



CALL FOR ENTRIES

Contact: Stephanie Hallman
shallman@mmseducation.com
800-291-6020 x 3154

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

Finalist Teams Win Trip to Walt Disney World®

AUBURN, N.Y.—September 24, 2012—Now in its 17th year, the **Christopher Columbus Awards**, a free program that challenges middle school students to explore opportunities for positive change in their communities, announces the **Call for Entries for the 2012-2013 school year**.

Today's middle school students are the **Innovation Generation**—everyday kids with untapped potential who are creative problem solvers. Unlocking that potential is the mission of the **Christopher Columbus Awards** program, a cutting edge national competition that combines science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) with community problem solving in a real-world setting.

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 attend the **Christopher Columbus Academy** and compete for gold medals, cash prizes and the **\$25,000 Columbus Foundation Community Grant**.

In its 16 years, the program **has attracted over 20,000 '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:

- teaches the scientific method while solving everyday problems
- meets the National Science Education Standards
- introduces hands-on discovery learning
- improves critical-thinking skills and team problem solving
- addresses the service learning aspect of many current curricula
- encourages community service

- MORE -

FEATURING THE COLUMBUS FOUNDATION 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: cca@edumedia.com · www.christophercolumbusawards.com

Deadline and How to Enter

The **Christopher Columbus Awards** program 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 2012-2013 Entries is Monday, February 4, 2013.**

Who Wins?

A winning team from Iowa 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. A team from San Diego 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. A team from Illinois developed a multi-faceted recycling awareness campaign that increased recycling in their community by 60 percent in just four months.

Teams also tackle worldwide problems. A 2012 Gold Medal winning team from New Jersey developed a low-cost briquette press that takes bio-waste products and turns them into a new source of cooking fuel for third-world countries that are quickly depleting the world's forests. A complete list of past winners may be found at: www.christophercolumbusawards.com.

One Finalist team will win the **\$25,000 Columbus Foundation Community Grant** to take back to their community to implement their idea.

Strong Participation from Girls and 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). 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. The program is endorsed by the Association for Middle Level Education.

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