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## **Gladwin Conservation District Receives Mini Grant to Improve Children’s Educational Garden**

GLADWIN – The Gladwin Conservation District has recently been awarded a mini grant from the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN). Saginaw Bay WIN is a community-based, voluntary initiative that connects people, resources, organizations, and programs. They look for strategic investments and technical support for projects that balance economic, environmental, and social priorities.

The mission of the Gladwin CD Children’s Educational Garden is to provide the life-long skills and education to actively promote health, wellness, and stewardship. For the past several years, the district has welcomed the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders from Gladwin Elementary each spring, teaching them about plants and giving them the opportunity to plant the fruits and veggies themselves. The garden continues to grow and was part of the 2019 Gladwin Master Gardeners Annual Garden Tour. Since then, the district has recently partnered with Gladwin 4H, Junior Master Gardeners, MSU Extension, Gladwin SPARKS, Boy Scouts, and Gladwin High School. It is an exciting time for the garden and the district looks forward to continuing to grow and expand it to better serve the community.

The grant funds received total \$1,000 and will be used to help build a wooden gazebo with native wildflowers grown around the perimeter with educational signage. It will have a handicap accessible path going through the center and will provide a space in shade for people to relax and rest while enjoying the garden. Community gardens and the associated work that the Gladwin Conservation District is doing really highlight what sustainability is all about. “Community gardens and the associated work that the Gladwin Conservation District is doing really highlight what sustainability is all about. We’re thrilled that we can be a part of this effort that continues the District’s work to promote conservation in both the community at large, and especially with children in the region’s schools”, said Mike Kelly of The Conservation Fund. The Conservation Fund administers the Saginaw Bay WIN program.

The Gladwin Conservation District is governed by a five-member board of directors serving four-year terms. Districts are unique in their structure, allowing them to adapt and respond to their communities needs. “The Children’s Educational Garden is one of my favorite things that we currently have at the district. We want to create a space where kids and adults can learn life-long lessons about gardening, native plant species, mushrooms, birds, and more, while also enjoying a beautiful safe space in nature. We want people to feel comfortable just hanging out in the garden. Our main focus is ensuring that the garden reflects the needs and desires of our community. That is what makes our new partnerships so exciting!” says Tristan Hewitt, Gladwin Conservation District Administrator.

For more details or if interested in learning more about the garden, email Tristan at [Tristan.Hewitt@macd.org](mailto:Tristan.Hewitt@macd.org) or call 989-426-9461 ext. 3232

