

## Evergreen School

416 Evergreen Lane  
Yreka, California 96097

My name is Riley Munson and I am a second grade teacher at a low income public school in Yreka, California. There are 459 students enrolled at our TK-3rd grade school. 72.1% of these students come from socioeconomically disadvantaged families. A large portion of our students are homeless or foster youth. Many students experience ongoing exposure to neglect, abuse, and violence. Because of this, every classroom is affected by behavior problems.

Should I be awarded \$500 to use for my students, I would create a Physical Education and Health program within my classroom. Our school currently does not offer PE, but I recognize a big need for it. I would purchase supplies to teach my students games such as football, basketball, soccer, volleyball, dodgeball, and baseball. I would also like there to be a health component to my PE class, where students would learn about how to make healthier food choices when they can, social emotional learning, and how to cope with feelings of anxiety or depression.

As of right now, when my students go to recess, it is obvious that they don't know how to play any team sports. They will try sometimes, but there is more arguing over how to play them than there is time spent playing. Physical education helps students develop social and problem solving skills. Students learn to cooperate with others, encourage teammates, and achieve a goal. Getting exercise releases endorphins that will make children feel happy and ready to take on whatever challenges the day might bring them. All of these skills would directly influence their behaviors in the classroom and create more opportunities for learning. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, before a student can learn they must feel safe, loved, and healthy. Physical Education could be the missing step in a lot of children's journey to learning.

Another very important reason to introduce my students to sports at school, is to teach them something that they can then go home and do in their free time. If they knew how to play these types of games or sports, their free time could be spent making healthy choices rather than playing video games. A lot of the students live in the same apartment complexes, and would be able to play with each other and teach others around them how to join in on games. Knowing how to play these games will also give students the

confidence to join sports teams when they get older, which has an endless amount of positive impact on a child. \$500 wouldn't just buy my classroom sports balls, football flags, frisbees, ball pumps, baseball bats... etc. It would buy my students a set of skills that would last a lifetime.

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