

Lexus and Scholastic Announce First Round of Winners in the 2010-2011 Lexus Eco Challenge

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Challenge #2 (Air/Climate) Entries Due January 19, 2011

TORRANCE, Calif., January 6, 2011 – Sixteen student teams from 11 states have been named winners in the first round of the fourth 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.

Students across the country demonstrated their commitment to the planet with programs aimed at protecting land and water. Each winning 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.

“It's great to see so many different ways the students have delved into their projects,” said Mark Templin, Lexus group vice president and general manager. “This goes to show that there is a never-ending supply of environmental issues and these students are finding many unique and exceptional ways to take action and improve our environment.”

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:

- New York (LaGrangeville) – “Team CORAL” – Arlington High – Focused on loss of biodiversity, specifically coral reefs. Thoroughly researched coral propagation techniques and propagated coral. Coral fragments were donated to local pet stores and traded with marine aquaria enthusiasts in hopes of preventing any more harm from being done to wild coral. Taught lessons to a marine biology class and created a Facebook group to create awareness.
- New York (LaGrangeville) – “Wet hands in the Wetlands” – Arlington High – Centered on preservation of aquatic habitats and shrinking wetlands. Trapped and monitored the threatened Blanding Turtles. Conducted further research of their wetlands and met with Vassar College professors to further their research. Created awareness via hosting local events and social media.
- Alabama (Hoover) – “Team Cahaba” – Hoover High School – Zeroed in on protecting the species in the Cahaba River by spearheading the 1st Bi-Annual Cahaba River Biodiversity Blitz. The blitz gathered local scientists from universities, students and organizations that spent a day gathering data on the river. Organized a river clean-up to pick up trash along the river and educated the public of their findings via a blog and website.
- North Carolina (Buxton) – “Hatteras Green Eco Team” – Cape Hatteras Secondary School of Coastal Studies – Focused on educating, protecting and preserving Hatteras Island, a fragile barrier island habitat. Created an environmental checklist magnet that was distributed to over 200 rental homes to be placed on refrigerator doors and hosted a “Green Fair” at school with over 320 students and community members in

attendance.

- Oklahoma (Red Rock) – “Recyclinators” – Frontier Public Schools – Organized and promoted recycling of pop cans to address pollution. Collected 7,631 cans district wide. In addition, pop tabs from the cans were collected for the Ronald McDonald House charity.
- Ohio (Chesterland) – “Environmental Discovery Project” – West Geauga High School Proposed, lobbied and helped passage of Spotted Salamander bill into Ohio’s law in order to address Ohio’s disappearing wetlands. Built outdoor classrooms with a rain garden, utilized over 500 gallons of rainwater to water plants, and recycled over 400 chip bags and over 100 pounds of bottles and cans per week.
- California (La Crescenta) – “Eco Savers 2010” – Clark Magnet High School – Addressed the threat to waterways and oceans and its effects on the lobster population, with a specific focus on California spiny lobsters, *Panulirus interruptus*. Recruited divers to donate tissue samples from lobsters, formed partnership with lab at CSU Long Beach to do testing, create maps in ArcGIS and made presentations to the community and schools.
 - Arizona (Chandler) – “Once Upon a Tree” Hamilton Prep – Directed their efforts of preventing desertification by planting trees in Tonto National Forest. Solicited sponsors to donate soil and trees and transported trees for planting. Exceeded their goal and planted 7 trees in the forest. Created a website, Facebook page and handed out fliers throughout the community in order to create awareness.

Middle School Teams:

- New Jersey (Hoboken) – “The Eco Saints” – All Saints Episcopal Day School – Led massive effort in banning plastic bags in their community. Sold 146 Eco-bags at their school, held a Leadership Summit and made presentations to community leaders and city council.
- New Jersey (Manahawkin) – “The Kreepy Krawlers” – All Saints Regional Catholic School – Focused on saving the woodlands, trees and forests from gypsy moths, leaf eating moths. Implemented many experiments and research and created a website to generate awareness in their community and other communities experiencing this on-going issue. Website includes information about the gypsy moths and how to stop an infestation.
 - Florida (Lakeland) – “Eco Med” – Lawton Chiles Middle Academy – Centered on educating the community on eco-friendly ways to dispose of unwanted medicines. Worked with the local police to collect over 180 pounds of unwanted medicines. To educate the community, the team created a video teaching students how to dispose of medicines correctly, launched a Facebook page, ran educational booths and handed out fliers at community events.
 - Florida (Lakeland) – “Eco Wash” – Lawton Chiles Middle Academy – Concentrated on educating the community about eco-friendly ways to wash cars and reduce phosphate pollution in their lakes. Encouraged and educated over 1,000 people to wash cars over their grass which will absorb some of the phosphate or use phosphate free soaps. Generated awareness via posters, a website, YouTube video and community events.
 - Iowa (Charles City) – “Eco Chicks” – Charles City Middle School – Distributed 250 fliers to their community, sent out a press release that reached 44,270 people and created a website that detailed the importance of bees and how to save hives from destruction. The members urged the public to contact local beekeepers to remove the queen and beehive safely, so that the bee population does not get destroyed.
- Michigan (Fruitport) – Fruitport Team Eco – Fruitport Middle School – Took on building a rain garden to address the run-off of water that flowed into their local stream. Water is no longer settling on the school parking lot and flowing to the stream. Raised awareness by speaking to the local media and educating the community on water pollution.
- California (Pasadena) – Lunch Bunch – High Point Academy – Created and implemented a campaign to reduce waste from lunches. With this campaign, the school reduced their trash by 37%.

- California (Hillsborough) – SPEW – The Nueva School – Embarked on raising water conservation awareness. Launched a successful argument against the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission’s effort to divert an extra 25 million gallons of water a day from the Tuolumne into Hetch-Hetchy. Encouraged over 100 students to reduce shower time by one minute each, saving over 500 gallons of water every day. Created an interactive presentation and a website in order to raise awareness.

This year’s Lexus Eco Challenge launched on Sept. 27, 2010, and concludes with the announcement of the first place and grand-prize-winning teams during Earth Month in April 2011. Challenge #2, which asks students to address the environmental challenges for air and climate, is currently underway and has an entry deadline of Jan. 19, 2011.

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 \$5 million in donations each year for organizations that help build, shape and improve children’s lives.

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