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**Dundalk Middle School leads BCPS in claiming “Clean Green" honors**

Together, they tallied 404 volunteers who filled 431 bags with trash during 121 separate clean-up events last spring. And that anti-litter effort was enough to make the students, staff, and friends of Dundalk Middle School the $4,000 grand prize champions of the first “Team BCPS Clean Green 15" litter challenge.

During an awards ceremony at Dundalk Middle on Tuesday, students cheered as their winning clean-up activities were celebrated by BCPS Superintendent Dr. S. Dallas Dance and County Executive Kevin Kamenetz.

Along with the $4,000 grant awarded to Dundalk Middle, cash grants and STEM training were awarded to six other schools that placed first or second in elementary, middle, and high school levels for the challenge. The challenge last May and June marshaled 3,200 BCPS students and volunteers at nearly two dozen schools to collect hundreds of garbage bags of debris and trash in a countywide initiative to beautify school campuses and communities.

“The Clean Green 15 initiative has been a great way for Team BCPS to learn about the importance of a clean environment and to show the pride we take in beautifying our schools and communities," said BCPS Superintendent Dr. S. Dallas Dance. “Congratulations to all the schools and students who participated in this worthy challenge, and thank you for doing so much to help make our schools and our county the best places in the nation in which to learn and live."

Added County Executive Kamenetz, “We are delighted with the enthusiastic response from schools and communities all around the county, especially for our first year. This kind of hands-on involvement helps students realize that they can take a stand against litter and directly help protect our communities and waterways."

All of the cash grants from the Education Foundation of Baltimore County Public Schools will go toward funding school-based instructional projects emphasizing the theme of environmental literacy. First place award winners, which received a $2,000 grant, included Westowne Elementary School, Holabird STEM Middle School, and Western School of Technology and Environmental Science. Second place finishers, who will benefit from a STEM resource enrichment experience provided by sponsor Hot Spots Extended Care Programs, Inc., are Chapel Hill Elementary, Ridgely Middle, and Woodlawn high schools.

Through the Clean Green program, which began this year, BCPS schools and their community supporters were challenged to conduct 15-minute clean-up activities in May and June. Community groups could support their local schools through the clean-up events, and schools competed to log the most events, trash collected, and participants. Schools could also undertake beautification efforts as well as part of the initiative.

The challenge was a collaborative effort of County Executive Kamenetz, Baltimore County Public Schools, the Education Foundation, and the Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability. Sponsors included Comcast, Hot Spots, and the Maryland Environmental Service.

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