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2013 Environmental Stewardship Award winners announced



Palm City, Fla. – At first glance, it would have been difficult to walk into the packed dining room at Piper's Landing Yacht & Country Club on February 6 and figure out who the event was honoring. There were school children who would typically be sporting T-shirts and shorts wearing pretty dresses, starched button downs and pressed khakis. They were mixing and mingling with elected officials, business owners, government employees and environmental leaders. And while the diversity of the attendees was obvious, so was their unity as they honored the many winners of Keep Martin Beautiful's (KMB) Environmental Stewardship Awards.

For nearly a decade, KMB has been hosting the annual Environmental Stewardship Awards as a way to recognize and celebrate the notable efforts within Martin County to promote environmental stewardship through education and action.

But it was one group, in particular, that really stole the show. The crowd rose quickly in a standing ovation, complete with thundering applause, whistle blowing and napkin swinging as Bessey Creek Elementary School's Team Green Recycle Buddies was announced as the winner in the youth and school category.

The students jumped, hugged, screamed and shouted “We won! We really won!” as they accepted their award for their diligent oversight of their school’s recycling program. Their efforts resulted in a 33 percent reduction in the amount of trash their Palm City school throws away. They also raised more than \$1,200 for Charity Water, an organization which provides clean and safe drinking water to developing nations and earned an additional \$500 for their school by sending their empty juice pouches to Terracycle, a company that provides free waste collection programs for hard to recycle materials.

“While this event is our organization’s only fundraiser and awards event, it has evolved into a celebration of our volunteers and the variety of ways they are improving our environmental and quality of life in Martin County,” KMB Logistics Coordinator Rob Ranieri said. “Watching school kids interacting with business leaders, elected officials and community activists and all coming together to honor each others efforts -- it just doesn’t get better than that.”

Celeste Norup, a faculty advisor for the Bessey Creek students who won the award, noted that these youth are not only learning the importance of being better environmental stewards for our community, but they are learning about what it takes to be committed to a cause they believe in. “They all gave up their recess time to manage the recycling program. To a fourth-grader, that’s a big deal!” she added.

This year KMB received 60 nominations honoring individuals, families, businesses, civic and youth groups, schools and government agencies that are helping improve the quality of life in Martin County. Jon Shainman of WPTV NewsChannel 5 hosted the annual Environmental Stewardship Awards ceremony where the 10 winners of this year’s awards competition were announced.

This year’s sponsors include Martin County Solid Waste, AT&T, The Breeze 93.7, The Firefly Group, King Ranch, Waste Management, Archer Western Contractors, Wallace Automotive, Seacoast National Bank, FPL, Sailor’s Return, Culpepper & Terpening, Continental Shelf Associates, NisAir, Whiticar Boat Works, Cook Electric, AmeriSweeps, Tobacco Free Partnership of Martin County, WastePro, Southeastern Printing, Thomas Winter Photography, and Piper’s Landing Yacht & Country Club.

To view a complete list of nominees and images from the event, visit keepmartinbeautiful.org.

Ten (10) Environmental Stewardship Winners

Martin County Fair Association - Business/Professional

The Martin County Fair Association launched the first ever fair-wide recycling program. With the support of Waste Management, twenty recycling bins were placed throughout the fairgrounds and collected two tons of recyclable material, decreasing the typical eight tons of trash for the week to six tons.

Environmental Studies Center - Government Agency

For 40 years, The Environmental Studies Center, part of the Martin County School Board, has focused on helping students get hands-on learning experiences about the local ecosystems and the Indian River Lagoon in order to become better environmental stewards.

Hobe Sound Women’s Club – Non-Profit/Civic Group

The Treasures from Trash program offers hands-on discovery workshops for children that focus on creative problem-solving, teamwork, art-making and environmental education. During these workshops children creatively reuse discarded materials, scrap and samples that would typically end up in a landfill.

Bessey Creek Elementary Team Green - Youth/School

The Team Green Buddies work diligently to oversee the recycling program at their school. In addition to reducing their disposable trash by one third, they also earned \$500 for the school by sending empty juice pouches to Terracycle.

David Peters - Unsung Hero

David Peters is committed to supporting public education, outreach efforts, and environmental stewardship in our community. He has initiated and managed multiple programs in the City of Stuart, in addition to supervising eight divisions and encouraging environmentally friendly practices in each of them.

Martin County Sheriff's Office - KMB Sustainability Award

The Martin County Sheriff's Office new gun range was constructed by using all recycled or reused materials from other government agencies. Materials used would have been otherwise thrown away such as previously used fencing, crushed concrete and tile, recycled asphalt, old gun range targets and old gates.

H2Ocean - Innovation Award

From the simple company policy of recycling all used boxes, paper and aluminum, to the recent installation of energy-efficient lighting and a rooftop solar energy system, this local business is committed to making sustainable improvements in Martin County. By purchasing raw materials exclusively from other environmentally-friendly companies they are not only blazing a new path for themselves and our community, but they are setting standards which can serve as a model for other companies to follow.

The Pine School: Organic Garden - KMB President's Award

Students at The Pine School assist in the planning, planting and harvesting of produce in the school's organic garden. Chefs for The Pine School also participate in the program by gathering the harvest and preparing it for students to eat in the cafeteria.

Doug Hencken - KMB Community Champion Award

Doug created the Community Clean-up for Schools Project, which picked up 1.2 tons of trash and collected 2,417 school supply items. His goal was to lift the spirits of everyone and bring the community together for a good cause.

Lloyd Jones - 2013 Raleigh "Riley" Jackson Award

Lloyd Jones has helped to foster a sense of community pride in Indiantown and played a key role in the 2012 Indiantown Extreme Martin Makeover. He also helped address the need for a litter ordinance initiative and has tirelessly and humbly championed the mission of Keep Martin Beautiful.

About Keep Martin Beautiful

Keep Martin Beautiful is a 501(c)(3) non profit community organization founded in 1994 as an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful. Its mission is to preserve and enhance the quality of life in Martin County through litter prevention, the promotion of recycling, improvement of solid waste management practices, and beautification and community revitalization activities. KMB signature events and programs include the annual Environmental Stewardship Awards Ceremony, the International Coastal Cleanup, the Great American Cleanup, the Adopt-A-Road & Adopt-A-Street programs, and other educational and outreach activities. Find KMB on Facebook at www.facebook.com/KeepMartinBeautiful, follow KMB on Twitter at www.twitter.com/KMBmartin or visit www.keepmartinbeautiful.org.

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