

Wheelabrator hosts 16th Annual Symposium for Environment and Education

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Wheelabrator Technologies Inc.

Media

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HAMPTON, N.H. - May 10, 2010- On a mission to think globally and act locally, 130 young environmentalists came forth to share their ideas at the 16th annual Wheelabrator Symposium for Environment and Education held recently in Sunrise, Fla.

Through the Symposium, middle-school students representing New England, the mid-Atlantic and Florida commit to a six-month learning project, identifying an environmental challenge in their community and developing a long-term solution. Under the guidance of educators and Wheelabrator employees, students apply lessons learned in the classroom to real-life situations.

“We ask them to find an environmental solution in their community - much like Wheelabrator had to do 35 years ago,” said Wheelabrator Technologies Vice President of Operations William Roberts. “Every year, it’s amazing. I’ve seen an array of innovative projects from preventing lead poisoning to stopping debris from entering storm drains. Seeing the abundance of optimism and environmental awareness in these students is amazing.”

“I applaud Wheelabrator,” said Stella Shelby, a teacher at Westglades Middle School in Parkland, Fla. “Every year, they continue to put on this Symposium, and it really does make a difference. I have students come back and say, ‘Wow, that was the best thing we ever did in middle school.’”

This year’s participants agreed.

“It’s fun to do something good for the environment,” said Kayleen McLean, a student at New River Middle School in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. “You feel good about it, and that makes you want to do more.”

“We’re not just learning about these things, we’re actually experiencing them and making a difference for the next generation,” said fellow New River student Abby Hodder.

“I really wanted to meet other kids who have the same green, eco-friendly perspective,” said student Pauline Holland of Millbury, Mass.

“I was looking forward to learning things from other presentations and seeing what the other teams were able to do this year,” said Josh Petalas, a student at Sawgrass Springs Middle School in Coral Springs, Fla.

Tackling issues such as conserving rain water, recycling, reducing waste and saving the manatees, 13 teams presented their projects and solutions to a panel of educators, government officials and local community volunteers.

“The projects these kids are doing are truly advanced, rivaling work that high school and college students can produce,” said Kent Wallace, director of physics at Fisk University, and one of the event’s judges. “And they’re engaging in activities that government agencies and adults deal with all the time - community outreach, project management, public policy and sustainability. It just shows you there’s no age limit for agents of change.”

At the awards dinner, Linda Sapienza, Wheelabrator’s director of community relations, recognized the achievements of each team.

“Your presentations were phenomenal,” said Sapienza. “But more importantly, you all made a difference in your communities. We appreciate your efforts and we’re honored to be partnered with such industrious and intelligent young men and women.”

Participating schools each received \$500 in startup funds and a \$1,000 donation from Wheelabrator at the conclusion of the event. In addition, students can later qualify to earn a four-year scholarship through Wheelabrator's partnership with Fisk University.

The event's keynote speaker, Greg Dorf, manager of environmental initiatives at Disney, encouraged students to continue in their efforts to think green.

"If you see your sister left the light on, turn it off," said Dorf. "If you see trash on the ground, pick it up. Somebody has to take the stand and that initiative will inspire others to do the same. This is our planet - our home - and we need to take care of it."

About Wheelabrator Technologies

A wholly owned subsidiary of Waste Management of Houston, Texas, Wheelabrator Technologies Inc. is a world leader in the safe and environmentally sound conversion of municipal solid waste and other renewable waste fuels into clean energy. Wheelabrator's 17 waste-to-energy facilities provide safe waste disposal for towns and cities across the U.S. Wheelabrator also operates five independent power plants designed to generate electricity using an assortment of fuels, including waste wood, tires, waste coal, and natural gas. In addition to producing electricity, some of these facilities also produce steam sold to nearby government and commercial establishments. Wheelabrator's 22 facilities have a combined electric generating capacity of 896 megawatts, enough energy to power more than 985,000 homes. To learn more, visit www.wheelabratortechnologies.com.

About Waste Management

Waste Management, based in Houston, Texas, is the leading provider of comprehensive waste management services in North America. Through its subsidiaries, the company provides collection, transfer, recycling and resource recovery, and disposal services. It is also a leading developer, operator and owner of waste-to-energy and landfill gas-to-energy facilities in the United States. The company's customers include residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal customers throughout North America. To learn more, visit www.wm.com or www.thinkgreen.com.

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