



CALL FOR ENTRIES

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CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS AWARDS CHALLENGES TEAMS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS TO SOLVE COMMUNITY PROBLEMS USING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Finalist Teams Win Trip to Walt Disney World®

AUBURN, N.Y.—September 13, 2011—Now in its 16th year, the **Christopher Columbus Awards**, a free program that challenges middle school students to explore opportunities for positive change in their communities, announces the program's **Call for Entries for the 2011-2012 school year**. Teams of up to four students and a coach identify a community issue and use the scientific process to solve it. Finalist teams win an all-expense-paid trip to Walt Disney World® where they compete to attend the Christopher Columbus Academy for gold medals and U.S. Savings Bonds.

In its 15 years, the program **has attracted over 19,000 'everyday' students** from all across the U.S., and appeals to educators who are increasingly looking to develop critical STEM skills in students while meeting state and Federal standards. The program:

- is a **cross-curricular STEM activity that helps meet both NCLB and state standards.**
- helps address the performance gap in U.S. science education by encouraging critical thinking skills in all students.
- encourages community service.

Deadline and How to Enter

The **Christopher Columbus Awards** is **free** to enter. For more information and competition guidelines, call **800-291-6020** or visit www.christophercolumbusawards.com. Coaches may be teachers, parents, community leaders or mentors. Teams do not need to be affiliated with a school to enter. The **deadline for receipt of entries is Monday, February 6, 2012.**

- MORE -

FEATURING THE COLUMBUS FOUNDATION COMMUNITY GRANT

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Who Wins?

One of the 2007 winning teams was a group of students from West Branch, Iowa, who felt there was an environmental hazard caused by used oil filters being disposed of in household trash. They developed an awareness campaign to educate the public about the dangers of placing used oil filters in landfills and worked with their state legislature to pass an oil filter recycling law. Past winners also have included a team from San Diego that has secured a provisional patent for a specialized seat cushion design that uses sensory feedback to train people to maintain a healthy posture while sitting at a computer, and a group of students from Illinois who developed a multifaceted recycling awareness campaign that increased recycling in their community by 60% in just four months. A complete list of past winners can be found at: www.christophercolumbusawards.com.

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 a fourth are from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, statistics that are higher than those of most science competitions.

About the Sponsor

The **Christopher Columbus Awards** program is sponsored by the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation (www.columbusfdn.org) and it is endorsed by the Association of Middle Level Educators. The 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.

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