

Call for Entries: \$500K Lexus Eco Challenge Kicks Off

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TORRANCE, Calif., Sept. 3, 2013 – Some people think teenagers only care about their cell phones and weekend plans. However, the teenagers who participate in the [Lexus Eco Challenge](#) prove that they are dedicated to making the world a better place for future generations.

Since the Lexus Eco Challenge began in 2007, 25,000 middle and high school students have earned \$4 million for themselves, their teachers and their schools by creating unique environmental programs. Starting today, the challenge is on for students to vie for a share of \$500K in scholarships and grants. Lexus and Scholastic Inc., the global children's publishing, education and media company, have partnered to create this STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) program.

The Lexus Eco Challenge is an annual contest for teens across the U.S. in grades 6–12. Teams of students can enter challenges focused on Land/Water or Air/Climate. Winners from the first two challenges then go on to participate in the Final Challenge with a top prize of \$30K for both the winning middle school and high school teams.

“The Lexus Eco Challenge is an integral part of the environmental studies curriculum at our school,” said Ashlie Beals, teacher advisor for the 2011 grand prize-winning team called the ‘One-Towel Wonders.’” “For the past six years, all of my 8th grade students have worked in teams to create and implement innovative campaigns to encourage others to make one small change that can have a large positive impact on our environment.”

The Challenge Elements

1. Standards-based supplementary educational materials encourage teachers to integrate creative lesson plans into their classrooms to help teach students about the environment.
2. Competition to reward environmental action helps young people apply what they've learned in class through the program and empowers them to make improvements in their community by participating in the environmental team challenges.

Beals adds, “During the Challenge, students sharpen their oral and written communication skills, utilize many forms of technology, and work together actively and enthusiastically to solve real-life problems. My younger students eagerly look forward to their chance to participate in the Challenge when they are in 8th grade. I can't thank Lexus and Scholastic enough for offering this tremendous opportunity to my students.”

“We're pleased to see the Lexus Eco Challenge helps inspire teens to improve the world around them,” says Jeff Bracken, Lexus group vice president and general manager. “It further opens their eyes to environmental issues in their communities and gives them the experience and confidence to take action to improve those issues.”

The Challenges and Rewards

The Lexus Eco Challenge registration is open now and will conclude with the announcement of the first-place and grand-prize-winning teams in spring 2014. Middle and high school teams, comprised of 5–10 students and a teacher advisor, are invited to define an environmental issue that is important to them, develop an action plan to address the issue, implement the plan, and report the results. Submission deadlines are: Challenge #1

(Land/Water) – Oct. 7, 2013 and Challenge #2 (Air/Climate) – Nov. 11, 2013.

Each of the challenges will have 16 winning teams – eight middle school and eight high school teams. The winning teams will each receive a total of \$10,000 in scholarships and grants to be shared among the students, teacher and school. In addition, the winning action plans will be featured on a special webpage to inspire other students to take action in their communities.

In early January, the winning teams from the first two challenges will be invited to participate in the Final Challenge. Teams will be asked to reach beyond the local community and inspire environmental action around the world through innovative ideas that are communicated to a wide audience. From the Final Challenge entries, eight first-place teams and two grand-prize-winning teams will be selected. Each of the eight first-place teams will receive a total of \$15,000 in grants and scholarships, and the two grand-prize-winning teams will each receive \$30,000. The money will be shared by the students, their teacher advisors and their schools.

Teachers are encouraged to visit <http://www.scholastic.com/lexus> to learn how they can take part and to review the Official Rules. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Void where prohibited.

Lexus' Environmental Efforts

Lexus is the luxury hybrid leader with five low-emission hybrid vehicles available. When Lexus began selling hybrids in 2005, it helped advance the concept of sustainability without sacrifice. 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.