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NJ Food Council Awards \$1,000 Scholarship to Long Pond School for Its Environmental Stewardship

ANDOVER, NJ – June 5, 2017 – The middle school students grow vegetables and donate the food to hikers on the Appalachian Trail. They run a composting program in the school cafeteria. They recycle. They collect plastic bags. They plant trees on the school grounds.

For this work, and much more, the Long Pond School Earth Club is a 2017 recipient of the New Jersey Food Council \$1,000 grant. It was presented at the New Jersey Clean Communities Council (NJCCC) annual awards event.

The Long Pond School, based in Andover, has been running the Earth Club for nearly 10 years, serving at its epicenter for environmental education and activism. Not only do students and teachers meet in the gardens to plant, weed and harvest, they also often eat lunch together amid raspberry vines and flowering dogwoods.

“There is so much enthusiasm among these students for caring for Mother Nature, with older students helping younger students, or those with disabilities, learn about environmental stewardship,” said Linda Doherty, president of the New Jersey Food Council and vice chairperson for the NJCCC.

“We are impressed how this program reaches into the community, with students cleaning up local streets, recycling and reusing bottles, and looking for ways in which to beautify the school grounds,” Doherty said. “This is certainly a unique program that could be a model for the entire state.”

Teachers from the grades 5-8 school were on hand recently, as the NJCCC held a banquet to honor winners of the annual Kids-Teens Awards, part of the 14th annual NJCCC conference, held this year in West Orange. Long Pond teachers were the special guests of the New Jersey Food Council.

Sandy Huber, executive director of NJCCC, said the Kids-Teens Awards recognize young people who demonstrate enormous pride in their communities and encourage others to keep the schools, parks and streets clean of litter.

“We applaud the students of Long Pond School, and are many other award winners, for what they have been able to accomplish and for what other successes await them in the future,” she said.

Learn more about the Kids-Teens Awards at njclean.org

Photo caption for attached photo: Toni Lu-Martin, Clean Communities coordinator for Andover Township; Mariann Whitaker of the Long Pond School Earth Club; NJCCC Chair Pat Ryan, Monika Sternecker, co-coordinator of the Long Pond School Earth Club; and Linda Doherty, NJCCC Vice Chair and NJ Food Council President, pose with a ceremonial check.

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