



News Release

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Final Eco-Challenge Could Help Prevent Floods and Net Ladue Horton Watkins High School Students \$50,000

A team of five students at Ladue Horton Watkins High School are among the 48 school teams nationwide that have qualified to participate in the Final Challenge of the Lexus Eco Challenge, a national contest that encourages middle and high school students to develop and implement environmental programs that positively impact their communities. The team was awarded \$10,000 for their entry in the WATER Challenge earlier this academic year. Now, as a participant in the Final Challenge, they've been asked to take their environmental message to as wide an audience as possible.

The students, Rivka Feinberg, Natalie Krebs, Maxwell Montaldo, Mark Wilensky and Gina Wilmott, are hard at work promoting their project. The students have named themselves Team LEAF (Ladue Environmental Action Force). Initially, they designed a rain garden to be built at the high school. They also developed a Web site devoted to explaining their action plan and documenting their research on wetlands and rain gardens.

For the final challenge, the students are planting their rain garden and presenting what they have learned about rain gardens in the hope of convincing other people to build one as well. They are doing this by expanding their Web site, writing letters to Missouri state representatives, senators and educators, and creating educational materials on rain gardens. They are also giving presentations to environmental groups and educators in the area.

"Our theme is, 'if you build one rain garden, you prevent erosion, if you plant 100 you can prevent a flood.' So our goal is to get 100 people or more to build a rain garden," explained Wilmott at a presentation to the Master Naturalists group earlier this month.

This year's second annual Lexus Eco Challenge (www.scholastic.com/lexus), created by Lexus and Scholastic, had 775 registered teams representing 5,100 middle and high school students nationwide. The 48 winning Action Plans were selected from 425 entries submitted during the three earlier phases of the competition. From the Final Challenge entries, Lexus and Scholastic will choose two \$50,000 grand-prize-winning teams and 14 \$30,000 first-place teams.

To support Team LEAF's Final Challenge Action Plan please visit the team's Web site at www.teamleaf.org. Visitors can learn more about the challenge and see what rain gardens can do for their community.

Ladue Schools has more than 3,700 students and serves all or part of ten communities including Creve Coeur, Crystal Lake Park, Frontenac, Huntleigh Village, Ladue, Olivette, Richmond Heights, Town & Country, unincorporated St. Louis County and Westwood. More information about the Ladue Schools and its individual schools can be found at www.ladue.k12.mo.us.

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