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Bothell, Wash., Teacher Wins National Environmental Prize

North Carolina and New York Educators Recognized with Merit Awards

WASHINGTON, D.C. — John Schmied, a seventh grade science teacher at Skyview Junior High in Bothell, Wash., has been awarded the 2011 Richard C. Bartlett Environmental Education Award for his outstanding teachings on the importance of being an environmentally-responsible citizen.

The Bartlett award, made possible by Baxter International Inc., is given annually by the National Environmental Education Foundation and recognizes teachers who inspire their students and peers in environmental studies. The award is given during National Teacher Appreciation Week, May 2-6, 2011. Schmied will receive a \$5,000 award.

Schmied's students are a reflection of his dedication and passion for the environment and a rigorous hands-on approach to science. His students leave his classroom with excellent writing, research and mathematic skills. Many students say they pursue higher education degrees in science and the environment thanks to his class. Through varied project-based learning experiences, students are exposed to soil and field studies, conifer classification, water quality issues, frog rearing, worm ranching, mice behavioral studies and long-term ecological and habitat studies.

"This is not only incredible news for myself, but also for the other environmental educators who have worked tirelessly beside me over the years to develop new and innovative ways to encourage students to learn what they can do to balance their desires with the need to protect their environment and the health of their community," Schmied said of the award.

"I'd especially like to thank my colleagues at Skyview Junior High School, Friends of the Hidden River and those in King County," he added. "This award is about ensuring that the students, who will soon be our leaders, learn that as humans we have great power, but that with great power comes a great responsibility to make our environment a better place."

Being an environmentally-aware citizen is a large part of Schmied's curriculum. With his guidance, Schmied's students recently launched a school-wide recycling program. Besides helping Skyview earn a Green School certification, the recycling program acts as a way to teach students about the impact of recycling in society as they track the amount of waste versus recycling in the school. Students initiated a successful new CFL light bulb recycling initiative with a local chain of hardware stores to address concerns

about mercury entering Puget Sound from improper disposal of the more energy efficient bulbs.

Additionally, Schmied helped establish an Outdoor Environmental Learning Center behind the school to address the increasing challenge of financing field trips and to create a rich living laboratory that fosters student environmental stewardship. To date, over 1,500 students and 300 parents and community volunteers have worked, learned and cared for the environment at the 6.5 acre center. In six years, a total of 8,400 community service hours have been logged creating a filtering wetland, building 725 yards of trails and planting nearly 1,400 plants, shrubs and trees to restore the Pacific Northwest native habitat.

“Each year, the Bartlett Award recognizes teachers who inspire everyone around them with their passion, vision and energy,” said Diane Wood, president of the National Environmental Education Foundation. “As our honoree this year, Mr. Schmied is representing all the other teachers around the country who are dedicated to making a difference in the lives of their students, communities and the world through environmental education.”

Schmied will travel to Washington, D.C. this summer to meet with environmental leaders and the staff of the National Environmental Education Foundation.

Richard Bartlett, after whom the award is named, has been a leader in conservation for more than 40 years. He has co-authored several textbooks and three books and has himself received numerous awards for his work. Nearly 40 teachers were nominated for the award this year. Two merit winners were also selected, each receiving a \$750 award.

**Frank McKay, Eighth Grade Science Teacher, Exploris Middle School, Raleigh, NC
Bartlett Merit Winner**

Frank McKay believes that environmental teaching should be based on three overarching themes: service learning, an integrated curriculum that reflects all academic areas and current world events and community partnerships.

One of McKay’s class projects involves taking students to visit Raleigh’s drinking water source. Students then canoe the Neuse River and take inventory of the stream quality. Following the outdoor experiences, students are given a virtual tour of the local wastewater plant and are then asked to interview community experts to create documentaries on environmental issues. The students’ films are then developed and shown at a community film festival.

**Alan Fiero, Seventh Grade Science Teacher, Farnsworth Middle School,
Guilderland, NY
Bartlett Merit Winner**

Alan Fiero describes his approach to environmental education as authentic and meaningful.

For the last 15 years, Fiero has collaborated with the Albany Pine Bush Commission to teach students about the native plant and its ecosystem. Known as the Pine Bush Project, this comprehensive initiative involves student participation in field trips, community restoration projects, as well as scientific observation and documentation that all contribute to the survival of the native habitat.

Over the years, Mr. Fiero's project has expanded to include a three-week summer session where students operate a butterfly house that is open to the public and serves to grow the endangered Karner blue butterfly. The program has been used as a model around the district and has been awarded numerous grants to expand its success.

For information on past winners, visit:

http://www.neefusa.org/bartlettaward/bart_award.htm

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