



NC Beautiful Presents Eighteen North Carolina Schools with 2013 Windows of Opportunity Grants

Elementary, Middle, and High Schools across the state are awarded grants that promotes environmental awareness and preservation

RALEIGH, NC – April 9, 2013 – NC Beautiful, a provider of environmental education and beautification opportunities that elevate the quality of life of North Carolinians, has announced this year's recipients of the organization's environmental education grants. Eighteen schools were awarded Windows of Opportunity Grants that are available to certified, full-time K-12 teachers in the state of North Carolina.

Windows of Opportunity provides up to \$1,000 grants to NC teachers to reward their creativity fostering environmental stewardship, leadership, and awareness and initiating a sense of community service. Since 1999, NC Beautiful has awarded tens of thousands of grant dollars to schools all across North Carolina—from the mountains to the coast. NC Beautiful Executive Director, Steve Vacendak, says that the goal of NC Beautiful is to offer a Windows of Opportunity grant annually in all 100 counties in North Carolina.

"Promoting and fostering environmental stewardship is a state-wide commitment," says Vacendak. "By rewarding our teachers throughout our state for their innovation and hard work, we can ensure that our children and grandchildren are participating in a project that sparks a lifelong interest in nature. They will appreciate this beautiful state even more for having had a teacher who went above and beyond to give them a hands-on, real-world experience. We are proud to be a small part of that discovery."

Susie Robidoux, a fourth grade teacher at Rainbow Mountain Children's School in Asheville, was one of this year's grant recipients. Robidoux will use the award to label different trees along a walk around the school and give information about the trees as part of an outdoor classroom. Different activities will be included for each grade level.

"I am so appreciative of NC Beautiful for selecting Rainbow Mountain Children's School...as a winner of the 2013 grants for environmental education," said Robidoux. "As a school that encompasses and imparts the knowledge and values of a naturalist to our children, this grant provides the means to enhance our curriculum with hands on activities that will engage learners of all ages and levels."

The Windows of Opportunity Grants were created to cultivate an appreciation of natural environments by helping children get out of school and into natural settings. The grants also build leadership awareness, develop environmental educational mentors and ambassadors, create materials and resources that can be used by other K-12 students, and develop a sustainable, outdoor program, which will continue well after the grant period ends.

The following is a list of the 2013 Windows of Opportunity Grant recipients, including the name of the teacher submitting the winning entry:

- Emily Pake, Beaufort County Early College High School, Washington (Beaufort County)
- Shannon Barham, Belville Elementary School, Leland (Brunswick County)
- Donna Michaux, Southport Elementary School, Southport (Brunswick County)
- Jamie Harbison, Hominy Valley Elementary, Candler (Buncombe County)
- Susie Robidoux, Rainbow Mountain Children's School, Asheville (Buncombe County)
- Deborah Coulter, West Carteret High School, Morehead City (Carteret County)
- Kayla Moore, Broad Creek Middle School, Newport, (Carteret County)
- Stephanie Sellers, Chadbourn Elementary, Chadbourn (Columbus County)
- Rebecca Leousis, Shawboro Elementary School, Shawboro (Currituck County)
- Margaret Cleary, Chinquapin Elementary School, Chinquapin (Duplin County)
- Mary Beth Seitzer, Granville Central High School, Stem (Granville County)
- Gena Byrd, Snow Hill Primary School, Snow Hill (Greene County)
- Carla Billups, Jonathan Valley Elementary School, Waynesville (Haywood County)
- Donna Bullock, West Hoke Middle School, Raeford (Hoke County)



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- Jodi Riedel, Wakefield High School, Raleigh (Wake County)
- Michelle Bass, Springfield Middle School, Lucama (Wilson County)
- Jennifer Byrd, John W. Jones Elementary School, Wilson (Wilson County)
- Cecelia Hampton, Sparta Elementary School, Sparta (Alleghany County)

Entries for next year's Windows of Opportunity Grants will be accepted online starting September 2013. For more information, visit www.ncbeautiful.org.

About NC Beautiful

NC Beautiful has been part of the state's environmental preservation community for over 40 years—supporting awareness, education and beautification efforts that affect our quality of life. Today, we concentrate on hands-on and merit-based programs designed to empower our citizens to preserve the natural beauty of the state of North Carolina. Whether it's school children building outdoor classrooms, graduate students developing cutting edge research, or a Boy Scout troop planting azaleas at an elder care facility, we make it possible for North Carolinians to keep NC Beautiful. For more information, visit www.ncbeautiful.org.

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