

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release
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Caption:

‘Ding’ awards \$7K in school conservation education grants

(Sanibel Island, FL, December 2017) “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) on Dec. 18 awarded \$7,303 in grants to conservation education-related projects at eight different schools in Lee, Charlotte, and Collier counties for the 2017-2018 school year.

Teachers submitted grant applications to the DDWS Environmental Education Committee by Nov. 30; the deadline was extended this year because of Hurricane Irma. The committee chose awards based on need and relevance to conservation.

Schools to which DDWS awarded grants this year include Lehigh Elementary for its “Learning Gardens Outdoor Classroom” project, The Sanibel School for its “Sanibel School Recycling Team” project, Neil Armstrong Elementary in Port Charlotte for its “Hydroponic Community Garden” project, Colonial Elementary in Fort Myers for its “Increasing Nature Awareness through Experience” project, Patriot Elementary for its “Heroes of the Environment” project, Immokalee Middle School for its “All Creatures Great & Small” project, Challenger Middle in Cape Coral for its “Wild about Wetlands” project, and Robinson Littleton Elementary in Fort Myers for its “Naturally Good Readers” project.

“This is the 12th year the society has awarded these conservation teacher grants. The past four years we opened eligibility to a five-county area,” says Wendy Kindig, education committee chair. “To date, we have awarded more than \$75,000 in teacher grants. We were impressed by the wide variety of projects our teachers and their students imagined this year. The society is pleased to help the future of conservation stewards in this important way.”

Grant recipients report back on their projects to the society and refuge, sending pictures and often thank-you notes from the students, upon completion in June 2018.

In 2018, DDWS will again be awarding up to \$10,000 in teacher conservation grants for schools in Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee counties. The grants are funded by monies received from the DDWS Conservation Education Endowment Fund earmarked specifically for education by the late Kip Koss, grandson of Jay N. “Ding” Darling.

For information on next year’s grants, contact Conservation Educator Sara Hallas at 239-472-1100 ext. 236 or Kindig at wendykindig@aol.com, or visit dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/teacher-grants. Anyone interested in supporting conservation education at “Ding” Darling can visit dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Sarah Lathrop at sarah@dingdarlingsociety.org.

ABOUT DDWS

As a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, DDWS works to support J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge’s mission of conservation, wildlife and habitat protection, research, and public education through charitable donations and Refuge Nature Shop proceeds.

To join DDWS and support the refuge with a tax-deductible gift, visit dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Birgie Miller at 239-472-1100 ext. 4 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

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