

CLiCK seeks donations to purchase van

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WINDHAM/WILLIMANTIC — Windham's Commercially Licensed Co-operative Kitchen is hoping to drive into the New Year with new programs and transportation options.

The kitchen has launched a campaign to raise funds for a 15-passenger van for educational youth programs.

CLiCK is Windham and Willimantic's urban farm and education resource center.

The hybrid van will be used to transport local elementary,

middle and high school students to CLiCK to further their education in nutrition, gardening and food entrepreneurship.

Classes will be taught at CLiCK using the commercial kitchen, teaching kitchen, gardens and orchards.

CLiCK has been unable to secure a bus stop at its location on Club Road and cost of transportation through the schools is high.

Securing its own van would allow for program scheduling that meets the needs of the students and will provide

an additional employment opportunity at CLiCK.

CLiCK Executive Director Leigh Duffy said the van could be used for in-school field trips, after-school programming and more.

"This will open up a lot of opportunities for people to come out here and get an education," Duffy said. "The van would help secure those young folks and get them here."

The fundraiser is called DRIVE CLiCK. Its primary focus is to "drive" local youth to utilize CLiCK "resources" through "innovative" training while promoting their "vision" and inspiring "entrepreneurialism" in the food industry.

CLiCK needs to raise a total of \$25,000 for the van.

Donations will be matched dollar for dollar by Sustainable CT and a private foundation called IOBY for In Our Back Yard.

Then, the Jeffrey P. Ossen Family Foundation will match up to \$12,500 for the initiative.

With these two foundations, it means every \$1

donated will turn into \$4.

The fundraiser will run until Dec. 31.

The kitchen is expanding its education program to include a Young Entrepreneurialism Program around the CLiCK mission of Grow, Cook, Share.

YEP will engage local middle and high school students in creating a value-added product that is created, grown, processed, packaged and distributed from CLiCK, creating a connection between students, entrepreneurialism and a healthy local food system.

"We hope to take students who might not be happy in the traditional school setting," Duffy said. "They will learn how to create a product, market it, make it and sell it."

Donations can be made online at ioby.org/project/drive-click. Donations can also be mailed to P.O. Box 788, Willimantic 06226.

For more information about CLiCK, visit clickwillimantic.com or call 860-786-7907.

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