



National Environmental Education Foundation

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Media Advisory

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Environmental Science Teacher Honored with first Richard C. Bartlett Award

First Richard C. Bartlett Environmental Education Award to be presented at the North American Association for Environmental Education's Annual Conference in Virginia Beach

WASHINGTON, D.C.—This Thursday, Nov. 15, as environmental consciousness is gaining momentum nationwide, the first-ever Richard C. Bartlett Environmental Education Award will recognize a teacher who is bringing this concept to the classroom.

Debra Weitzel, a high school environmental science teacher at Middleton High School in Middleton, WI., has been selected as this year's Richard C. Bartlett Award winner. She will receive the award at the North American Association for Environmental Education's annual conference at 7:45 a.m. on Thursday, Nov. 15, in Virginia Beach, Va. The event takes place at the Virginia Beach Convention Center, Ballrooms 1 and 2.

"Environmental education should be a requirement in every school," says Weitzel, who has been teaching since 1978. "I find that the most rewarding part about this experience is looking at course evaluations at the end of the year, when students comment that learning about the environment opens their eyes to what they can do to make a difference."

The Bartlett Award was established by the National Environmental Education Foundation to distinguish the teachers who best represent Richard C. Bartlett's passion for and leadership in environmental education. For more than 40 years, Richard C. Bartlett has been inspiring environmental educators nationwide. "Engaging youth to learn about nature and the environment is important," says Bartlett. "Positive solutions to achieve a sustainable planet begin in the classroom with teachers like Debra Weitzel, who are true leaders in education."

As part of National Environmental Education Foundation's ongoing commitment to fostering public-private partnerships, the award is sponsored by Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A. "I am proud that through Toyota's sponsorship of the Richard C. Bartlett Award, we are able to make a growing contribution to both the environment and youth education," says J.L. Armstrong, National Manager, External Affairs, at Toyota Motor Sales and a board member of the National Environmental Education Foundation.

This year's winner was chosen from a group of 45 nominees in a process that included eight judges from the environmental education community. She was nominated by Janet Kane, a fellow colleague from Friends of Pheasant Branch, a nonprofit conservancy group. Guidelines for the award include meeting the requirements of the Tbilisi Declaration, a universal set of principles that define environmental education at all levels including:

- Foster clear awareness of economic, social, political and ecological interdependence;
- Provide opportunities to acquire the knowledge and values to protect and improve the environment; and,
- Create new patterns of societal behavior as a whole towards the environment.

Media interested in attending the North American Association for Environmental Education's convention in Virginia Beach, or who would like to set up an interview, can call Patricia Charles at (202) 536-5798. Those interested in nominating teachers for next year's Richard C. Bartlett Environmental Education Award can find details by visiting the National Environmental Education Foundation webpage at www.neefusa.org.

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