



For Immediate Release

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NEEF Announces Winners of the Bartlett Environmental Education Award

WASHINGTON, October 22, 2012 — After a nationwide search, the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) selected Deborah Wasylik, a high school science teacher in Orlando, Fla., as the winner of this year's [Richard C. Bartlett Environmental Education Award](#). The award recognizes outstanding achievement by teachers in advancing environmental education at their schools.

Wasylik will receive \$5,000 and a trip to Washington, D.C. to meet other environmental educators and leaders. The Foundation also recognized two merit winners: Paul Ritter, a science teacher at Pontiac Township High School in Illinois and Kristine Rademacher-Gorovitz, who teaches 10th-12th grade science at Desert Vista High School in Phoenix, Ariz.

NEEF President Diane Wood said, "We are inspired by the work and ideas of these teachers. Their dedication to their students and teaching on the environment are truly outstanding, and we congratulate them on their success. We are also excited to host award winner Deborah Wasylik in Washington, D.C."

Wasylik teaches juniors and seniors at Dr. Phillips High School, on a campus of 3,600 students who speak 46 languages. Almost half of these students are enrolled in the federal free or reduced school lunch program and, since the school has not had a science budget in recent years, her department operates entirely on donations. Despite these and other challenges, Wasylik's students have scored over 30 points above the national average on the Advanced Placement (AP) Environmental Science exam for the past several years.

"Students have done tremendously on their coursework. We creatively use our urban school campus for nature observations, and as their teacher I facilitate student-led projects such as the school recycling program," said Wasylik. "I also meet with faculty to identify environmental topics of interest to students that help them make real-world connections with what they are learning."

Richard C. Bartlett (1935-2011) inspired environmental educators nationwide, believing that education is critical to preserving the natural world for future generations. His work in conservation and environmental education spanned over four decades. Mr. Bartlett was Chairman of the Board of Trustees at NEEF and served on the boards of the Nature Conservancy, the National Council on Science and the Environment, the Aldo Leopold Foundation and the Center for Big Bend Studies.

The award has been made possible through the support of Baxter Healthcare Corporation.

Merit winners Ritter and Rademacher-Gorovitz demonstrated great skill at engaging students through environmental projects, also referred to as environmental project-based learning.

Ritter's Operation Endangered Species project was created with the help of National Geographic's Dr. Brady Barr and focuses on the local alligator snapping turtle. Students in art, English, science and

business classes work together to raise the turtles from hatchlings, collect physical data, write teacher and student lab manuals, develop artwork, produce children's books, satellite tag the turtles and finally release them into the wild.

Rademacher-Gorovitz and her students have focused on a number of topics, such as invasive species. She organizes field trips to local and regional sites that afford in-depth environmental learning, including the Catalina Island Marine Institute. Through a green business project, her students choose a local business and provide consulting to help them improve their ecological footprints. Students assess businesses based on their paper, water, lighting and other energy usage, then come up with goals and strategies to improve conservation or energy-efficiency.

Wasylik will be using the Bartlett Award money to take her daughter, Colleen—a new science teacher in Charlotte, N.C.—with her to the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) conference in Texas. “The experience will help give her the skills to become a leader in environmental education at her school and in her district,” Wasylik said.

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About NEEF

The National Environmental Education Foundation is the nation's leading organization in lifelong environmental learning, connecting people to knowledge they use to improve the quality of their lives and the health of the planet.

To accomplish this, NEEF provides knowledge to trusted professionals and other leaders who, with their credibility, amplify messages to national audiences to solve everyday environmental problems. Learn more at www.neefusa.org, follow us on Facebook at <http://ow.ly/7HjRX> & Twitter [@neefusa](https://twitter.com/neefusa).