

Friends Plant Seeds of Success

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HAMPTON - Work on restoring Winnacunnet High School's Lane Greenhouse to its former glory got a little bit easier this week thanks to the Friends of Winnacunnet Foundation.

"This is just the first of many grants that we hope to give out in the future," said Linda Libbey, one of the directors of the foundation.

The nonprofit organization, formed last year to provide additional funding to enhance programs of excellence in education at the high school, gave out its first financial award to Special Education teacher Diana Weidenbacker.

The \$1,000 grant will help restore the greenhouse, which Weidenbacker said will provide a real life biology course for students based in horticulture.

Weidenbacker wanted to restore the greenhouse to give students in her Decisions Program an opportunity to have experience in the field of horticulture

"This is a project we really wanted for our program," Weidenbacker said. "We truly want to revive this greenhouse. This is very exciting for us and the students were thrilled that we got the grant."

Weidenbacker got the idea to restore the greenhouse after hearing school officials were going to demolish it.

"They were going to destroy it and I said no," Weidenbacker said. "I told them we can use it for our program."

So far, Weidenbacker along with her students cleaned out the greenhouse by gutting the inside and removing items stored in it for the last nine years.

"To say that the greenhouse was in total disrepair is being kind," Weidenbacker said.

Students also constructed wooden boxes to become the greenhouse's new tables.

While the greenhouse is still under renovation and additional funds are needed to complete the project, Weidenbacker said the \$1,000 grant would be used to further their goal.

In fact, the students have already started the process by setting up a miniature greenhouse inside their classroom.

She hopes that once the greenhouse is restored it can be used for years to come.

Weidenbacker said the items grown will be used for the gourmet cafe the students run and can be sold at the area farmers' markets.

"It will give students an opportunity for a business venture," Weidenbacker said.

Chris Singleton, chairman of the Winnacunnet School Board and member of the Friends foundation, said this is a great educational program to have at the school.

"It's not only about growing things, but also about business," Singleton said. "This is the Friends of Winnacunnet Foundation first grant and we are proud to give it to them." For more information about the foundation, please visit www.winnacunnetfoundation.com.

