

COMMUNITY CORNER

Gowrie Group Partners with NESS STEM Leadership Outreach Pro- gram in New London, CT

Given that Gowrie Group is recognized as the largest independent marine insurance group in the country, the recent announcement of its new community partnership with New England Science & Sailing (NESS) is a natural. NESS, a year-round nonprofit 501(c)(3) adventure education organization, describes its mission as dedicated to “inspiring individuals to discover themselves through the enjoyment of the sea.” Its programming is directed toward increasing marine science knowledge, teamwork and self-reliance through active learning.

Eager to support the educational goals of NESS, Gowrie Group has signed on as a significant financial sponsor of the NESS STEM Leadership Program. (Gowrie also recently announced a new multi-year sponsorship extension with Chubb

Insurance for U.S. Sailing, the national governing body of the sport).

This hands-on program, which serves students attending the Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School in New London, Connecticut, promotes interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) through experiential learning using sailing, kayaking, marine science and adventure sports. Now in its second year, NESS’s outreach program has served 140 middle school students through weekly field experiences throughout the school year.

As noted on the NESS website, this structured “adventure education” curriculum provides opportunities for experiential learning through active engagement of students, fostering personal growth by “taking students on and in the water — out of their comfort zones — to places they literally and figuratively have never been before” and promoting environmental stewardship.

A critical fourth element of the program is its inclusiveness and accessibility, emphasizing the opportunity for all students to participate regardless of financial means, intellect or developmental ability.

“We’re grateful to Gowrie Group for supporting our New London STEM Leadership Program,” said NESS president Spike Lobdell. “Their gift makes a difference to this important education initiative for New London students.” Carter Gowrie, CEO of Gowrie Group stated, “We’re very proud to support NESS’s exemplary program of providing innovative after-school education empowering students to consider



careers in STEM-related fields.”

At the completion of their 30-week NESS STEM Leadership Program this spring, students from the Bennie Jackson Middle School had plenty to say about their experiences.

“NESS helped me not only learn to sail, but how to help with the environment,” related a 7th grade girl. A 6th grade boy remarked, “NESS helped me be a better person by teaching me to try more. It was great.” And summing it up neatly, another boy observed, “You can learn much better when you’re doing fun things like kayaking or sailing.”

Whitney Peterson, Gowrie Group’s vice president of marketing, notes that “Gowrie Group is very proud to support the important community outreach that NESS is focusing on students in New London.” He added, “Using sailing and adventure STEM education to help underserved children is such a smart idea.” The dozens of students from the Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School in New London who have participated to date in the program would certainly agree.

Gowrie Group’s portfolio of offerings includes commercial, home/auto, equine, and yacht insurance, as well as employee benefits solutions and safety services. The company services clients across the U.S. from its Connecticut offices in Westbrook and Darien, its Rhode Island offices in Newport and North Kingstown, and its Marshfield, Massachusetts, office.

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