



Contact: *San Diego, Calif:*
Rhonda Epstein
858-481-3727
rhondae@san.rr.com

Addison, Ill.:
Dawn O'Brien
630-285-0335
familyob@sbcglobal.net

Manahawkin, N.J:
Stephen Kubricki
609-597-3800
kubricki@verizon.net

Or: Stephanie Hallman
Christopher Columbus Awards
800-291-6020
shallman@mmseducation.com

Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation Announces Winners of the \$25,000 Stephen J. Moses Community Grant and Two Gold Medals in National Science/Community Service Competition Held at Walt Disney World®

Winning teams develop device to reduce repetitive stress injuries related to computer use, launch recycling awareness campaign, and pursue initiatives to preserve endangered species in their community.

AUBURN, N.Y.—June 19, 2009—Bright ideas, solid research and teamwork won three teams of middle-school students top prizes in the Christopher Columbus Awards, a nationwide program that challenges middle-school students to explore opportunities for positive change in their communities.

Seventh-graders Sean Colford, Ethan Epstein, Brandon Loye, and Michael Walsh, from Carmel Valley Middle School and Santa Fe Christian School, in San Diego, Calif., and their coach, Rhonda Epstein, made it to the finals last month, and now are winners of the grand prize—the **\$25,000 Stephen J. Moses Community Grant**. The students addressed the growing problem of repetitive stress injuries (RSIs) related to computer use by developing the Ergonomic Posture Alignment Device or Ergo-PAD, a specialized seat cushion that uses sensory feedback to train people to develop a healthy posture while sitting at a computer.

Seventh-graders Dana Gattone, Angel Loizzo, and Maggie O'Brien from St. Philip the Apostle School, in Addison, Ill., and their coach, Dawn O'Brien, won a Gold Medal and a \$2,000 Savings

-more-

FEATURING THE STEPHEN J. MOSES COMMUNITY GRANT

SPONSORED BY THE CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS FELLOWSHIP FOUNDATION
105 Terry Drive, Suite 120 · Newtown, PA 18940-3425 · tel: 800-291-6020
fax: 215-579-8589 · email: succes@edumedia.com · www.christophercolumbusaward.com

Bond for their entry. The team tested several community awareness-generating tactics to determine which would have the greatest impact on local residents' recycling behavior. One approach resulted in 86% of non-recycling households converting to recycling households.

Eighth-graders Rachel Altman, Emily Bruinooge, Donovan Fifield, and Aidan Ryan from All Saints Regional Catholic School, in Manahawkin, N.J., and their coach, Stephen Kubricki, won a Gold Medal and a \$2,000 Savings Bond for their entry. The team identified local species endangered by human activity, including the Diamondback Terrapin turtle, Piping Plover, Red Knot, Swamp Pink, and Horseshoe crab, and developed a multifaceted plan to foster awareness of their plight in an effort to halt their eradication.

A panel of community leaders, scientists and experts in science education judged these ideas as the top three entries in the U.S. More than 600 students and coaches participated nationwide.

Team Wins a Trip to Walt Disney World®

Eight finalist teams and their coaches won an all-expense-paid trip to the *Walt Disney World®* Resort, where they competed in the **Christopher Columbus Awards' National Championship Week**, and participated in the **Christopher Columbus Academy**, a custom-designed educational program conducted by scientists, engineers and educators, the program reveals the science and technology behind the thrills and excitement of *Epcot®* and the *Magic Kingdom®*.

Positive Community Change

The Christopher Columbus Awards challenge teams of middle-school students to explore and discover opportunities for positive change in their communities using science and technology. The program is now in its 13th year and has attracted nearly 16,000 students from diverse backgrounds all across the U.S. The program is sponsored by the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation (www.columbusfdn.org), a Federal government agency, and is endorsed by the National Middle School Association.

Past winners have included: a group of Ohio students who developed a plan to use methane gas produced at landfills as an alternative source of energy; a group of Native American girls who built a study hall out of straw on the Crow Indian Reservation in Montana; and a group of students from Pennsylvania who developed a video/motion sensor device for school buses that deters motorists from trying to pass illegally.

Strong Participation from Girls, Minorities

The program attracts many students who may not typically enter a science competition. More than half of the entrants are girls, and more than one-fourth are from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, statistics that are higher than those of most science competitions. The Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation believes the teamwork aspect and community focus draw a broader range of students to enter.

About the Sponsor

The Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation is an independent Federal government agency created by Congress in 1992 to encourage and support research, study and labor designed to produce new discoveries in all fields of endeavor for the benefit of mankind. The Foundation has established *Frontiers of Discovery–Work in Progress* and *Discover the*

-more-

FEATURING THE STEPHEN J. MOSES COMMUNITY GRANT

SPONSORED BY THE CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS FELLOWSHIP FOUNDATION
105 Terry Drive, Suite 120 · Newtown, PA 18940-3425 · tel: 800-291-6020
fax: 215-579-8589 · email: succes@edumedia.com · www.christophercolumbusaward.com

Future, programs that recognize “cutting edge” innovations and innovative ideas of America’s youth, and honor teachers. These programs include *Life Sciences Awards*, the \$25,000 *Homeland Security Award*, *Christopher Columbus Awards*, and the \$10,000 *Freida J. Riley Teacher Award*.

For more information on the Christopher Columbus Awards, call 1-800-291-6020 or visit www.christophercolumbusawards.com.

###

FEATURING THE STEPHEN J. MOSES COMMUNITY GRANT

SPONSORED BY THE CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS FELLOWSHIP FOUNDATION
105 Terry Drive, Suite 120 · Newtown, PA 18940-3425 · tel: 800-291-6020
fax: 215-579-8589 · email: success@edumedia.com · www.christophercolumbusaward.com