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ARIZONA FORWARD PRESENTS EARTHFEST EDUCATION GRANTS TO FOUR SCHOOLS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

PHOENIX (Jan. 24, 2014) – A total of \$5,000 in grant funding has been awarded to support environmental education efforts in four Arizona schools through Arizona Forward’s EarthFest Education Grant program, made possible by Helios Education Foundation.

Students in grades K-12 from schools throughout the state, including Phoenix, Gilbert and Pirtleville, will benefit from the grants which support environmental projects at their schools or in their community. Their efforts will focus on topics such as: healthy food production, tortoise habitat, bird feeders and a comprehensive study on electric cars.

“Our goal is to foster a sense of environmental stewardship in today’s youth to help ensure the livability and sustainability of Arizona cities and towns long into the future,” said Diane Brossart, president of Arizona Forward. “Healthy communities are at the heart of Arizona Forward’s mission and the organization is empowering people to influence our state’s destiny. We received a number of worthy applications for a diverse range of projects, from educators around the state, making the selection process extra challenging.”

The grant opportunity was announced last fall at Arizona Forward’s EarthFest Educators Night, held in partnership with University of Phoenix, the program’s official education partner. The ninth annual event was designed to provide teachers with environmental education resources ranging from continuing education credits to curriculum for the classroom, field trip opportunities and funding.

Recipients of Arizona Forward’s 2013-14 EarthFest Education Grants include:

- **Faras Elementary School (Pirtleville): \$1,500** – Awarded to Jasper Lusby, the school’s principal, for a project titled “STEM Exploration Stations.” One of the exploration stations, “*Grow and Eat Lab*” will be a small greenhouse area in which students could plant and harvest foods year-round. This will provide students a hands-on experience with life cycles of plants and showcase the benefits of composting, organic foods and eating what you grow. This will develop the students’ understanding of the ecology associated with healthy food production, including maintaining healthy soil.
- **Mesquite Junior High School (Gilbert): \$1,390** – Awarded to Sarah Galloway, a seventh grade science teacher, for a project titled, “School Garden Beautification Project.” Students will explore the characteristics and composition of a desert ecosystem and how a nature and vegetable garden can provide a perfect habitat for wildlife and diminish the urban heat island effect experienced in the Phoenix metropolitan area. To further improve the school’s botanical garden, students will implement additional plants, a vegetable garden, a weather station, bird bath/pond and most specifically, a tortoise habitat. The project is slated to be complete on April 22 in commemoration of Earth Day.

- **Fireside Elementary School (Phoenix): \$200** – Awarded to Janice Mak, a third and fourth grade life science teacher, for a project titled, “Gone to the Birds!” Students will research and gain a thorough understanding of animal adaptations specifically pertaining to Arizona native birds and the environment in which they live to gain an understanding of the types of birds and the challenges various avian populations face in the Southwest. This will lead them to the point of being ready to take action by setting up an experiment with bird feeders. Students will compare the birdfeeders, studying various designs and engineering an original birdfeeder that will work best in the Arizona environment.
- **E-Institute Metro/West Valley Campus (Phoenix/Buckeye): \$1,910** – Awarded to Scott Hogan, a high school math teacher, for a project titled, “A Day in the Life of a Leaf” – with reference to the Nissan Leaf, an electric car. At least 100 students will be involved in this project that weaves together common core math standards, an examination of real world all-electric cars, analysis of an emerging battery, magnetic levitation technology and the application of this technology for major environmental benefits. Students will study and evaluate the success of all-electric cars versus gasoline vehicles. Through books, building electric cars, visiting electric car dealerships and going to the Arizona Science Museum, students will see the big picture behind the electric car revolution.

All grant projects must be completed by May 1, 2014, and recipients must provide a summary of their work with photos to Arizona Forward.

About Arizona Forward

Arizona Forward brings business and civic leaders together to facilitate thoughtful public dialogue on sustainability issues and to improve the environmental quality and economic vitality of cities and towns throughout the Grand Canyon State.

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