

Lexus Eco Challenge First-Round Winners Take Environmental Commitment to a New Level

December 11, 2012

TORRANCE, Calif., Dec. 11, 2012 – Students from across the country are showing they can change the world, starting with their local community. Sixteen student teams from 11 states have been named winners in the first round of the sixth annual Lexus Eco Challenge, an educational program and contest that inspires and empowers young people to learn about the environment and take action to improve it. Lexus will award a total of \$500,000 in grants and scholarships throughout this year’s program.

Each winning high-school or middle school team has earned \$10,000 in scholarships and grants to be shared among the students, teacher and school. Their win has secured each team an invitation to participate in the Final Challenge for a chance at one of two \$30,000 grand prizes and eight \$15,000 first-place awards. In addition, the winning action plans will be featured on a special Web page to inspire other students to take action in their communities at www.scholastic.com/lexus.

“Creating a better world takes passionate people and the Lexus Eco Challenge is helping students find that passion at an early age,” said [Mark Templin](#), Lexus group vice president and general manager. “By looking closely at the world around them, and taking steps to improve their environment, students gain a new perspective and develop the tools they need to make a positive impact throughout their lives.”

For each of the challenges, teams are required to 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 Challenge #1 winning teams that best addressed environmental challenges associated with land and water are:

High School Teams:

- **California (La Crescenta) – "The EcoNarcs" – Clark Magnet High** – Researched the negative environmental effects of illegal marijuana growers.
- **California (Roseville) – "The Green Bandits" – Woodcreek High** – Built worm bins to experiment with vermicomposting.
- **Florida (Hollywood) – "McArthur Techletes" – McArthur High School** – Developed a water conservation program for their community.
- **Florida (Miami) – "Trophic Troopers" – Miami Palmetto** – Addressed the effects of electronics disposal in landfills on water quality.
- **Massachusetts (Boston) "Conservation Nation" – Boston Latin School** — Created a school-wide food composting pilot program for the Boston Public Schools.
- **Missouri (Eureka) – "Honeysuckle Hunters" – Eureka High** – Conducted a nature study and removed non-native honeysuckle from a creek near their school.
- **New York (LaGrangeville) – "Elymenators" – Arlington High** — Evaluated how Lyme Disease affects biodiversity in their community.
- **Ohio (West Geauga) – "The Take Charge Team" – West Geauga High** – Established a program to keep batteries out of local landfills.

Middle School Teams:

- **Florida (Lakeland) – “Can You HEAR Me Now?” – Lawton Chiles Middle Academy**– Collected hearing aids to prevent them from going into landfills.
- **Florida (Lakeland) – “Pesticide Awareness Team” – Lawton Chiles Middle Academy** — Presented educational programs to promote the proper use of pesticides.
- **Iowa (Charles City) – “The Green Team” – Charles City Middle School** – Coordinated an electronics drive to keep harmful items out of landfills.
- **Michigan (Harper Woods) – “ECKH20 Preservers” – Harper Woods Middle School** – Studied water quality of the Great Lakes.
- **New Jersey (Jersey City) – “Project Reservoir” – Christa McAuliffe School** – Studied natural ways to decrease mosquito populations in a local reservoir.
- **New Jersey (New Egypt) – “Eco-Warriors for the World” – New Egypt Middle School** — Launched a food composting program at their school. .
- **Utah (Holladay) – “R4E: Recycle for the Earth” – Olympus Jr. High** – Raised awareness to the importance of recycling.
- **Utah (Holladay) – “Kookaburras” – Olympus Jr. High** – Made birdhouses to assist native birds from non-native species to protect biodiversity.

This year’s Lexus Eco Challenge launched in September and concludes with the announcement of the first place and grand-prize-winning teams in spring 2013. Challenge #2, which asks students to address the environmental challenges for air and climate, is currently underway and has an entry deadline of Dec. 17, 2012.

In addition to the ongoing contest, 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.

###