

LEAD4CHANGE®

April 2024 Grant Winners Press Release

Twice a year, Lead4Change hosts The Lead4Change Project – a small grants program that showcases the growth of students leaders and funds their ideas for community impact.

The Lead4Change Program takes students on a journey of learning leadership skills through community service. After completing the curriculum, students share their story of growth and impact by requesting additional funding to continue or complete their service project.

Each project addresses a community need and encourages students to develop a creative solution to support that need. We're amazed by the creativity and drive of our students as they use the leadership lessons they learned to create positive change in their communities. It's always difficult for our judges to choose winners as the projects are all meaningful and awe-inspiring.

This year's winners are surely that. Congratulations to all of the April 2024 Projects that will receive funding!

Warren East High School

Bowling Green, KY

Jamisen Abernathy, Educator

Project: Warren East High School FCCLA

Funding: \$7,500

The Need: Many teachers, friends, and families in their community have loved ones sundering cancer treatment but the extra expense to purchase chemotherapy port shirts and remain comfortable in treatment didn't seem right to these students. "Companies like Amazon shouldn't profit off of something as simple and as needed as this."

The Project: Sew 20 chemotherapy port shorts and donate to the local oncology centers in their city! The students learned how to sew and fundraised the resources to make the ChemoComfort Sweatshirts.

The Result: The students exceeded their goal and created 25 ChemoComfort Sweatshirts and delivered them to the oncology department at their local hospital. Then Lead4Change accepted their proposal for \$7,500 so that they can create an additional 500 more garments and expand their distribution across the state, and even the country.

LEAD4CHANGE®

Mercer County Educational Service Center

Tri Star Career Compact

High School in Mercer Co., OH

Wendee Bertke, Educator

Project: Career Pathways Caring Concessions

Funding: \$3,000

The Need: After learning that there are 50-100 people who are homeless in their community every night, this team decided to raise money to provide canned food goods to their local community members in need.

The Project: The students hosted two fundraisers where they sold concession stands at school events that allowed them to purchase a total of 833 cans for donation! Not only that, but they found ways to include students with disabilities in their project so that they too could give of their time to serve the community. They split the canned goods between two local food pantries.

The Result: The students delivered a total of 833 canned food items to two separate food pantries. Lead4Change accepted their proposal of \$3,000 which allows the school to purchase an ice cream maker and a popcorn popper — two items they will use to continue to sell concessions so that they can use the proceeds to support projects like this in their community.

Timothy Edwards Middle School

Windsor, CT

Tanya Bynoe, Educator

Project: T.E Change Leaders

Funding: \$10,000

The Need: Many of these students know fellow students and relatives who are afflicted by Type 1 Diabetes. After some research the students learned how expensive it is to receive insulin and monitor blood sugar for the uninsured. These students set out to raise money to purchase 3 blood sugar monitors and 3 insulin pumps for 3 individuals who have Type 1 diabetes and are unable to pay for it.

The Project: The students hosted a number of fundraisers to raise money to help with the cost of 3 new blood sugar monitors and 3 new insulin pumps. These middle school students encountered a number of barriers along the way but refused to give up in their pursuit of helping those around them.

The Result: While the students fell short of their goal, they continued to plan even more fundraisers — even after their project was submitted. Lead4Change accepted their proposal of \$10,000 to cover the cost of 1 year's expenses related to owning and operating a blood sugar monitor and insulin pump.

LEAD4CHANGE®

The Chu Family & We Sense Inc

Chapel Hill, NC
Ting Chu, Advisor
Project: The Giving Garden
Funding: \$1,000

The Need: A growing awareness of food waste, food insecurity, and the affects of green house gas emissions, this family decided to take the matter into their own hands as a 7th, 9th and 10th grader rallied to help their local community in this way.

The Project: This family set out to create a community garden, recruit 50 volunteers and donate 10,000 seedlings to the community for easier access to other community gardens that provide fresh, safe produce, eliminate food insecurity, and support local food pantries with donations.

The Result: Through their volunteers and efforts, they composted over 5,000 lbs. of food and distributed 2,000+ seedlings to other families and donated nearly 1,000 lbs. of fresh produce. Lead4Change accepted their proposal of \$1,000 to help them reach their goal of providing 10,000 seedlings to their community, allowing for convenient backyard gardening. With the grant, they will create seedling kits, distribute gardening tools and organize two community events to distributes the free kits.

Turning Point Program, Auglaize County Educational Service Center

High School Students with Special Needs in Wapakoneta, OH
LaZett Daum & Kimberly Newfer, Educators
Project: Turning Point
Funding: \$2,500

The Need: These young adults with special needs partnered together to serve two local animal shelters that needed donations in order to continue to provide good food and care to their pets waiting to be adopted.

The Project: The students set out to raise \$100 and collect 50 bags of pet food for donations. They created flyers, posted in the local newspaper, and created awareness in their community about their donation boxes that were placed around the city at different businesses.

The Result: The students were able to collect \$372 and 30 bags of pet food for donations through their efforts! Lead4Change accepted their \$2,500 proposal so that they could create their own biscuits and treats for the animals in the shelter. Additionally, they will use the funding to distribute more collection boxes around the city and draw more awareness to their cause.

LEAD4CHANGE®

Glastonbury High School

Glastonbury, CT
Lauren DeBlois, Educator
Project: Baking from the Heart
Funding: \$750

The Need: As homelessness has increased in their community, these high school students desired to support their local soup kitchen by baking and donating bread.

The Project: The students fundraised to make a different bread recipe every month and donated all of the bread to a local soup kitchen. Not only did they provide food but the students took great pride in providing homemade goods, made with love and care to those most in need in their community.

The Result: The students supplied bread to the soup kitchen for 4 months and baked 4 different recipes — honing their baking skills. Lead4Change accepted their \$1,500 proposal to cover their baking expenses and allow them to make even more baked goods, serving more in need. This grant allows them to expand their donations to a second soup kitchen in need as well.

Leigh Community School

High School in Leigh, NE
Justine Fischer, Educator
Project: Leigh Youth Advisory Committee Christmas Festival Project
Funding: \$5,000

The Need: Last summer the high school students in this small town in Nebraska sought to foster community togetherness and improve their local park, pool, and baseball fields. During that project they realized there was more they could do! So they decided to fundraise to provide a new play-set, ground covering for the play-set, and a concrete pad for picnic tables near by.

The Project: The students created a Christmas Festival as a fundraiser for their community. They involved local businesses, curated 34 vendors, a visit from Santa, live entertainment, activities, games and more. In total, their amazing event served over 400 people in their community and fostered a sense of togetherness in their small town.

The Result: Together they raised \$4,700 through their event! Lead4Change accepted their \$5,000 proposal to complete the rest of their project by purchasing a play-set, ground covering, and concrete pad for their local park.

LEAD4CHANGE®

Forest Park High School

Woodbridge, VA
Susan Gonzalez, Educator
Project: Diversity in the Den
Funding: \$7,500

The Need: Learning first hand the benefit of exposing oneself to different cultures and communities, these high school students wanted to create an opportunity for others in their community by hosting a Multicultural Night.

The Project: The fundraised in order to put on a Multicultural Night and invited the community in order to foster a deeper appreciation for diversity in their student body and community as a whole. On display at the event was food from around the world, different customs, dances, and attire.

The Result: Their Multicultural Night was a huge success, so much so that in order to host another one, they would need more space, more food, and more volunteers! Lead4Change accepted their \$7,500 proposal in order to host more Multicultural Nights in the future at a larger venue.

Bridger High School

Middle and High School Students, Bridger, MT
Vicki Kaufman, Educator
Project: Ageless Allies
Funding: \$2,000

The Need: Bring joy and encouragement to local senior citizens by hosting 4 holiday parties for them and cleaning the local senior center weekly!

The Project: These students, 7th-12th grade, put on a Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas and Valentines Day party for their local senior citizens and weekly, cleaned the center. Later they decided to host bake sales at their school to help fund the purchase of a commercial two burner griddle and brand new KitchenAid heavy duty mixer to upgrade the kitchen facilities at the senior center.

The Result: The students successfully executed 4 holiday parties and raised enough money to up the senior center's kitchen! Lead4Change accepted their \$2,000 proposal to cover the cost of 1 month's worth of lunches for the senior citizens to further their commitment to their well-being and health.

LEAD4CHANGE®

Milton-Union High School

West Milton, OH

Suzanne Kimball, Educator

Project: Milton-Union MVCTC FFA

Funding: \$255

The Need: Bring mental health awareness and support specifically to farmers who rarely receive the support and resources they need to help them improve their mental health.

The Project: These students hosted a 3-day Dodgeball Tournament at their school to raise money for FarmAid, raising \$255 in total and bringing the entire school together to support their cause.

The Result: The students raised \$255 and Lead4Change accepted their matching proposal of \$255 to be donated to FarmAid and support the mental health of farmers in their community.

Odessa High School

Odessa, WA

Terri King, Educator

Project: Project RRR: Replace, Refresh, Restore

Funding: \$7,430

The Need: The town hall in their small town is over 100 years old and in much need of repairs as it now serves as the local senior center and community gathering place for funerals, receptions, showers, meetings, and dances.

The Project: These students donated over 200 hours to the remodeling and renovations to the bathrooms and entryway of the old town hall — parts of the building that are used every day but have not been updated since the 1970s. Partnering with the local Lion's Club for resources, the students donated their skills and time to complete this renovation and host a new grand opening for 100 people to attend.

The Result: The renovation was complete and the small town celebrated an amazingly refreshed town hall entryway and bathrooms. During their work it became evident that many of the water pipes servicing the building were original and needed replacement. Lead4Change accepted their \$7,430 proposal to excavate and replace these water pipes to allow the building to continue serving the seniors and citizens of Odessa, WA.

LEAD4CHANGE®

Positive Education Program-Phoenix

Param-Heights, OH
Julie Lanigan, Educator
Project: The Elders
Funding: \$3,200

The Need: After serving warm meals at a local homeless shelter, these Juniors and Seniors noticed that beyond nutrition, these community members also needed basic hygiene and personal care items.

The Project: These students rallied resources from the local community and school to create 25 hygiene kits to donate to the homeless in their community.

The Result: The students reached their goal and excelled in supporting the personal hygiene and mental health of the homeless in their community. Lead4Change accepted their \$3,200 proposal to be able to provide 25 hygiene kits monthly for the remainder of the year.

Randolph-Macon Academy

Middle School in Front Royal, VA
Daniel Malinconico, Educator
Project: R-MA Big Brothers/Big Sisters (Elementary Excellence)
Funding: \$2,000

The Need: The 7th graders at this Private School noticed needs for supplies at the local public elementary school where 70% of the families in the district fall below the poverty line.

The Project: These students learned how to best support the students at this school by going to their school 2-3 times per weeks and serving as reading buddies, lunch buddies and to assist with math lessons, library, art, music and P.E..

The Result: The local elementary school was encouraged and benefitted greatly from these visits from the 7th graders. Lead4Change accepted their \$2,000 proposal to purchase school supplies for the students who are unable to afford them on their own.

LEAD4CHANGE®

BASEC-Belmont

Middle School in Boston, MA
Sydney Padgett, Educator
Project: Keepers of the Courtyard
Funding: \$2,300

The Need: These 6th graders noticed how their courtyard could benefit from a compost bin and a good cleaning so the After School Enrichment Collaborative decided to improve their school and courtyard.

The Project: The students set out to collect resources and build a new compost area in their courtyard as well as cleaning it up so that others in the school could enjoy it. They took the time to create posters and educate their community about the importance of composting.

The Result: They educated their fellow classmates, built and utilized a new compost bin whose compost can be donated to others in the community to help their gardens. Lead4Change accepted their \$2,300 proposal to purchase two new, durable picnic tables for their courtyard — making it a more enjoyable place for students and teachers in their school to use for class and extra curricular activities.

Fife High School

Fife, WA
Laura Ramos, Educator
Project: Trojan Heart 24
Funding: \$10,000

The Need: 42% of students in their school are on a free or reduced lunch so these students created a discrete resource needs closet that any teacher can access to provide hygiene products, school supplies, food, clothes, and drinks to any student in need.

The Project: The students fundraised to stock and resource the needs closet. And the students worked to expand the resource needs closet but securing resource needs carts that can be distributed to different counselor's offices and allow them to distribute the resources as necessary.

The Result: Lead4Change accepted their \$10,000 proposal to help continue fulfilling the mission of Trojan Heart with some of that money going to restock items and some of it going to providing a Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter Dinner Drive-Through event.

LEAD4CHANGE®

Jackson Milton High School

North Jackson, OH
Jeanne Reyes, Educator
Project: Blue Jays
Funding: \$500

The Need: Some students with disabilities are excluded from participating in regular school activities because they are either not invited or unable to. Additionally, the school struggles to consistently raise money to help with extracurriculars and service projects.

The Project: The students realized that the school was negatively impacted by the exclusion of students with multiple disabilities — particularly 3 students. And that both those students and the school at large would benefit from their inclusion. So these NHS high school students started making and selling popcorn at the school and include students with disabilities in the process.

The Result: Lead4Change accepted their \$500 proposal to purchase supplies for one month of popcorn supplies that would allow their NHS chapter to become profitable and create more service opportunities.

Assumption High School

Louisville, KY
Mary Ann Steutermann, Advisor
Project: Wag4Wishes
Funding: \$1,000

The Need: As of 2023, Kentucky ranked #46 for the U.S. State Animal Protection Laws Rankings due to the lack of laws passed to provide animals with protection they need. Wags4Wishes set out to educate the public and support the first non-kill animal shelter in their city.

The Project: The students raised around \$200 from a homemade dog treat bake sale at their school and received \$250 in donations from their donation drive in addition to volunteering their time at the animal shelter and doing their part to help these pets secure adoption.

The Result: Lead4Change accepted their \$1,000 proposal used to educate the public on the issue and support for the only no-kill animal shelter in the city. It will help the shelter cover the cost of medical care and supplies that they need to support these animals.

LEAD4CHANGE®

Assumption High School

Louisville, KY

Mary Ann Steutermann, Advisor

Project: Teen Free

Funding: \$1,000

The Need: Bring much needed awareness and education to their city about the reality and dangers of human trafficking.

The Project: The students created a vibrant social media account to grow awareness. They also created a presentation and shared it with two different groups of students at their school.

The Result: Lead4Change accepted their \$1,000 proposal to partner with a local organization dedicated to ending human trafficking in Kentucky so that they can create more resources to spread awareness locally.

Assumption High School

Louisville, KY

Mary Ann Steutermann, Advisor

Project: Valor4Veterans

Funding: \$4,000

The Need: 1 in 10 veterans say they struggle frequently with the lack of structure in civilian life after leaving the military which often results in depression, homelessness, and increased risk of crises.

The Project: The students partnered with a local non-profit called Active Heroes to map out 3 hiking trails and widen one of these trails on the property of Active Heroes. They put down landscaping and mulched the entrance and fundraised for and installed a six-sided bench with six accompanying plaques for the six branches of the military. Later they hosted an unveiling event and free dinner with a presentation about the project and a flag retirement ceremony.

The Result: Lead4Change accepted their \$4,000 proposal to help support active heroes but creating an obstacle, or COPE, course at Active Heroes to provide another fun activity for the veterans and their families.

LEAD4CHANGE®

Tonganoxie High School

Tonganoxie, KS

Tracey Waldeier, Educator

Project: Inclusion Isn't Scary

Funding: \$10,000

The Need: They set out to make their school more inclusive by creating an opportunity for students of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to come together.

The Project: The students created an opportunity within the school day where students of different backgrounds, talents, and abilities could interact together in a positive and meaningful way. Through this program, we were able to educate students in our entire school district (K-12) about the importance of inclusion. Chieftain Friends and Fun allowed students to visit different activity stations that were set up around the gym, similar to a field day. Each activity had differentiated ways that all students, regardless of their physical or intellectual ability, could participate. For example, with bowling, students could bowl freely or they could use a ramp for support. Also, the bowling pins could be arranged in different configurations for the different ability levels. Other activities included cup stacking, badminton, tennis, basketball, sensory bins, cornhole/bean bag toss, catch, and soccer. By playing games, all students could have fun and develop lasting friendships.

The students hosted 3 different Chieftain Friends and Fun Day events in November: one for the elementary school, one for the middle school, and one for neighboring high schools. Over 100 students with physical and intellectual disabilities participated in the event. In addition, over 200 peers and 35 teachers and staff members also participated.

The Result: The outcome has been amazing and since this event, they have started a Unified PE class, which pairs students with and without disabilities together. They also started a monthly peer group of students with and without disabilities that meet to play inclusive board games and participate in other inclusive activities. Students with disabilities have more opportunities in which to participate since starting our peer education advocacy program, which increases equity for all. Lead4Change accepted their \$10,000 proposal to continue to implement these events moving forward.

LEAD4CHANGE®

Paulding Exempted Village Schools

High School in Paulding, OH
Emily Remaklus, Educator
Project: Lunch Chats
Funding: \$1,000

The Need: Develop a safe and fun environment for middle and high school students to make friends and develop social skills because so many struggle with making friends, bullying, and mental health.

The Project: The students created a group at school called “Lunch Chats” — a safe and fun environment where students who don’t have many friends, lack social skills, and confidence can come together for lunch, snacks, games and make new friends! Their group became Teen Mental Health First-Aid Certified so that they could guide students facing crisis. 20 students benefitted from their hospitality and care.

The Result: They have already seen many benefits from their Lunch Chats group and have encouraged 20 younger students who did not have many friends and lacked social skills. Lead4Change accepted their \$1,000 proposal to continue to provide snacks and games for Lunch Chats through the next school year.

Al-Furqan Academy

High School in Jacksonville, FL
Amna Mukhtar, Educator
Project: NF9K
Funding: \$10,000

The Need: Engagement with school activities and sports has wained in recent years and is hurting the culture of the school

The Project: The students decided that more students and families would be more involved if they knew what was happening at the school and the stories behind the events and athletics so they set out to create a school newspaper. They recruited 50 student contributors, created a digital school newspaper and saw a 30% increase in attendance at school sanctioned events.

The Result: Lead4Change accepted their \$10,000 grant request to ensure sustainability for a printed and digital newspaper for the school. Including providing a website, marketing, outreach, printing and distribution costs, and more.

LEAD4CHANGE®

Mount Si High School

Snoqualmie, WA

Kelly Hawkins, Educator

Project: Mount Si DECA

Funding: \$1,100

The Need: The local homeless recently lost their shelter center.

The Project: The students held multiple drives to collect food and hygiene needs to donate to the local homeless.

The Result: Lead4Change accepted their \$1,100 proposal to provide two weeks worth of meals and to purchase appliances needed to heat and refrigerate the meals for the homeless folks now staying at a local motel.