



# NEWS RELEASE

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**SIEMENS WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD CHALLENGE ANNOUNCES 2011 GRAND PRIZE WINNING TEAMS**

*-- Iowa, Hawaii, Maryland, and North Carolina Students Take Top Honor as Winners of Nation's Premier Sustainability Challenge --*

**ISELIN, N.J.**, May 18, 2011—The [Siemens Foundation](#), [Discovery Education](#), the [National Science Teachers Association](#) (NSTA), and the [College Board](#) today announced the grand prize winners of the third annual *Siemens We Can Change the World Challenge*. Adding a high school division this year, the national *Challenge* aims to empower young people to create solutions to today's environmental problems.

Nearly 18,000 elementary, middle school and high school students competed in this year's *Challenge*. This year's projects addressed a wide variety of topics, ranging from recycling old trophies to stopping radon gas from entering homes to harvesting usable energy using a microturbine.

“The Siemens Foundation and its partners are proud to honor the winning students and their mentors for their impressive efforts to take on some of the world's biggest environmental and energy challenges,” said Jeniffer Harper-Taylor, President of the Siemens Foundation. “This year's record participation levels underscore just how dedicated the younger generation is to solving some of our most pressing sustainability issues.”

Under the mentorship of their teacher, the elementary teams identified an environmental issue in their classroom or school, while middle school students worked in teams of 2-4 students, also under the guidance of a mentor, to identify an environmental issue in their community. High school students were specifically challenged with identifying an energy-related issue that has local, national and global implications, and creating a sustainable solution that can be replicated around the globe. All levels researched their issue using scientific investigation and created a replicable green solution using web-based curriculum tools powered by Discovery Education.

**High School Winners**

**Grand Prize Winners:** Team “T.E.A.M.S.” from West Branch, IA

- West Branch High School students David Fischer, Justin Roth and Sarah Fischer, along with mentor Hector Ibarra, conducted an energy audit of their high school and found many items that could be improved, including replacing the outdated pneumatic thermostat HVAC system and air exchange unit with an energy efficient electronically controlled variable frequency drive. Many of their ideas were accepted and implemented by the school board.

**Second Place Winners:** Team “Clean Plate, Clean Energy” from West Lafayette, IN

- West Lafayette Junior/Senior High School students Arthi Puri and Agustina de la Fuente, along with mentor Rakesh Agrawal, focused on evaluating the feasibility of diverting food waste toward energy generation in order to reduce fossil fuel dependency. A pilot arrangement was successfully established between the high school and the local waste-water treatment authority.

**Third Place Winners:** Team “EC<sup>2</sup>” from Nashville, TN

- Students Catherine Anne Caffey and Emily Alsentzer, along with mentor Jonathan Creamer from The School for Science and Math at Vanderbilt in Nashville, implemented an energy conservation competition among the freshman residential houses at Vanderbilt University to examine whether a non-monetary reward (winning the “Commons Cup”) would be effective in changing environmental behaviors. The freshman student body saved Vanderbilt approximately \$10,000 in five months, thus validating the use of a non-monetary award.

**Middle School Winners**

**Grand Prize Winners:** Team “6,000 n 60” from Kapaau, HI

- Kohala Middle School students Isabel Steinhoff, Rico Bowman, Genevieve Boyle and Mina Apostadiro along with mentor Lani Bowman, undertook a household battery recycling effort to collect 6,000 batteries (the approximate population of North Kohala) in 60 days. They chose to focus on household batteries, as there are no local opportunities for recycling them. The goal of collecting 6,000 batteries was met, and the team is using their data to lobby for better battery recycling opportunities.

**Second Place Winners:** Team “Alpha Eliminators” from Iowa City, IA

- Prairie Creek Intermediate School’s Learning Without Limits Science Club students Eleanor Mildenstein, Jordan Penfold and Payton Kline, along with mentor Hector Ibarra, educated community members and legislators about hazards and health risks associated with Radon gas entering homes. The team held meetings with the Home Builders Association and tested more than 70 homes finding that Radon gas was entering 71 percent of houses. They drafted a House file to legalize the sale of electronic Radon meters in Iowa.

**Third Place Winners:** Team “Phantom Slayers” from Acton, MA

- Raymond J. Grey Junior High School students Vrinda Agarwal, Shilpa Bhat and Albert Kong, along with mentor Sumana Bhat, focused on reducing wasted electricity, such as phantom load, in the community. The team measured the waste and presented their findings to several community groups. The team also convinced a state senator to file a bill aimed at reducing phantom load.

**Elementary School Winners Grades 3-5**

**Grand Prize Winners:** Team “Passe/Herring” from Charlotte, NC

- Barringer Academic Center students along with mentors Mindy Passe and Rachel Herring focused their project on reducing paper waste. They spread the word through posters created from recycled paper, their morning announcements, the school paper, and encouraged teachers to use recycled paper for homework and tests. They gathered data and found that students and teachers were reducing paper use and reusing paper.

**Second Place Winners:** Team “Bullis Bears” from Los Altos, CA

- Bullis Charter School students along with mentor Lynn Reed worked together with a local nature preserve to develop an erosion control method and prevent loss of habitat. Students collected data, researched riparian environments and developed plans for habitat restoration. They found that their methods were very successful in preventing erosion and restoring habitat and continue to work with staff at the nature preserve.

**Third Place Winners:** Team “The Green Team” from North Las Vegas, NV

- Vincent L. Triggs Elementary School students along with mentor Melissa Herout focused on reducing and recycling waste in their lunchroom. They had students recycle one new item per week and collected data to determine the effect on recycling. They also instituted “Double Green Days” once a week, during which students were challenged to bring no-waste lunches. The team spread the word and observed a drastic increase in overall recycling habits.

**Elementary School Winners Grades K-2**

**Grand Prize Winners:** Team “Concord Hill Greenies” from Chevy Chase, MD

- Concord Hill School students along with mentors Tracy Yaffe and Jack Daggitt learned that a car idling still produces 20 pounds of carbon dioxide for every gallon of gas it burns. To help solve the issue of cars lining up and idling in the pickup area at school, the team analyzed ways to make the cars move faster and more efficiently. After collecting data, the team decided to change the pickup procedure by staggering pickup times. The team found that cars spent 70 percent less time idling than before the campaign.

**Second Place Winners:** Team “From Plastic to Fantastic” from Cumming, GA

- Vickery Creek Elementary students along with mentor Laura Fedorchuk were concerned about the use of plastic bags for shopping. They sold reusable bags at parents’ nights and reached out to larger grocery chains to find out about providing incentives to use reusable bags. From their data, they noticed a dramatic increase in the number of reusable bags used and have reached out to their senator and mayor for additional support.

**Third Place Winners:** Team “Water Rescuers” from Lakeland, FL

- Lincoln Avenue Academy students along with mentor Mijana Lockard decided their school needed to have responsible behavior when using water outdoors. The class made rain barrels to collect water on rainy days and transformed every garden at their school into xeriscapes. They also hope to introduce their plan to the district’s school board and campaign to reduce outdoor water waste at all schools around the district.

The high school grand prize-winning team will receive an equal share of a \$50,000 scholarship and a chance to present their project at the United Nations. Each member of the middle school grand prize-winning team will receive a \$10,000 Savings Bond, a Discovery Adventures trip to Costa Rica and a pocket video camera to capture their trip. Elementary school winners earn a \$5,000 grant, a Discovery Education assembly, in addition to a *Siemens We Can Change the World* prize pack. For additional prizing details, visit:

- High School: <http://www.wecanchange.com/high-school/about-challenge/prizes/>
- Middle School: <http://www.wecanchange.com/middle-school/about-challenge/prizes/>
- Elementary School: <http://www.wecanchange.com/elementary-school/about-challenge/prizes/>

For more information on the *Siemens We Can Change the World Challenge*, go to [www.wecanchange.com](http://www.wecanchange.com).

### **About Siemens We Can Change the World Challenge**

The *Siemens We Can Change the World Challenge* ([www.wecanchange.com](http://www.wecanchange.com)) is a premier national sustainability challenge that empowers students in grades K-12 to develop and share environmental solutions that can help change the world. The *Challenge* is a collaborative effort of the Siemens Foundation, Discovery Education, the College Board and the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) to educate, empower and engage elementary, middle and high school students and teachers to become “Agents of Change” in improving their schools, communities and world. To date, more than 17,500 students have participated, creatively engaging their communities to find solutions to a local environmental issue or global energy challenge. All participants research their issue using scientific investigation and create a replicable green solution using web-based curriculum tools powered by Discovery Education. For more information, visit [www.wecanchange.com](http://www.wecanchange.com).

### **About the Siemens Foundation**

The Siemens Foundation provides more than \$7 million annually in support of educational initiatives in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in the United States. Its signature programs include the Siemens Competition in Math, Science & Technology, Siemens Awards for Advanced Placement, and The Siemens We Can Change the World Challenge, which encourages K-12 students to develop innovative green solutions for environmental issues. In February 2010 the Siemens Foundation launched its newest initiative, The Siemens STEM Academy, a national STEM education program for teachers designed to support educators in their efforts to foster student achievement in these fields. By supporting outstanding students today, and recognizing the teachers and schools that inspire their excellence, the Foundation helps nurture tomorrow's scientists and engineers. The Foundation's mission is based on the culture of innovation, research and educational support that is the hallmark of Siemens' U.S. companies and its parent company, Siemens AG. For further information, visit [www.siemens-foundation.org](http://www.siemens-foundation.org).

### **About Discovery Education**

Discovery Communications (DISCA, DISCB, DISCK) revolutionized television with Discovery Channel and is now transforming classrooms through Discovery Education. Powered by the number one nonfiction media company in the world, Discovery Education combines scientifically proven, standards-based digital media and a dynamic user community in order to empower teachers to improve student achievement.

Already, more than half of all U.S. schools access Discovery Education digital services. Explore the future of education at [www.discoveryeducation.com](http://www.discoveryeducation.com).

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