

Jupiter Environmental Academy Students Prevail at 2010 Envirothon

Students from Jupiter Environmental Academy took top honors in the Palm Beach County Envirothon held at the A.R.M. National Wildlife Refuge in Boynton Beach. ELEMENTZ team members Lillian McBee, Sara Miller, Nathalie McCrate, Samantha Huddleston, and Stephanie McCrate, coached by their adviser Mr. Phil Weinrich, were ranked #1 overall after a day of challenging testing and presentation of their Action Project which involved developing and maintaining a Migratory Bird Garden on the Loxahatchee River. The students spent hundreds of hours working with environmentalists from the Loxahatchee River District and consulting local experts about native plant selection and culture and migratory bird patterns and habits. They raised funds and solicited donated materials in pursuit of their goal to create a suitable habitat for migratory birds and educate the public on their patterns and habits.

Students from Forest Hill, G Star School of the Arts, John I. Leonard, Jupiter, Palm Beach Central, Park Vista, St. Andrews School, Suncoast and Wellington High School vied for top honors at the 2010 Envirothon, a regional competition sponsored annually by the Palm Beach Soil and Water Conservation District. The ELEMENTZ team will compete at the state level on April 24th at the Silver River State Park and the state winner will advance to the National Envirothon sponsored by Canon U.S.A., Inc. which will be held at the California State University in Fresno this August. Past winners, Pirates of the Loxahatchee and Team Elementz from Jupiter Environmental Academy, finished in the top ten at the National Canon Envirothon in 2009 and 2005.

Second place in the overall competition also went to a team from Jupiter Environmental Academy, Green Life, followed by El Equipo Verde from Suncoast High School in third place. Eco-Team-Go! from G Star School of the Arts won fourth place and fifth place went to Outrageous Octopi from Jupiter. Likened to an environmental Olympics, teams are judged on their Action Projects and tested in five different disciplines including Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Wildlife and this year's Current Issue, Protection of Groundwater through Urban, Agriculture and Environmental Planning.

Awards were presented by County Commissioner Shelley Vana. Major sponsors included South Florida Water Management District, Pratt and Whitney, Sea World, Bedner Farms, Whole Foods - Boca and Wellington, Publix, Florida Power and Light, and the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida.

First place overall Envirothon winners celebrate with local officials. Left to right:

Jeff Joyner - Secretary/Treasurer, Palm Beach Soil and Water Conservation District
Nathalie McCrate, Team Elementz
Stephanie McCrate, Team Elementz
Samantha Huddleston, Team Elementz
Sara Miller, Team Elementz
Phil Weinrich - Jupiter HS Teacher/Advisor
Shayna DeRuysscher, Team Elementz
Shelley Vana - County Commissioner

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