



**NEWS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact:**

Christie Silverstein

Valley Forward Association

(602) 240-2408

[csilverstein@valleyforward.org](mailto:csilverstein@valleyforward.org)

## **VALLEY FORWARD PRESENTS EARTHFEST EDUCATION GRANTS TO FOUR VALLEY SCHOOLS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS**

**PHOENIX (Feb. 1, 2012)** – A total of \$5,000 in grant funding has been awarded to support environmental education efforts in four Arizona schools through Valley Forward’s EarthFest Education Grant program, made possible by Helios Education Foundation.

Students in grades K-12 from schools throughout the Valley, including Phoenix, Scottsdale, Mesa and Gilbert, will benefit from the grants which support environmental projects at their schools or in their community. Their efforts will focus on such topics as: water, air, land, plants, animals, recycling, transportation and energy.

“Our goal is to foster a sense of environmental stewardship in today’s youth to help ensure the livability and sustainability of Valley communities long into the future,” said Diane Brossart, president of Valley Forward. “We received a number of worthy applications for a diverse range of projects, making the selection process extra challenging.”

The grant opportunity was announced last fall at Valley Forward’s EarthFest Educators Night, held in partnership with University of Phoenix, the program’s official education partner, and Central Arizona Project. The seventh annual program was designed to provide teachers with environmental education resources ranging from continuing education credits to curriculum for the classroom, field trip opportunities and funding.

Recipients of Valley Forward’s 2011-12 EarthFest Education Grants include:

- **Chaparral High School (Scottsdale): \$1,200** – Awarded to Ann Hammersly, a high school physics teacher, for a project titled “Engineering Wind Turbines – A STEM Application for Physics and Engineering.” Students will explore wind energy as a viable energy resource by building model wind turbines and studying their properties, then designing variations on the models that optimize performance for electrical output for different locations around the country, given altitude, wind parameters and local regulations.
- **CREST and Foothills Elementary School (Phoenix): \$2,000** – Awarded to Linda Coyle, a CREST/CTE STEM curriculum specialist, for a project titled, “A Collaborative Approach to Sustainability Design in an Urban School Outdoor Laboratory.” The goal is to match 10<sup>th</sup> grade students with teams of three or four Foothills fourth grade students and to design and build the comprehensive outdoor learning laboratory on the Foothills campus. The laboratory will feature nature trails with marked signage about plants and eco-system highlights, a landscaped reading area, amphitheater for seating and teacher instruction, native plants and a pond.

- more -

- **Settler's Point Elementary School (Gilbert): \$725** – Awarded to Ellen Munley, a fifth grade elementary school teacher, for a project titled, "The Power of Solar Energy." It will integrate STEM science activities into the classroom and teach students the benefits of solar energy. The objective is to go above and beyond the 3 Foss science kits that are provided by the school district and integrate solar energy learning into the science curriculum. The students will build and create a science investigation to learn about how solar cells work. They will also design solar experiments using color changing ultraviolet beads to test the effectiveness of sunscreen.
- **Mesa Preparatory Academy (Mesa): \$1,058** – Awarded to Rebekah Kienenberger, an eighth grade earth science teacher, for a project titled, "Water Filtration Lab." Students will build a water filtration system which will reduce the acidity of water, remove particles and increase clarity. Students will gain an understanding of the importance of water conservation and will learn ways to save water in their daily lives. They will also gain understanding of the national standard for water quality and will learn about the dangers and causes of water pollution.

All grant projects must be completed by May 1, 2012, and recipients must provide a summary of their work with photos to Valley Forward.

Valley Forward Association is a 43-year-old non-profit environmental public interest organization that brings business and civic leaders together to convene thoughtful public dialogue on regional issues, and to promote cooperative efforts to improve the sustainability and livability of Valley communities. In addition to environmental education, the Association's basic agenda includes: land use planning and open space initiatives, transportation and air quality issues, water management and energy.

###