



PROCLAMATION

BOROUGH OF RED BANK

STUDENT ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES & LEADERS (SEAL) PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the SEAL program offers eligible high school students a unique leadership learning experience focused on local environmental issues. SEAL students collaborate with peers across Monmouth County through bi-monthly group training sessions, to learn the basics of community grassroots activism and advocacy, and how it can be achieved in their own schools' communities; and

WHEREAS, topics presented in the training sessions, featuring experts in that field, include, but are not limited to civics and the voting system, environmental justice, water quality, environmental careers, recycling crisis, and watershed mindfulness; and

WHEREAS, students make connections from the lessons to their local communities and learn to make real change through problem-based learning. In addition, guest speakers, including elected officials, advocates, and activists speak to the students to discuss successful strategies and campaigns to add real world context to the learning; and

WHEREAS, SEAL students identify an environmental issue of concern in their communities. They develop and implement projects to engage their communities in solving this environmental issue. They work on outreach and communication and learn how to overcome hurdles and roadblocks, depending on existing connections and forming new connections – from members of their community to their fellow SEAL student peers. SEAL students enhance their leadership skills by seeing a project all the way through and end the program with something to show for their hard work and commitment; and

WHEREAS, the Monmouth County SEAL Program is 37 students strong and among them is Red Bank's own Samantha Flores-Castillo, the only SEAL student to be part of the initiative for three years; and

WHEREAS, Samantha worked with alongside the Red Bank Environmental Commission to champion the newly enacted legislation, "Skip the Stuff," an ordinance to reduce the amount of single use items for delivery and take out items in Red Bank; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, William Portman, Mayor of the Borough of Red Bank, on behalf of a proud Council and Community do hereby acknowledge and applaud the Student Environmental Advocates & Leaders (Seal) Program for their efforts to protect waterways using science, law, research, education, and citizen action.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 9th day of May 2024.



William Portman, Mayor