

FAU Pine Jog Celebrates Record Number of Schools “Going Green”



Green Team at Freedom Shores Elementary School, winner of the Susan Toth Outstanding Outdoor Environmental Education Award. From left to right are Patricia Trejo, Veronica Bergeron, Shari Davidsmeier, Taylor Salley and Julie Beesley, 2017 Green Teacher of the Year.

FAU

**PINE JOG ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION CENTER**

College of Education
Florida Atlantic University

Florida Atlantic University Pine Jog Environmental Education Center celebrated the Green Schools Class of 2017 at the ninth annual Green Schools Awards Luncheon held at Hilton West Palm Beach. One hundred ten public and private schools, representing over 30% of all schools in Palm Beach and Martin counties, made the grade in “going green.”

“Recognition was given to 22 ‘Green Schools of Promise,’ 39 ‘Green Schools of Quality’ and 49 ‘Green Schools of Excellence,’” said Anne Henderson, Director of Education at the Center. “These levels illustrate that ‘going green’ is a journey and that schools should be acknowledged for their efforts along the way.”

The Green Schools Recognition Program (GSRP) recognizes schools that have taken a holistic and innovative approach to greening their campuses and academic programs. Their efforts include school grounds enhancement, resource conservation, environmental curriculum connections, community involvement and a school-wide commitment to sustainability. The program is coordinated by FAU Pine Jog Environmental Education Center, in collaboration with the School District of Palm Beach County (SDPBC) and the Martin County School District (MCS D).

“This event was a wonderful celebration of Green School success stories across the region,” said Paul Strauss, director of Environmental & Conservation Services at SDPBC. “The Green Schools Recognition Program is getting bigger and better every year,” Mr. Strauss added, noting that this is the first year the program topped 100 schools.

Twenty-nine cash prizes totaling over \$13,000 were awarded to schools implementing exceptional green school programs and practices. All cash awards are intended to help these schools continue to grow their “green” projects.

Henderson credits the addition of the Green Schools Ambassador Program, funded by the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties, with the record number of schools being recognized this year. The program provides “green” coaches and resources to new schools to help them achieve their green goals.”

2017 top award winners were Oxbridge Academy winning first place and \$2000, Whispering Pines Elementary taking second place and \$1000, and J.D. Parker School of Science, Math & Technology receiving third place and \$750.

To learn more about the Green Schools Recognition Program and awardees, contact Anne Henderson at ahender8@fau.edu or Lauren Butcher at lbutcher2013@fau.edu.