

Call For Entries: \$500k Lexus Eco Challenge Revs Up

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TORRANCE, Calif., (Sept. 25, 2012) – Young people are committed to making a difference in the world, and for the sixth year, their efforts will be rewarded through the Lexus Eco Challenge. An educational program and contest, the Lexus Eco Challenge has inspired and empowered more than 22,000 middle and high school students to learn about the environment and take action to improve it. For their efforts, more than \$3.5 million has been awarded to students, teachers and schools across the nation. This fall, students are invited to participate for a chance to win part of \$500,000 in grants and scholarships. Lexus, the luxury automaker, has once again joined with Scholastic Inc., the global children’s publishing, education and media company, to create the eco-friendly educational school program.

“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 five 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. 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.”

The Challenge has two distinct elements:

- Standards-based supplementary educational materials – encourages teachers to integrate creative lesson plans into their classrooms to help teach students about the environment.
- 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.

"Year after year students tell us that the Lexus Eco Challenge helped them learn how to improve the environment," said Mark Templin, Lexus group vice president and general manager. "But they say the most important aspect of the competition is the revelation that they can make a difference. That knowledge and experience will be powerful as their generation takes responsibility for making decisions about the environment."

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 2013. Middle and high school teams, comprised of 5-10 students and a teacher advisor, are invited to participate in one or both of the two initial challenges, each addressing different environmental elements – land/water and air/climate.

For each of the challenges, teams 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. 29, 2012 and Challenge #2 (air/climate) – Dec. 17, 2012.

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 Web page 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.

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.

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