

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**WEST GEAUGA STUDENTS QUALIFY TO COMPETE FOR
\$30,000 GRAND PRIZE IN THE LEXUS ECO CHALLENGE**
Effort Provides Chance to Win Part of \$500,000 in Grants and Scholarships

Chesterland, Ohio February 21, 2010 Environmental Discovery Project

A team of West Geauga High School students, Shawn Cooper, Zak Kucera, Clay McMullen, Claire Slusarz and Mariah Wright is among students from 16 schools nationwide that have qualified to participate in the Final Challenge of the Lexus Eco Challenge, a national contest that encourages middle and high school students to develop and implement environmental programs that positively impact their communities. The team was awarded \$10,000 in grants and scholarships for their entry in the LAND/WATER Challenge earlier this academic year, and now, as a participant in the Final Challenge, they've been asked to take their environmental message to as wide an audience as possible.

This year's fourth annual Lexus Eco Challenge (www.scholastic.com/lexus), created by Lexus and Scholastic, is offering two \$30,000 grand prizes and eight \$15,000 first prizes to the most innovative programs nationwide. The prizes will be awarded in April in celebration of Earth Month. In all, \$500,000 will be awarded.

The students are now taking the Environmental Discovery Project worldwide. In addition to local speaking engagements and seminars, they are partnering with organizations in Ecuador, Afghanistan, Kenya, and Burma on recycling projects. These projects include recycling human waste (with composting toilets), bottles, cans, chip bags, tires, paper and other recyclables. For each of these recyclables, they are looking for new ways to encourage residents to recycle, use less energy and reuse. You can join their efforts by bringing your recycling to recycling centers and bringing your paper to the school. Try out the new composting toilets at local Geauga County parks to see what the West Geauga students are helping to construct in other countries. And try to stop by the high school and look at the raingarden out front that is protected by rubber mulch made from recycled tires and grows well thanks to composted kitchen scraps and sterilized waste. "These young adults have accomplished some amazing things. Lexus Eco Challenge has helped them focus on immediate ways to improve the lives of others," said Natalie Cooper, their Advisor.

For more information about this team's activities, contact:
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