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**Team Project Developed by All Saints Regional Catholic School
Wins Gold Medal in National Science/Community Service
Competition Held at Walt Disney World®**

***Students develop briquette presses that uses bio-waste readily available in
countries impacted by large rates of deforestation***

AUBURN, N.Y.—June 15, 2012—Bright ideas, solid research and teamwork won three students from All Saints Regional Catholic School in Manahawkin, NJ, Gold Medals and a \$2,000 United States Savings Bond each in the **Christopher Columbus Awards**, a nationwide program that challenges middle-school students to explore opportunities for positive change in their communities.

Eighth graders Samantha Barton, Michael Cofone and Anthony Ricci and their coach, Stephen Kubricki, made it to the finals last month. The team became aware that almost half of the world's population uses wood from nearby forests or charcoal for cooking and heating, as they have no access to other energy sources. According to the Food and Agricultural Organization's Global Forest Resource Assessment, 80% of Africans use wood for cooking, which is resulting in rapid deforestation; and two-thirds of the Philippines' forests will be eliminated within the next decade.

Addressing this concern, the team identified the countries with the largest deforestation rates—Honduras, Nigeria, Philippines, Benin, Ghana, Indonesia, Nepal, North Korea, Ecuador and Haiti – to formulate their solution. Creating a five-year implementation plan, the team will continue to work on their project to not only educate the public about this problem but to also provide cost-effective briquette presses to identified countries around the world.

The team remarked, "Our goal is by providing these low-cost, easy to ship briquette press that specific countries will use these bio-waste products for cooking and heating purposes, thus reducing deforestation."

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A panel of community leaders, scientists and experts in science education judged this idea as one of the top six entries in the U.S. More than 800 students and coaches participated nationwide.

Team Wins a Trip to Walt Disney World®

The team and their coach 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 16th year and has attracted more than 20,000 students from diverse backgrounds all across the U.S. The program is sponsored by the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation (www.columbusfdn.org) and is endorsed by the National Middle School Association.

Past winners 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 has increased recycling in their community by 60% in just four months.

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 nearly a 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 Future*, programs that recognize “cutting edge” innovations, innovative ideas of America’s youth, and honor teachers. These programs include the **Agriscience Awards, Christopher Columbus Awards, Homeland Security Award** and the **Life Sciences Awards**.

For more information, call 1-800-291-6020 or visit www.christophercolumbusawards.com.

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