

## **The Drop Collaborative Requested as Model for CTE Training Best Practices by Department of Education, Tennessee**

*After viewing a video created by Edge City Design LLC describing the Drop Collaborative, this model was requested for use to develop best practice methods for teachers in Career and Technical Education programs state-wide.*

Elizabethton, TN ([PRWEB](#)) January 08, 2016 -- After viewing a video paying tribute to the Drop Collaborative's first year in review (check out the video at: <http://www.dropcollaborative.com/happy-holidays.html>), Heather Justice, Executive Director of CTE (Career and Technical Education) office of Tennessee's Department of Education, praised the Drop Collaborative and participating students' efforts. In addition to her approval of the program, Sharon Necessary, the Career and Technical Education Consultant in the First Tennessee CORE office, plans to share the video and highlight the Drop Collaborative in next month's CTE directors meeting in Nashville, Tennessee. Sharon Necessary has also requested the Drop Collaborative be used as a best practice model for other CTE teachers state-wide.

The Drop Collaborative was created to strengthen local community through food, education, and community outreach. By offering a space for students to apply classroom lessons to a practical environment through a SAE (Supervised Agricultural Experience), students can learn the art of sustainable farming and mentorship while providing families in need with fresh produce. Since 1982, Unaka High School has been home to one of two meat sciences programs in the country; teaching students the process of meat production. Until March 2015, Unaka High School did not have land available to teach food production from start to harvest or to raise cattle. Through the birth of the Drop Collaborative, Unaka's SAE program evolved. The first year's successes included inspiring dedication and commitment from student farmers, the purchase of our first calf, over 500 pounds of fresh produce donated to the community, and a mentorship day at the farm with younger students.

The idea and the mission of the Drop Collaborative was created by John C. Drop. Pattie Meyer, President, Edge City Design LLC, acting as Executive Director, and her assistant, Ashley Bevensee, both based in Philadelphia, Pa. worked together to put his vision into practice at the Stoney Creek Farm. Through Edge City Design's lengthy relationship with Manhattan Chamber of Commerce, particularly with Nancy Ploeger (Founder of Community Benefit Fund) and Laura Bucko (Founder of Green Committee), Edge City Design gained practical knowledge on creating such a program. East Tennessee State University (ETSU) was the first local school that was contacted. Ron Roach, Ph.D., Chair, Department of Appalachian Studies, and Kevin O'Donnell, Department of Literature and Language, wanted to help make the idea become reality. They connected us with Emily Bidgood of Appalachian RC&D Council who connected us with Unaka High School. Josh Armentrout, Agriculture Instructor; Melissa Loveless, CTE Principal; Betsy Oliver, Principal; and Mickey Taylor, CTE Director/Supervisor of Unaka High School were immediately interested and quickly developed strategies to implement the Drop Collaborative's vision. We would not have been able to begin work on the Drop Collaborative in such short notice if it were not for the dedication of Unaka High School as well as other players and friends -- Frances Meyer, David Robbins, Esq., Lawrence Pierce, Charlotte Markland, Chris Estlow, Joe Meyer, Margaret Meyer, Taylor Malone, and many others. Last but not most certainly not least, the Drop Collaborative would not have been so successful without the motivation of Unaka High School's students who participated -- Logan Cannon, Israel Harrah, Savannah Wood, Jacob Graybeal, Savannah Agan, Sierra Wright, and Chris Erickson.

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