

# A \$3.1 Million Grant Renewal From The Toyota USA Foundation Expands Environmental Program for Urban Youth

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NEW YORK, NY (April 8, 2011) – In an effort to diversify the green movement and extend the benefits of nature to urban youth, The Nature Conservancy just announced the expansion of its signature youth program, *Leaders in Environmental Action for the Future (LEAF)*. This comprehensive, environmental leadership program for teenagers and their educators will now serve approximately 20,000 students attending multicultural environmental high schools in urban areas around the country.

The Toyota USA Foundation's gift of \$3.1 million over the next two years will build on *LEAF*'s 17 years of success in New York City and expand the program to Boston, Atlanta, New Haven, Newark, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. The unprecedented grant will provide critical funds to triple the number of environmental high schools and students served.

"Everything that I'm doing now, everything that I'm interested in, my view on life and the world, started with the *LEAF* program," said Josh Carerra, 21, a *LEAF* alumni at the University of Vermont who secured a full scholarship to its Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources. Josh is currently enrolled in the SIT Study Abroad Program in Brazil, where he is spending his junior year focusing on Resource Management and Human Ecology in the Amazon.

"The Toyota USA Foundation believes in supporting programs with long-term sustainable results. The Nature Conservancy and its partner environmental high schools have a successful history of empowering the next generation of conservationists, and we are incredibly proud to support the growth of this program," said Patricia Salas Pineda, Group Vice President of Philanthropy at Toyota Motor North America.

*LEAF*'s mission is to engage urban youth in conservation activities now so that they will become future stewards for our planet. The program provides paid, residential career internships for students on nature preserves around the country and enriches these experiences in the classroom by providing professional development opportunities to educators from partner high schools. Nationally, only 6% of students receive bachelors' degrees in the life science fields. According to a recent alumni survey of *LEAF* participants, 34% have gone on to major in life science fields in college and 21% of those majored in environmental studies. Approximately 33% of *LEAF* alumni have secured budding careers in related fields.

"We are truly grateful for the Toyota USA Foundation's generosity in supporting *LEAF*, as its grant will play a huge role in The Nature Conservancy achieving the long term goals of expanding the program to reach even more students and educators and diversifying the environmental field," said Mark Tercek, President and CEO of The Nature Conservancy. "The future of our planet is in the hands of our young leaders and we look forward to continuing our work with the Toyota USA Foundation in order to engage youth around the country and help foster a passion for the environment."

Learn more about the students that *LEAF* serves, the Toyota USA Foundation and about this unique partnership model at [www.nature.org/LEAF](http://www.nature.org/LEAF).

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### **About The Nature Conservancy**

The Nature Conservancy is the leading conservation organization working around the world to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people. Since 1951, The Nature Conservancy has protected more than 119 million acres of land and 5,000 miles of rivers worldwide — and we operate more than 100 marine conservation projects globally. The Nature Conservancy works in all 50 states and more than 30 countries—protecting habitats from grasslands to coral reefs, from Australia to Alaska to Zambia. For more information, visit [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org).

### **About the Toyota USA Foundation**

The Toyota USA Foundation is a \$100 million charitable endowment created to support education programs serving kindergarten through 12th grade students and their teachers in the United States, with an emphasis on mathematics, science and environmental science. For additional information about the Toyota USA Foundation, visit [www.toyota.com/foundation](http://www.toyota.com/foundation).