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Robb Hirsch, Founder and Executive Director
The Climate Change Leadership Institute
911 Stagecoach Rd.
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Robb,

I am so grateful for the "2018 Sustainability in Education Leadership Award" you presented to me today, and proud to receive it in the presence of my students and colleagues. It is a relief to receive recognition for my lifelong passion for and commitment to sustainability. I thought, when I went into teaching after working as a mechanical engineer in the solar industry, an environmental activist, and an environmental consultant, that I would more directly teach environmental science or sustainability. But I found the scientific foundation that my students had was too weak to support that, and their sense of the world too narrow, and have chosen to focus on teaching science well. There is so much distraction in our society, and confusion over what is urgent versus what is important. Many of the ideas foundational to understanding climate change are counterintuitive for middle school students, and I feel like I spend the entire year leading them through experiences, trying to help them understand that burning things produces carbon dioxide, which is a greenhouse gas, what that means, and what our alternatives are.

And, of course, I am extremely grateful for the \$1000 in seed grant money. As I told the students this morning, I will use \$250 of it as a mini-scholarship fund for our school's collaboration with Albuquerque-based Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions, with whom I've been cultivating a partnership to get students outside more. For instance: our next trip is to Abiquiu Dam to see the hydroelectric facility, and to Ghost Ranch to view that stunning watershed, and some of the kids' families can't afford the \$5 cost, so they can apply to my Climate Change Leadership Fund for financial support. The remaining \$750 will be used to move ahead my Villanueva Fields Farm project. I am working with a variety of partners to bring students out to my farm more often, to give them experiences with plants and crops and irrigation and being outdoors, and am working to make the experience pleasant and comfortable and interesting for them. This year's harvest was returned to New Mexico families through the MoGro CSA, and this winter's project is to improve soil health and carbon sequestration in the soils.

I look forward to maintaining a connection with CCLI going forward. Again, thank you for your encouragement and vote of confidence!

Sincerely,

Katherine Bueler
8th grade bilingual science teacher, El Camino Real Academy, Santa Fe