

Teens Changing Their World and Ours: \$500,000 in Eco Grants and Scholarships Awarded

March 21, 2013

TORRANCE, Calif., March 21, 2013 – From California to New York, student teams were recognized today for making the world a better place by improving the environment. A total of \$500,000 in scholarships and grants was awarded to teens, teachers and schools.

Two Grand Prize winners earned \$30,000 each, and eight First Place winning teams were awarded \$15,000 each. “The Elymenators” from Arlington High School in Lagrangeville, New York, and the “Eco Hawks” from Hanahan Middle School in Hanahan, South Carolina, were the Grand Prize winners. “The Elymenators” took on the spread of Lyme Disease both in their community and around the world while the “Eco Hawks” aimed to inspire the government and residents of South Carolina to improve its low recycling rate. For their efforts, each Grand Prize winner will receive \$30,000, of which the school will receive a grant for \$7,000, the teacher advisor will get a \$3,000 grant, and the students will share \$20,000 in scholarships.

Since the program was created, the Lexus Eco Challenge has awarded \$4.5 million in scholarships and grants to empower middle and high school students to learn about the environment and take action to improve it.

“The Lexus Eco Challenge encourages teens to start local and then go global. All ten of these winning teams brought their idea to a larger audience to make a positive impact in the world,” said Mark Templin, Lexus group vice president and general manager. “Through this program, nearly 30,000 participants have learned that their passion and commitment can make a difference in the world. It’s a lesson they can take with them the rest of their lives.”

The eight First Place teams each won \$15,000 with \$3,000 for the school, \$2,000 for the teacher advisor and \$10,000 in scholarships for the students. The winning teams were:

- **California (La Crescenta) – “Riptides” – Clark Magnet High School** – Created a native plant garden at their school and partnered with an environmental group to grow seeds to be planted in national parks.
- **Florida (Newberry) – “Climate Control Corps” – Newberry High School** — Focused on reducing carbon dioxide emissions through community outreach and building a solar water heater.
- **Massachusetts (Boston) – “Real Cost Calculators” – Boston Latin School** –Developed an on-line service learning tool to help consumers evaluate the “big picture” toll when purchasing everyday items.
- **Michigan (Harper Woods) – “ECKH20 Preservers” – Harper Woods Secondary School** – Worked with teachers all over the world to share ideas on improving water quality.
- **New Jersey (Jersey City) – “Project Reservoir” – Christa McAuliffe School** – Developed the “Put a Hole In It” campaign to help drain trash cans and reduce the mosquito population.
- **Ohio (Chester) – “Take Charge Team” – West Geauga High School** – Evaluated the process of fracking and its impact on the water supply in their own community, as well as in rural Guatemala.
- **Texas (McKinney) – “Green Our School” – Evans Middle School** – Installed energy tiles in their school and district, as well as created a smartphone app that calculates energy use.
- **Utah (Holladay) – “Kookaburras” – Olympus Junior High School** – Rallied the community to build houses for native birds in the state.

This year's winners emerged from more than 400 registered teams representing nearly 3,000 middle and high school students nationwide. The 10 winners were selected from 32 teams that qualified to enter the Final Challenge by winning in one or both of the two previous Challenges that were held from September to February. The earlier phases of the contest, which required teams to address the topics of land, water, air or climate, challenged teams to make a difference for the environment in their local communities. The Final Challenge asked teams to reach beyond the local community and inspire environmental action around the world.

In addition to the ongoing contest, the Lexus Eco Challenge also includes educational materials designed by Scholastic to encourage teachers to integrate creative lesson plans into their classrooms to help teach students about the environment. 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 will enter its seventh year in fall 2013. Teachers and students are encouraged to visit www.scholastic.com/lexus to view all the winning entries and to learn how they can take part in the next challenge.