

## **NC Beautiful announces 2015 Duke Energy Foundation Windows of Opportunity grant winners**

- Eighteen N.C. schools win grants for outdoor learning programs
- Grants subsidize educational programs that promote environmental stewardship

RALEIGH, NC – NC Beautiful is pleased to announce it received a \$25,000 grant from the Duke Energy Foundation to provide Windows of Opportunity (WOO) grants to cultivate an appreciation of natural environments by helping children of all ages get out of the classroom and into natural settings. Eighteen schools across the state were awarded WOO grants.

The grants build leadership awareness, develop environmental educational mentors and ambassadors, create materials and resources that can be used by other students, and develop a sustainable outdoor program.

The Duke Energy Foundation invests in programs that promote environmental education and programs that protect, improve or restore natural resources.

“Through the Windows of Opportunity grants, students are able to experience firsthand the outdoor educational resources our state provides,” said Shawn Heath, president, Duke Energy Foundation. “Providing innovative learning opportunities can become a catalyst to engage future generations in science, the environment and our state’s natural resources.”

NC Beautiful Executive Director, Steve Vacendak, says that the support of the Duke Energy Foundation will help NC Beautiful broaden its reach to empower more citizens to help keep North Carolina beautiful. “This grant serves to reinforce Duke Energy’s continued commitment to environmental education in the state of North Carolina,” says Vacendak. “We congratulate all of our grant recipients, and want to thank The Duke Energy Foundation for helping us educate a new generation on the importance of preserving our environment and natural resources.”

The following is a complete list of the Duke Energy Foundation 2015 Windows of Opportunity grants recipients, including teachers who submitted winning entries:

- Jenny Kinard, Hildebran Elementary, Hildebran (Burke Co.)
- Lenora Barron, Weddington Hills Elementary, Concord (Cabarrus Co.)
- Tamara Letterman, Hudson Elementary School, Hudson (Caldwell Co.)
- Janet Brooks, Clyde Campbell Elementary, Hickory (Catawba Co.)
- Beverly Hart, Webb A. Murray Elementary, Hickory (Catawba Co.)
- Cheri Hudson, Blackburn Elementary, Newton (Catawba Co.)
- Kim Burton, Balls Creek Elementary, Newton (Catawba Co.)
- Meneca Davis, Willow Oak Montessori, Chapel Hill (Chatham Co.)
- Christopher Draughon, Gray's Creek Elementary, Spring Hope (Cumberland Co.)
- Michelle Joyner-Ricci, C. E. Jordan High School, Durham (Durham Co.)
- Sandra Lubchenko, Brooks Global Studies, Greensboro (Guilford Co.)
- Erika Dinkler, Overhills High School, Hope Mills (Harnett Co.)
- Teri Spivey, East Lee Middle School, Sanford (Lee Co.)
- Kara Boniello, Reedy Creek Elementary, Charlotte (Mecklenburg Co.)
- Michael Gilbert, Partnership Academy, Hillsborough (Orange Co.)
- Ella Kern, Donna Lee Loflin School, Asheboro (Randolph Co.)
- Debbie Swift, Davis Drive Middle School, Cary (Wake Co.)

- Farrall Hilton, Athens Drive High School, Cary (Wake Co.)

### **About NC Beautiful**

NC Beautiful has been part of the state's environmental preservation community for almost 50 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.