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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



The Bedford 2020 Greenlight Award Advances Nine Teams as Finalists

The 2017-2018 Bedford 2020 Greenlight Award contest concluded Round One last weekend in which nineteen student teams proposed big ideas to inspire change to address a variety of environmental problems - from greenhouse gas emissions to water pollution and waste.

“The Greenlight Contestants researched problems, grappled with strategies, and put together high quality proposals and presentations that brought this year’s competition to a new level,” according to Ellen Calves, Bedford 2020’s Program Director.

High school students from Fox Lane, John Jay, Harvey, Horace Greeley, Rye Country Day, and Somers tackled the this year’s challenge, *Changemaker 2020*, with proposals to get at least 20 people to change behavior at least 20 times to benefit the environment.

“Behavior change is one of the biggest challenges of the environmental movement. People may know and people may care, but they don’t always act in ways that help our planet. We were thrilled to see so many great ideas from these young leaders to inspire behavior change in their communities. We are even more excited to fund, mentor, and watch the Finalists actually do it,” said Olivia Farr, Co-Founder of Bedford 2020.

Round One

The Greenlight Award Contestants put a lot of work into the Round One. They find a faculty mentor, form a team, attend the “Incubator Workshop” with community experts, write an action plan and budget, and finally present their proposal at the Round One Event. The teams with the top scores move on to receive funding and mentor support to carry out their “big ideas” in the community

This year nineteen teams vied for Finalist status. On December 9 at John Jay High School the Contestants gave their presentations before the audience and a panel of Greenlight Award Judges who asked questions and scored them. The judges included Jayni Chase, founder of the Center for Environmental Education and author of *Blueprint for a Green School*, Nisa Geller, Vice Chair of the Board of the Westchester Youth Alliance, Brian LaKamp, Founder and CEO of Totem Power, an energy startup and former President of Technology and Digital Ventures at iHeartMedia, and Michelle Land, a Clinical Associate Professor of environmental law and policy at Pace University, Director of the Masters in Environmental Policy program, and Program Director in the Dyson College Institute for Sustainability and the Environment.

The Finalists

After the scores were tallied, nine proposals scored high enough to move forward to develop their behavior change projects. Bedford 2020 will fund these Finalists – up to \$1000 each depending on their proposal - and will offer a workshop in January where community members with expertise in areas related to the finalists’ proposals will meet with the students, answer questions, and help them move forward.

Congratulations to the following Greenlight Award Finalists:

The Frequent Filling Club by Mitchell Antin and Sam Dixon of Fox Lane High School will incentivize students to use refillable water bottles at FLHS.

Rain Water Harvesting by Rachel Joseph from Somers High School will inspire water conservation behavior by using the installation of a 5-barrel rain barrel system at Somers HS to raise awareness and start an environmental club.

Smart Route Optimization by Jack Capobianco, Chris Cook, Jacob Raimondi, and Ian Wiatric of John Jay High School will encourage efficient driving practices by creating an app to optimize after school bus routes based on bus riders on any given day and convincing bus drivers and students to use it.

Recycling for a Cause by Bronson Cvijanovich and Sasha Levine from Horace Greeley will encourage recycling by giving students an opportunity when they recycle to select a charity that their bottle refund money will benefit.

STOP Idling by STOP, the Greeley environmental club, will get cars to stop idling at the high school through incentives and by launching a major outreach and social media campaign. Team members include: Talia Belowich, Katie Blauner, Hudson Burrows, Will Dionne, Sabine Elbouhali, Cameron Grant, Daniel Greenstein, Andrew Hildenbrand, Joe O'Brien, Corey Schmolka, Norman Simon, Emily Westle

Take-a-Bag, Leave-a-Bag by Krishna Ramaswamy of Horace Greeley High School will encourage use of reusable bags by installing and promoting kiosks in town where people can take and leave reusable bags to use for free when shopping.

Turn Your Key, Be Idle Free by Warren Kennedy-Nolle and Jialin Yang of Rye Country Day School will get parents to stop idling in front of the school through education, a pledge, incentives, and awareness.

Water Band; Vibrate, Calculate, Alleviate by Davin Bhatti, Dyllon Preston, and Pranay Talla of Horace Greeley will reduce water use by raising awareness through use of their invention of a water consumption sensor.

Water Filtration by Sadie Albert and Chloe Savitch from the Harvey School will encourage reusable water bottle use by having a new bottle-filling and water-

filtering water fountain installed at their school and selling reusable water bottles.

Bedford 2020 will be following the progress of these Finalists between now and the Finals. The Final Event will be held at Fox Lane High School on May 1st where the Finalists will present all that they have accomplished before a community-wide audience and a different panel of judges. At this event one team will win the Greenlight Award and a \$500 grand prize, and there will be prizes for other teams as well. The event will be open to the public.

All the presentations at the Round One Event were impressive and some quite innovative. Joe Montuori, a faculty advisor from Horace Greeley High School remarked, "These kids have busy lives, so it's heartening to see so many who share our passion for resilient and sustainable communities."

Bedford 2020's Greenlight Award was supported in 2017 by a grant from Westchester Community Foundation, and the 2017-2018 contest is sponsored by PepsiCo.

For more information about the Greenlight Award visit www.bedford2020.org/greenlight

Bedford 2020 is a non-profit organization leading a grassroots effort in the Town of Bedford, NY to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 20% by 2020 and to create a sustainable community that conserves natural resources. Bedford 2020 programs are led by the work of nine Task Forces with over 90 community volunteers. More information is available at www.Bedford2020.org.

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