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Education Foundation
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Colorado High School Wins National Award for Excellence in Environmental Education

Schools in Chicago and New Haven Win Merit Award Recognition for Their Greening Efforts and Curriculum

Boulder, Colo. – Boulder's New Vista High School (NVHS) has won the 2011 Green Prize in Public Education http://neefusa.org/grants/green_prize.htm, which includes a \$10,000 award and national recognition for the school's comprehensive greening initiatives.

New Vista won the nationwide competition for incorporating the environment into the curricula across all academic disciplines and for supporting environmental learning throughout the school through its Community Adventure Program (CAP), and the work of its Earth Task Force (ETF), initiated by students dedicated to greening their school.

"The unique, replicable and innovative part of the school's greening efforts is that teachers, students and staff have worked in concert together as catalysts toward creating a sustainable school," NVHS said in its submission for the Green Prize, "The ETF and CAP are the twin engines powering NVHS towards sustainability." These initiatives have led to the installation of a variety of resource-saving mechanisms including solar panels, low-flow toilets and vending machine 'misers', and have also led to a series of creative student-led environmental projects including a Green Prom that features alternative transportation, a dress exchange and reusable utensils.

"I am incredibly proud of our community for winning this award. It would not have been possible without the hard work and amazing cooperation between teachers, students, our school and our nonprofit partner, the Cottonwood Institute," said Kirk Quitter, principal. "The interdependence that has been created through these partnerships will ensure that future teachers and students can continue the high-impact, sustainable work that has been taking place at New Vista."

Paige Doughty, teacher and ETF mentor said, "Working with the Earth Task Force has been one of the most joyful experiences of my teaching career. The work that we are doing to create sustainability at our school is my dream of what high-school level environmental education can be."

Two 2011 Green Prize merit awards went to Waters Elementary School in Chicago, Ill. and Common Ground High School in New Haven, Conn.

The National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF, <http://www.neefusa.org>) awards the Green Prize in Public Education to an outstanding public school that best demonstrates success in engaging the entire school as well as the community in greening the curriculum, facilities and grounds to improve student learning and cultivate environmental responsibility. The award winners were announced during Environmental Education Week (EE Week)

<http://www.eeweek.org/>, the single largest national environmental education event in the United States.

“NVHS is a shining example of how environmental education can not only raise awareness about environmental issues, but can lead to real change, a heightened sense of community and, as they noted in their application, ‘create a whole new class of superheroes,’” said NEEF President Diane Wood. “The collaboration between teachers and their students is truly inspiring.”

“These Green Prize winners represent a small fraction of the innovative work being done at schools across the country to advance environmental literacy,” added Wood. “Teachers, students and communities are engaging in project-based learning across multiple academic disciplines that leads to real improvements in their local environments. We look forward to following how these green school initiatives evolve and help to seed the growth of school sustainability efforts nationwide.”

NVHS’s CAP class inspires young people to initiate positive environmental change in their schools and communities by teaching students about local environmental issues, giving them the tools and leadership skills they need to address these issues and challenging them to create a service learning project to tackle the environmental issue of their choice.

Teachers at NVHS are working together to integrate real world applications in their curricula with themes of personal responsibility, civic engagement and stewardship.

2011 Green Prize Merit Award Winners

Waters Elementary School in Chicago, Ill. won a 2011 Green Prize Merit Award in Public Education, which includes a \$5,000 award, for its work in transforming its asphalt-covered campus into a natural green environment that also serves as a medium for ecological education and an inspiration to the community. Waters is serving as a mentor to schools throughout Chicago.

Common Ground High School in New Haven, Conn., one of the nation’s first environmental charter schools also won a 2011 Green Prize Merit Award in Public Education, which includes a \$5,000 award, for creating the next generation of environmental leaders through the work of its school-wide Environmental Leadership Team. The school created its own set of core environmental learning standards and launched a year-long environmental jobs program – a GreenCommon Jobs Corps – that connects students with paid environmental jobs on and off the school site.

In recognition of their exemplary efforts, the National Environmental Education Foundation will award seven additional Green Prize finalist schools a “Go Greener” \$500.00 grant to support continued greening of their schools.

The National Environmental Education Foundation, with major support from the NEA Foundation <http://www.neafoundation.org/> and in partnership with EarthEcho International <http://www.earthecho.org/>, recognizes and celebrates outstanding K-12 public schools that have successfully taken on the challenge of becoming green schools through the Green Prize in Public Education.

This annual prize recognizes an innovative, sustainable and replicable greening initiative in a public school, and the educators and other school community members instrumental to the greening initiatives. A green school should involve and benefit students, educators,

maintenance staff, parents and the local community. Ultimately, a green school increases students' environmental literacy, and empowers and inspires them to be more socially and environmentally responsible.

For more information about the Green Prize in Public Education, visit http://neefusa.org/grants/green_prize.htm.

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Knowledge to Live By

The National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) provides knowledge to trusted professionals who, with their credibility, amplify messages to national audiences to solve everyday environmental problems. Together, we generate lasting positive change. To learn more, call (202) 833-2933 or visit www.neefusa.org.