

Students Get Dollars and Sense in Lexus Eco Challenge - \$500, 000 Awarded to Teams Who Learn About Environment and Community Empowerment

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TORRANCE, Calif., (Feb. 24, 2014) – It’s a win, win situation! Communities become a better place, and students, teachers and schools have the chance to share \$500,000 in scholarships and grants through the Lexus Eco Challenge.

This year, the \$30,000 Grand Prize winners are the Pinelands Eco Scienceers from Little Egg Harbor, New Jersey, and the E.T. Electrical Team from Byron Center, Michigan.

The Lexus Eco Challenge is an educational program and contest that inspires and empowers young people to learn about the environment and take action to improve it. High school and middle school teams nationwide define an environmental issue that is important to them, develop an action plan to address the issue, implement the plan, and report on the results.

The Pineland Eco Scienceers from Pinelands Regional High School focused on reducing deforestation in third world countries. They developed a machine that presses locally found combustible materials into briquettes to use as an alternative to cutting trees for cooking fuel.

The winning middle school, Byron Center West, earned money to send water filters to Haiti and the Philippines to help local villages create a more sustainable environment.

For their efforts, the students, teacher advisor and school each get a part of the \$30,000 prize. Students share \$20,000 in scholarships while their teacher receives a \$3,000 grant and the school earns \$7,000.

Additionally, eight First Place winning teams will receive \$15,000 each.

More than 1,500 students participated in the 2013-2014 Lexus Eco Challenge. Thirty-two middle and high school teams each received \$10,000 for their programs in the Land/Water or Air/Climate challenges. For the final challenge, all 32 finalist teams were asked to reach beyond the local community and inspire environmental action around the world through innovative ideas that are communicated to a wide audience.

The grand prize and first place teams that best addressed environmental challenges are:

Final Challenge Winners

State, City

School Name

Team Name

Project Summary

High School Grand Prize Winner

NJ – Little Egg Harbor
Pinelands Regional High School

Pinelands Eco Scienceers

Designed, made and distributed low-cost briquette presses to rural villages where deforestation is occurring at an alarming rate.

High School First Prize Winners

CA – La Crescenta
Clark Magnet High School

The Enviros

Researched and monitored footage of the marine environment to create story maps and a PSA about the global issues of marine debris.

FL – Newberry Newberry High School	The NHS Renewables	Created a lesson plan and comic book with superheroes to educate children on the importance of caring for their environment.
MO – St. Louis Parkway North High School	Team WasteBusters	Planted air-pruned trees around the community to increase the potential growth rate of trees and built a vermicomposter that recycled nutrients. Created a public relations and education campaign to spread the word beyond their community
PA – Birdsboro Daniel Boone Area High School	Go Clean, Go Green, Gooooo Algae!	across the U.S. and globally that renewable algae-based biofuels are a sustainable replacement for nonrenewable crude oil- based fuels.

Middle School Grand Prize Winner

MI – Byron Center Byron Center West Middle School	Team E.T.	Fundraised to send water filters to Haiti, Philippines and Kenya and help build a well in Haiti.
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Middle School First Prize Winners

AZ – Phoenix All Saints’ Episcopal Day School	Eco Tigers	Used recycled market shopping bags to make jump ropes and crochet bags for a school in Haiti. Minimized food waste by creating a cookbook of recipes that utilized at least one leftover food item.
MI – Whitehall Whitehall Middle School	iCompost@WMS	Diverted 80% of cafeteria trash from going to the landfill by creating worm bins for classrooms and encouraged composting at home.
NC – Chapel Hill Guy B. Phillips Middle School	Trash Terminators 2.0	

TX – Whiteface
Whiteface Middle School

Arsenic Arresters

Distributed an
inexpensive water filter
for use in India.

Over seven years, the Lexus Eco Challenge has awarded more than \$4 million in scholarships. More than 26,000 middle and high school students have positively impacted their communities, learned about the environment and improved their teamwork skills.

The Lexus Eco Challenge also includes educational materials created and distributed by Scholastic, the global children’s publishing, education and media company, to encourage teachers to integrate creative lesson plans about the environment into their classrooms. For each challenge, the Web site (www.scholastic.com/lexus) has lesson plans and teacher instructions, including questions to help guide a discussion about the current challenge topic, facts about the topic, and guidelines for a specific classroom project.

The Lexus Eco Challenge is part of [The Lexus Pursuit of Potential](#), a philanthropic initiative that generates up to \$3 million in donations each year for organizations that help build, shape and improve children’s lives.

Lexus will open the 2014-2015 Eco Challenge this fall. Students and teachers can participate in the “Land/Water” or “Air/Climate” challenges for a chance to win a portion of the \$500,000 prize money.

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