



Ladue Horton Watkins High School

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March 20, 2009

To The Lexus Eco Challenge Selection Committee:

This letter is in support of the Ladue Horton Watkins High School's Team LEAF application for the Lexus Eco Challenge. This group of young people has followed their mission of exploring and understanding local environmental issues and sharing knowledge with the community in order to create awareness and promote action.

By recognizing the unintended consequences buildings, parking lots, and non-green spaces have on erosion and flooding, Team LEAF sought to find a way to make a real difference on our school campus. The south boundary of our campus is formed by Deer Creek. During major rains this creek floods, and on several occasions has entered the basement of our school. Last fall, a flood led to an insurance claim over \$200,000. In addition, Deer Creek is the recipient of the run-off pollutants of our parking lot.

Team LEAF researched, created, proposed, and implemented a project to restore natural habitat, lessen the pollution of Deer Creek, and make an educational statement regarding the need for "green spaces" among areas of concentrated human development. Team LEAF has been in charge of all aspects of creating a Rain Garden on school property in the area between a parking lot and Deer Creek. They researched appropriate native habitat. They met with school officials including the Director of Facilities, Head Groundskeeper, and myself to win approval for their project. They also met with an architectural firm regarding the plans and officials with the city public works department. Team LEAF then applied for and received a grant from a parent group to purchase the plants. Currently, Team LEAF is in the process of planting the rain garden. These seniors have also made arrangements with other school clubs for the continued care and maintenance of the garden.

Team LEAF has expanded the scope of creating and maintaining the rain garden to education and promotion of responsible ecological practices within the community. With the development and implementation of the project they have raised awareness. They have networked with another environmental club and also the ceramics club regarding beautification. They have created and maintained a website providing information and encouraging other rain garden projects. This website is currently the student spotlight on the official school website homepage. Their actions provide a positive example to our school community.

Having watched, listened, and learned from these students over the course of the last year, I am very proud of the work they have done. It provides great hope for the future knowing the sense of mission these students exhibit. They truly believe they can make a positive difference and so do I.

Sincerely,

Bridget Hermann, Ed.D.

Principal, Ladue Horton Watkins High School