

## **HOPATCONG HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVES “LOWES” GRANT**

*HOPATCONG:* A patch of ground outside Hopatcong High School will be transformed with the help of a corporate donation. Lowe’s Toolbox for Education program gave the school a \$5,000 grant to build an outdoor classroom, cafe and community center. Lights, tables and benches will be installed on the lawn outside the cafeteria so it can be used for a multitude of purposes.

"The high school facility, like many other aging buildings, is in constant need of upgrading. These awards go a long way to sustaining a modern school climate that is welcoming and useful to students attending school in Hopatcong," remarked Superintendent Dr. Charles Maranzano.

Principal Emil Binotto envisions using the area in a number of ways. It will be set aside for instructional purposes when class lessons are enhanced by being outdoors. Seniors will be allowed to eat lunch outside if the weather allows, he added. The school district also has many community groups and sports leagues that need space. It will be designated for their use after school, according to Binotto. Last year’s graduating class donated more than \$2,000 toward the project. It will be used to purchase tables and benches, according to Binotto. The Lowe’s grant will pay for lighting so the space can be used in the evening.

High School library media specialist Patricia Paugh donated her time writing the grant. "We are proud of the efforts of staff to obtain grant funding for projects that are out of reach in our current budget," Maranzano said. "The outdoor classroom and café project will improve the environment at the school and improve morale. "The project is expected to be finished in the summer.

Kelly Persons, Community Relations Manager for The Lowe’s Charitable and Education Foundation, wished the district luck with its project. "The mission of the LCEF is to improve the communities we serve, and we are committed to having a positive impact on the lives of our customers, neighbors, and employees," she wrote.

The district’s buildings and grounds crew will perform the site work, according to Neil Piro, Buildings and Grounds Supervisor. "Our maintenance staff goes the extra mile when it comes to collaborating to improve the school environment," Maranzano noted. A contractor has offered a load of stone dust so pavers can be installed to create a café-type atmosphere. However, the district is still seeking a donation of paving stones and a decorative outdoor fountain. "Any extra resources are both welcome and appreciated," Maranzano added.

For Additional information, contact  
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