



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Welcome to our World: Senator Murphy's \$25,000 grant will help Carmel High School students create their own living ecosystem

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Carmel, NY - Everyone has wanted to master (or mistress) of their own world. With the aid of a generous \$25,000 grant from Senator Terrence Murphy, students at Carmel High School plan to build and study their own educational environment.

"This is a fascinating project. It is a great way for students to examine how animals and plants co-exist in conjunction with non-living components and how they react with one another," said Senator Murphy "Taking an active role in the planning, construction and maintenance of the project will give the students valuable experience in working together as part of a team."

Andy Irvin, Superintendent of Carmel Central School District said, "We are very appreciative of Senator Murphy's efforts on behalf of the students and the entire Carmel Central School District community. This project will benefit students for years to come."

"Senator Murphy's generosity and commitment to education proves he cares about the future of our communities," said John Fink, Assistant Principal at Carmel High School. "We look forward to including him in every step of our program and working side-by-side with him. His enthusiasm for this project will undoubtedly spark the interest of other community partners."

Carmel High School expanded its campus in 2007, creating a new science wing and library. During this expansion, a confined courtyard was created between the new

building and a part of the building erected in 1963. The confined space has limited accessibility, and as a result, it has been underutilized. During the 2014-2015 school year, a science class studied monarch butterflies and their migration patterns. To aid in their research, a small flower garden was installed in the courtyard that attracted monarch butterflies and hummingbirds during the spring and summer months.

Carmel High School is now collaborating with Glencar Water Gardens and Lighting, Inc. to install an ecosystem pond in the courtyard that include a waterfall made of natural stone, plant life, small fish and other wildlife necessary for creating a complete ecosystem. In addition to the installation of the pond, an outdoor classroom complete with benches and a whiteboard will be built so classes can meet in the courtyard and use the environment as a functioning laboratory. The existing butterfly garden will be upgraded and incorporated into the living environment of the courtyard space. Water for both the pond and the garden will be supplied through a rainwater harvesting system. This unit can also be modified to add an automated watering system to guard against the dry months of the seasons to come.

Kevin Cotter of Glencar Water Gardens and Lighting, Inc. commented, "Brainstorming this project with John Fink has been a rewarding experience. To be able to work hands-on educating kids is an experience of a lifetime. This living lab, ecosystem and outdoor classroom will provide valuable opportunities for all students at Carmel High School to learn, reflect and grow. I'm ecstatic about all the possibilities."

Mike Kleinlercher, a senior at Carmel High School added, "I'm very excited to see this project move forward. As a student and a community member I believe this project will do nothing but benefit our students and open new doors for them in the future."

To help offset the cost of the project, students, staff and volunteers will be given an opportunity to get their hands dirty working with the Glencar crew. The Living Lab Ecosystem Outdoor Classroom will become a space utilized by classes studying earth science, biology, zoology/ethology, animal behavior, drawing, painting, design, and photography. The space will also be a quiet haven for students looking to study, read, or indulge in a few quiet moments.

The project is scheduled to begin in 2018.