

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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For immediate release:

Camp Fire and Community Partners Step-It-Up to Help Fostoria 8<sup>th</sup> Graders TRIVE!

[Fostoria, Oh.] Camp Fire Northwest Ohio has announced that it is one of 197 applicants to receive a one-year grant in the latest rounds of the Community Connector grants awarded through the Department of Education. Since its inception in 2015, the Ohio department of Education reports, "342 community partnerships have been awarded \$29.2 million for programs that give more Ohio students access to role models who can motivate and inspire them and help them develop skills that lead to success in school and the workplace."

The \$45,000 grant involves Camp Fire Northwest Ohio, Fostoria City Schools, Fostoria Chamber of Commerce, Fostoria Economic Development, First Federal Bank of Midwest, and West Independence Church. The grant will work with at-risk students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Fostoria City Schools. The program provides \$3 for every \$1 provided by local partnerships for activities specifically associated with one-to-one mentoring.

"With experience comes wisdom, and Ohio's students have so much to learn from their community leaders. Through the Community Connectors program, students are encouraged to dream big and learn the skills needed to put their dreams into action," said Paolo DeMaria, superintendent of public instruction. "We also find that mentors go into the program with the intent of helping others and they end up learning more than they ever imagined from their mentees. These interactions are invaluable."

In 2012, The Thrive Foundation for Youth invested in an initiative to explore an approach referred to as "Step-It-Up-2-Thrive." Camp Fire was in the lead group of organizations tasked with taking the most current research on positive adolescent development and putting it into practice. Camp Fire's Thrive program shows a statistically significant positive influence on youth thriving indicators along with

increased development of skills to succeed when positively influenced through key actions by caring, trained adults. The intention of Thrive is to positively impact youth—their purpose, life, and social skills.

Youth engaged in Thrive programming report:

- 82 percent stated adults in Camp Fire helped them solve problems instead of telling them what to do.
- 83 percent felt that if they did not achieve their goal on the first try, they would not give up.
- 84 percent reported they were taught they could figure things out even when they did not know the answers.
- 82 percent reported that at Camp Fire they learned they did not have to be born with talent in order to be good at something.

“When caring adult mentors and youth are paired a beautiful thing happens! Youth begin to focus on their own personal development through learning, practice and reflection, they are significantly more likely to thrive,” said Michelle Huff, CEO of Camp Fire. “Everyone, regardless of who they are or where they come from, has the ability to lead. We cannot wait until adulthood to start teaching the skills necessary to be a great leader. We need to equip youth with the tools now.”

Camp Fire will deliver weekly Thrive programming to 25 at-risk youth that involves a new developmental concept. The program is made of a variety learning styles such as direct delivery of instruction, team building challenges, and coordinated peer and one-on-one adult mentoring sessions. Students will also explore a variety of career fields with local business through presentations and field trips. At the end of the year the students will test their new skills on Camp Glen’s high ropes and challenge course. The Thrive program focuses on four components that supports youth to achieve their full potential:

- Identifying and growing “Sparks” with the support of Spark Champions (mentors).
- Adopting a growth mindset (the belief that you can learn new skills all the time).
- Building goal management skills.
- Creating the opportunity to reflect on activities and outcomes.

Children need someone who can be present at the critical times in their lives when values are formed, when self-esteem is developed, and when basic academic and problem-solving skills are acquired. Mentoring also adds to the lives of mentors as they make connections, engage in character building and values transfer, build resiliency, and help create a brighter, more productive future for local youth. Mentors will meet with the students on the fourth Tuesday every month from 9:30-10:30am. For more information on mentoring or how to be involved or how to involve your business, please contact Sarah Stephens Krupp at the Fostoria Chamber of Commerce at 419-435-0486, [sarah@fostoriachamber.com](mailto:sarah@fostoriachamber.com) or Michelle Huff at Camp Fire at 419-422-5415.

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