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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EBS Receives \$3,000 Climate Catalysts Innovation Fund Grant for Food Forest Project

East Burke, VT, October 5, 2021 — East Burke School (EBS) has been awarded a Climate Catalysts Innovation Fund Grant in the amount of \$3,000 to support its school-based Food Forest Project. The grant will enable the school to further develop the edible perennial gardens that students began to plant on campus in September 2020. Ultimately, EBS's grounds will be transformed into a public demonstration center for low-maintenance regenerative agriculture, a method of food production that yields crops year after year while actively restoring the soil. EBS was one among 29 applicants with a total of over \$70,000 in requested funds.

The Climate Catalysts Innovation Fund was launched this year by the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) to support local innovators developing solutions that move Vermont closer to its climate and energy goals. The fund was capitalized with \$20,000 from the Vermont Low Income Trust for Electricity (VLITE) and VSECU, with an additional \$20,000 contributed during the application period from the Vermont Community Foundation (VCF). The objective of the fund is to support innovative local projects for which a small grant could have a meaningful impact.

“We broke ground on the Food Forest after a spring of mandated school closure to lift the spirits of our students, to remind them of the power they have to make a meaningful impact on their world,” said Megan Durling, one of the school’s three teaching administrators. “Community support for the Food Forest was tremendous in the project’s first year. Now with the help of the VCRD, students are beginning to get a sense of how important their work is beyond our little village.”

East Burke School is a state-approved independent school offering tuition-free enrollment for local students in grades 8-12. Our mission is to prepare students to confront 21st century challenges through critical literacy, creative thinking, and collaborative action. Together with families and community partners, we are raising the next generation of Vermonters to steward our land and communities for the sake of generations to come.

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