Organization Information- Provide a brief summary of the organization's history.

Since the 1930s, Camp Talahi has provided a 127 acre outdoor space for members of the Michigan community to connect with nature and each other with a focus on youth programming. Over the years, ownership of the property has changed many times and recently the property was in jeopardy of being sold and privately developed. Passionate members of the Camp Talahi community saw a need to preserve the land and founded the Camp Talahi Retreat and Nature Center as a 501(c)3 organization in 2012.

Since 2012, Camp Talahi has continued the long-standing tradition of the Summer Camp programs and has also recently given greater access of the Camp Talahi property to the local community by hosting annual 5Ks and by renting the property for private events.

Establishing a nonprofit at Camp Talahi has also allowed for a more productive organizational structure. Camp Talahi now has a full-time Executive Director and a Board of Directors (see attached document). With a board full of dedicated individuals, Camp Talahi now feels able to provide additional programming in order to reach a larger youth population. Under previous ownership, Camp Talahi ran an outdoor education program that was very successful. With this Board of Directors and newly hired Executive Director, Camp Talahi feels strongly about re-launching this program.This new program, Nature's Classroom, will focus on hosting small groups from the local community for one to two days of environmental exploration.

Describe your organization's mission and goals:

Camp Talahi is a 501(c)3 organization founded in 2012 for the purpose of continuing to host camp sessions, school programs, community events and retreats on the property. Camp Talahi serves groups of individuals throughout the state of Michigan in an "up north" atmosphere close to home. Our mission is to offer a singular, spiritually enriching environment wherein one can grow to a better understanding of oneself and one another away from the pressures of everyday life with a focus on youth.

Our goal through our programs is to cultivate a community of life-long campers that want to invest in the environment and share the joys of nature with future generations. Due to the longevity of our Summer Camp programs, Camp Talahi has a strong community of generations of past and current campers that continue to contribute to the organization in many ways.

Judy Lopus is a great example of a child introduced to Camp Talahi that now identifies as a "life-long camper." Judy began attending Camp Talahi in 1948 and attended the Summer Camp program first as a camper, then counselor, and eventually as a dean of programming. She has been around the community so long that children began to call her "Mother Nature." To this day, Mother Nature contributes by attending community events such as the annual 5K Trail Run, Fall Family Fun Fest, and by giving her time on our bi-annual volunteer work weekends.

Through our Summer Camp program and now Nature's Classroom we hope to cultivate many more life-long campers that will continue to care for this land and the environment as a whole as they grow into active adult members of their communities.

Describe your current programs and accomplishments:

Camp Talahi's Summer Camp programs currently serve about 250 children per year with a total of about 1,300 children served since 2012. Numbers have continued to increase yearly since the foundation of Camp Talahi as a nonprofit.

The Summer Camp programs provide children from surrounding cities, particularly from towns in the Ann Arbor and Metro Detroit Area, with a safe environment to explore nature and build community. The initiatives of the Summer Camp programs also include instilling youth with a sense of self-confidence, and encouraging a healthy lifestyle.

Children are given the opportunity to work on independent art projects, talent showcases, and journaling as well as working cooperatively with fellow campers to complete various activities that build trust and team work skills. During a typical day at camp, children are spending 8+ hours outdoors being physically active in some way whether it is by participating in water sports, field games, or an all-camp activity like a scavenger hunt.

The Summer Camp programs run over a course of eight weeks divided by age and interest groups:

Mini Camp *(Grades K-2)*
Junior Camp *(Grades 3-5)*
Adventure Camp *(Grades 6-8) (Includes horseback riding and off-site canoe trip)*
Junior High Camp (Grades 6-8) *(Includes special interest activities; i.e. dance classes and science experiments)*
Senior High Camp (Grades 9-12) *(5 day or 7 day packages available)*
Family Camp *(All Ages Welcome)*

In order to better serve the entire community, there are also two Summer Camp program options for adults: Camp Pinterest focused on arts and crafts, and Young Adult Camp focused on traditional action-packed fun.

During the off-season, Camp Talahi hosts community events such as Fall Family Fun Fest and a Fall and Sping 5K Trail Run to encourage locals to utilize the natural property and become familiar with what Camp Talahi has to offer.

Describe the program for which support is being requested:

Camp Talahi is asking for $21,400 to launch the Nature's Classroom program. Nature's Classroom will be a one to two night, sleep-away program available to students from Early Childhood to 5th grade in Southeast Michigan. This program will allow small groups of children to explore science, math, history, and art through nature. During this 6 week program, we plan to serve 8 groups of 20 children which will total to 160 youth served.

Today, children are spending half as much time outdoors as they did twenty years ago, which we know has a direct impact on how those same children will view the environment over the course of their lives. According to Wells & Lekies (2006), the most direct route to caring for the

environment as an adult is participating in activities in nature at a young age.This is why Camp Talahi sees the need to target school-aged youth and provide them with a hands-on, out of classroom experience in a natural environment.

The overall goals of Nature's Classroom are to provide children with self-development skills and a sense of environmental stewardship. The program does this through a platform of outdoor education. The long-term outcomes of these goals will provide children with the confidence and social skills to succeed in the classroom as well as giving them the knowledge and motivation to make the environment a pillar in their lives.

SELF DEVELOPMENT

Children will be given many opportunities to improve social skills in activities that focus on confidence building, team-work, and leadership. These activities include the Low-Ropes Adventure Course, Horse Led Leadership Workshop, and Geodome Building.

> *The Low-Ropes Adventure Course* is designed to challenge youth to complete obstacles in a cooperative manor which builds problem solving skills and trust among the group. This course is guided by a trained staff member and is customized for each age-group to ensure safety.
>
> *The Horse Led Leadership Workshop* is provided by Camp Talahi's partner, Horse Powered People. The campers will be exposed to a program that teaches them the structure and psychology behind horse herds. The children will then be led by trained professionals through various activities that teach them leadership skills and confidence through close interaction with horses.
>
> *Geodome Building* is a team activity that teaches campers team work, geometry, physics, and survival skills. Small-groups must work together to use ropes, logs, and knot tying to construct a geometric structure large enough to support the entire group.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Our most precious resource is the Camp Talahi property. This property has 127 acres of preserved land including trails, meadows, marshes, and a semi-private lake. This unique landscape provides for the ability to give youth a hands-on environmental science education. We provide this education through activities such as Predator vs. Prey, The Water Cycle, Nature Prints, Habitat Hunt, and many more.

> *Predator vs. Prey*, our version of "tag" is a great way for youth to understand the food chain and the interrelationship of all living things.
>
> *The Water Cycle* is a hands-on lesson that takes students through the steps of evaporation, condensation, precipitation, and collection.

Nature Prints allows students to appreciate the beauty of nature through arts and crafts. Students go out on our property and locate small pieces of nature that interest them, they then use ink to create beautiful art prints to take home and share with their families.

Habitat Hunt is an ecology focused scavenger hunt where students go out onto the property and locate the 4 different habitats where wildlife live: Lake, Bog, Forest, and Meadow. They also learn what Michigan species live in these habitats and which ones are on the threatened or endangered species lists and how to support this wildlife.

NATURE'S CLASSROOM TIMELINE:

August 2017: Begin marketing for Nature's Classroom 2018 dates
August- April 2017: Connect with local schools, Girl and Boy Scout troops, and day cares to book at least eight groups during this time.
May 2017-August 2017: Continue booking groups for Nature's Classroom but focus on summer programming.
September-December 2017: Post staff job listing on various outlets including Indeed and LinkedIn.
January 2018: Hire staff members
February-March 2018: Collect materials for programming
April 2018: Prepare facilities for groups, finalize programming plans & schedules, and train NC's staff on location.
April/May 2018: Host Nature's Classroom groups on Camp Talahi property.
June 2018: Complete final evaluation report.

Describe the active involvement of constituents in defining problems to be addressed, making policy, and/or planning the program:

Since Nature's Classroom will start off as a small-scale program, with a goal of eight groups, program staff is willing to meet one-on-one with the group's coordinator to discuss the specific interests of the youth that will be participating as well as expectations the leaders have for the program.

Under previous ownership, Nature's Classroom was run using similar programming. This is an advantage because as part of Camp Talahi's policies, past participants were asked to fill evaluation forms out after each session. The Nature's Classroom Director will have full access to these forms in order to asses the program and make improvements for the re-launch.

The evaluation form includes questions to gauge participants interests in activities as well as their opinions of the amenities offered to them. Question types include Likert Scale, short answer, and rating scale.

Here are sample questions from the Nature's Classroom evaluation form:

What was your favorite activity?

What was your least favorite activity?

What is the most interesting thing you learned?

Did you learn something new about a friend while at Nature's Classroom? Yes/No

Did you make a new friend while at Nature's Classroom? Yes/No

Did you feel safe during your time at Camp Talahi? Yes/No

The facilities were clean: 1) strongly agree 2) somewhat agree 3) neutral 4) somewhat disagree 5) strongly disagree

How would you rate your overall experience? 1) good 2) fair 3) poor 4) very poor

Many studies say that youth are much more likely to absorb information if they enjoy the environment they are learning in. Therefore, future staff will use answers from these forms, specifically from the activities portion, to ensure that staff plans activities that the youth enjoy learning from.

After re-launching the program, staff will be sure to observe, engage in dialogue, and provide a pre/post survey to future clients to ensure the continued evolution of the program. There is always more to learn from those directly impacted by our services.

Describe the target population and how they will benefit:

The target population for Nature's Classroom is school-aged youth from Early Childhood through 5th grade. This age group was chosen based on the level of self development that happens at that young age both with their peers and in relation to how they view the environment.Youth will benefit from 1.) environmental education and 2.) increased social skills.

1.) Through our programming described above, youth will be given a brief overview of environmental education. This level of hands-on environmental education is not usually found in tradition classrooms due to lack of preserved natural spaces. Our hopes is that this jump-starts interest in the students and will allow them to make their own informed decisions about the Earth and our impact as humans upon it.

Our programs also explore scientific concepts that youth may take back to the classroom and to their everyday lives. These concepts include measuring, state of matter, and homeostasis. By understanding these topics, children will be able to apply them to other subjects as well such as math, physics, and biology.

2.) Increased social skills such as self-confidence, team-building, and leadership will allow children to expand their opportunities at home or in school. Children that have these skills will feel more comfortable socializing with their peers, taking on responsibility, and being active in their communities.

Are there other partners in this program? If so, what are their roles?

DEARBORN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dearborn Public School District participated in Nature's Classroom in the past by sending 3-5 school groups per year to our Nature's Classroom program. Continuing a partnership with DPS will be essential to meet our goal of 8 groups in the first season.

LOCAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CHURCHES

Bethel UCC, Emanuel UCC, and Pinckney UCC have all historically supported Camp Talahi in any programs that we have offered. Combined they send about 50 children to our Summer Camp program each summer. We have confidence based on our long-term relationship with these churches that they will also support us with the Nature's Classroom program by sending youth groups or vacation bible school groups to participate.

HORSE POWERED PEOPLE

H.P.P. is a 501(c)3 dedicated to inspiring individuals to achieve their peak potential as human beings through development of life enhancing skills using horses as an education platform. Their work at Camp Talahi includes providing leadership, non-verbal communication, and teamwork skill-building workshops to our Nature's Classroom groups at a discounted rate.

Acknowledge similar existing programs or agencies. Explain how your program differs and if there is an effort to work collaboratively with organizations with a similar mission/ program.:

There are three major agencies that provide similar services in the Livingston County area; Kensington Metro Park, Howell Nature Center, and Wildwood Ranch.

KENSINGTON METRO PARK

Kensington Metro Park offers a purely recreational experience through programs and events such as hay rides, festivals, and night hikes. Nature's Classroom on the other hand uses recreation as a platform to explore education topics like science, math, and history.

For example, Nature's Classroom uses classic recreational activities like a scavenger hunt and turns it into an ecology related activity called Habitat Hunt where children search for the four major habitats and identify local wildlife. Nature's Classroom also turns a traditional game of tag into a game of Predator vs. Prey to teach the basics of the food chain.

HOWELL NATURE CENTER

Howell Nature Center and Nature's Classroom offer similar outdoor education programming, but Nature's Classroom provides a more private experience for our participants. Howell Nature Center has multiple groups on site at one time as well as other programming. Nature's Classroom's strength is providing participants with a private experience which allows for strong community building and a feeling of seclusion.

When Nature's Classroom groups arrive on site, they are the only group on property until the time they leave. This allows for the group to enjoy getting to know each other in total

seclusion from the outside world. There are no other groups to interfere or share the facilities with. It also allows the staff to focus solely on the group at hand which leads to deeper customization.

The property is also unique in that there are minimal buildings and structures on property to increase a sense of immersion in nature. In main camp there are sleeper cabins for participants and staff, a health cabin, a small store, and one community building. Only the necessities are located on-site in order to instill a sense of tradition and minimalism to the program.

WILDWOOD RANCH

The Wildwood Ranch offers two distinct outdoor education programs. The first option is based on wildlife and includes live animals from Michigan habitats. The second option is "Living History" which includes a presentation and Q & A with a person portraying a French fur trader from the 1700s.

Nature's Classroom provides lessons on wildlife and history (Habitat Hunt, Beeswax Candle Making, etc.) but also explores other subjects. Children learn geometry and physics by building a Geodome, they learn survival skills in our Staying Alive activity, and learn practical skills like fishing!

Provide your fundraising plan, including the total goal, the specific corporation goal and program expenses.:

We are requesting the $21,400 as a start-up fund for the Nature's Classroom program. It is Camp Talahi's intentions that within the next few years we can rely less on the DTE Energy Foundation and more on other sources of funding. In order to be able to support Nature's Classroom on our own we plan to build on our Annual Appeal goal for the next year, identify three major donors over the next two years and continue grant seeking.

Below is a modest budget for the upcoming program, Nature's Classroom. The program will run for 6 weeks from May 2018- June 2018 and will serve approximately 160 area youth. In order to ensure that the program runs successfully we need to invest in marketing/promotion, staffing, programming materials, and facilities.

Nature's Classroom Budget 2018

*Budget omitted for privacy purposes. In this section, there would be an overall program budget for Nature's Classroom as well as a budget rationale.

State the long-term strategy for funding this program. Specify plans for when support from DTE Energy/DTE Energy Foundation ends.:

Camp Talahi is requesting $21,400 from the DTE Energy Foundation as a start-up fee. This means that after the first season of this program, it is expected that Camp Talahi will be able to fund Nature's Classroom through other sources based on the new funding plan:

*Budget for future funding plan is omitted for privacy purposes. In this section there would be a new funding plan for Nature's Classroom in the future seasons which includes annual campaign efforts and other grant awards.

In the past, Camp Talahi's income relied heavily on registration fees and rental fees as seen in the attached current Operating Budget. While these are steady streams of income for Camp Talahi, we recognize that relying so heavily on fees is not a best practice for a nonprofit and does not at this time generate enough revenue to support Nature's Classroom. The Executive Director and Board of Directors realizes that individual donations and grant-seeking are both necessary to become more financially stable.

About 70% of charitable giving in the U.S is from individual donors but currently only 6% of Camp Talahi's revenue comes from individual donations. In order to better target individual donors we plan to increase our Annual Campaign funds by 100% within the next fiscal year, and cultivate three major gifts within the next three years. The * from next year's Annual Campaign will be used to run Nature's Classroom. The three major gifts may be used to run future programming.

Our organization also recognizes that we have underutilized grant-seeking as a strategy. Recently, a volunteer has committed to take on the task of applying to at least five other foundations to receive * of funding for Nature's Classroom in the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

INDIVIDUAL DONOR PLAN

*Individual Donor Plan omitted for privacy purposes. The IDP would include specific objectives to reach the three goals listed above.

GRANT-SEEKING PLAN

A member of the Camp Talahi community has stepped up to volunteer with fund development on the Fundraising Committee. This individual has received accreditation as a Certified Nonprofit Professional (CNP) and has practical experience with grant writing, event planning, and donor relations.

The Executive Director and Fundraising Committee members have expressed commitment to working with this volunteer to strengthen our current donor relations and to provide any information necessary for the individual to submit grants on behalf of the organization. This decision was made because through research, we have found that "youth development" and "outdoor education" are both subjects that many local foundations, corporations, and businesses are passionate about.

This individual will seek out Requests for Proposals that match Nature's Classroom's mission and goals. Out of the many organizations that support this type of programming, the individual will find five that best fit our funding needs and apply within the next fiscal year. By this grant-seeking strategy we plan to receive * to fund Nature's Classroom in the 2018-2019 year.

By using this fund development plan, we are confident that if we receive start-up funds from DTE, we will be able to support Nature's Classroom in future years through other funding sources. This fundraising plan will change over time hopefully increasing in stable individual

donations and decreasing in grant-seeking as we recognize that most grant awards are only temporary. Eventually, Camp Talahi will be able to fully support Nature's Classroom on a yearly basis.

List the sources with amounts (foundations, corporations, individuals, government entities) you are requesting from others for your program/organization.:

For Nature's Classroom, our partners Horse Powered People are providing us with a $40 discount per person. With an expected 20 participants per 8 groups this will total in $6,400 of in-kind donations for the 2018 season.

As mentioned in the fundraising plan, we have set goals in individual donations and grant-seeking opportunities so that in future years we can become more financially stable and utilize multiple sources of income for Nature's Classroom.

Provide a clear example of how your organization has increased efficiency so that you are ensuring every dollar is being fully utilized to achieve your mission.:

*Some names have been omitted in this section for privacy purposes.

Camp Talahi has drastically improved efficiency since the foundation in 2012 through finding a hard-working, diverse board of directors that are willing to offer their skills and experiences to constantly improve the organization as a whole. This past year, Camp Talahi has also hired an Executive Director (E.D) that has taken charge of all administrative tasks. There are two key factors to Camp Talahi using resources efficiently; one is the Finance Committee and two is the system of checks and balances put in place for the Executive Director, Board of Directors, and Committee members to ensure that all funds are being used to the fullest extent.

The Finance Committee is in charge of creating a yearly operating budget, properly distributing non-restricted and restricted funds, and monitoring fund development. The head of the Finance Committee is Robert *. Robert * has been a regional sales manager at Little Caesars for over ten years. With his experience of setting monetary goals, tracking accounts, and budgeting, Robert is confident in leading this committee.

The Finance Committee allots thousands of dollars to programs and events; to ensure that our investments are successful the programs must run efficiently. Camp Talahi ensures that the Executive Director, Board of Directors, and Committee Chairs are all constantly working towards our goals through a system of checks and balances.

Each program has specific goals set by the Board of Directors and it is the Executive Director's responsibility to ensure that these goals are met. To do this, the Executive Director gives each Committee Chair a set of objectives related to the specific committee which helps the organization as a whole reach their goal. The Committee Chairs will then assign tasks to committee members. Committee Chairs track progress and check in with the E.D monthly and the E.D checks in with the Board of Directors during monthly meetings.

To provide an example for this process, the goal for the 2018 Summer Camp program is to have 300 camper registrations for the eight week season. In this case, the Executive Director will take this goal, break it down into tangible objectives, and assign them to each committee. An

objective for the Marketing Committee may be to attend 10 local community events in the off-season to market the program or to receive 100 registrations by a set deadline.

Camp Talahi will function the same way with Nature's Classroom. If granted the funds, the Finance Committee will monitor the budget to ensure that funds are being used properly. The Executive Director and Committee Chairs will ensure that the funds are being used to meet the overall goals through detailed planning and completion of objectives.

Provide donor recognition opportunities in date order.:

The DTE Energy Foundation will be featured on all promotional materials which are slated to begin distribution in September of 2017. According to the marketing plan these materials will include physical brochures and fliers as well as Mailchimp and Facebook advertisements.

This information will be sent to all previously hosted groups, Early Childhood and Elementary schools in Livingston County, local homeschool groups, church groups, and daycares. There will also be paid ads in the local newspapers.

The DTE Energy Foundation's logo will be posted on the Camp Talahi's website (camptalahi.org) and kept year round as a major sponsor starting in September 2017.

Provide related production/media deadlines.:

All media requests will need to be fulfilled the month before production. In this case, the DTE Energy Foundation would need to send a logo for placement on promotional materials and a banner for online use by the end of August 2017.

Describe plans for evaluating the program including how success will be defined and measured.:

Nature's Classroom will be evaluated quantitatively and qualitatively through meeting our pre-set quantitative goals and by disseminating a pre/post survey to all participants and teachers/chaperones/parents.

Quantitative Goals:

- Reach 66% capacity for the Nature's Classroom program- Host at least 8 groups with 20 children each, totaling 160 children.
- 50% of the groups stay for the maximum of two days and one night.
- 75% of the groups express interest to return for the next Nature's Classroom season.
- 30% of the children's guardians contact Camp Talahi for more information on other programs offered.
- 50% of participants complete the pre/post survey.*
- 30% of teachers/chaperones complete the pre/post survey.**

* The pre-program survey for children will gauge their interest in environmental topics/nature. The post-program survey for children will be the same survey as well as questions to gauge their thoughts on the activities they participated in through the program. Post survey to be

distributed on-site. If children are incapable of filling out a form due to young age, the Nature's Classroom Director will take a straw poll with show of hands and take notes.

** The pre-program survey for teachers/chaperones/parents will inquire about group dynamics before the program. The post-program survey for teachers/chaperones/parents will inquire about group dynamics after the program. Post survey to be distributed via e-mail one month later.

Qualitative Goals (as measured by pre/post surveys):

- Increased interest in nature shown in the classroom or at home.
- Increased sense of community within the classroom.
- Increased participation in the classroom.
- Increased interest in participating in science activities in the classroom.

Describe how you will use and/or disseminate the evaluation results and, if appropriate, how you will replicate the program?:

After the Nature's Program season is completed, a final evaluation report will be constructed by the Nature's Classroom Director with assistance from the Executive Director. This report will be completed by August 2018.

The final evaluation report will be disseminated when requested by any of our sponsors, community partners, potential donors, or potential Nature's Classroom groups. Information may also be used for marketing purposes in the next year.

Replication of the program will be made possible because in the occurrence that staff changes over the years, the Nature's Classroom Director and Executive Director of Camp Talahi will have created a strict curriculum to follow with a detailed manual which will include instructions, material lists, and policies/guidelines for Nature's Classroom. Future staff will also have access to the pre/post surveys in order to make further improvements.

Describe how you will actively involve clients/constituents in evaluating the program.:

We believe that the truest way to evaluate a program is by direct feedback from clients. In this case, the clients will fill out a pre/post survey. As described above, the pre/post surveys will focus on group dynamics, participation, and interest in the environment.The answers to the pre/post surveys will allow staff and the Camp Talahi board to asses whether or not the goals of the Nature's Classroom program have been reached.

If further information is needed, the Nature's Classroom Director will reach out to participating groups and speak with the group leader to further clarify what can be improved or what was done well. These changes will then be implemented into the curriculum for future years.