

Toyota to Send 24 Educators on Inaugural Visit to South Africa for Toyota International Teacher Program

April 27, 2011

- Program marks the first visit to South Africa for collaboration among U.S. and local educators
 - Since the program's inception in 1998, 635 teachers nationwide have traveled abroad
 - Program will take place July 24 – August 10, 2011

TORRANCE, Calif., April 27, 2011 – A group of 24 U.S. teachers have been selected to travel to South Africa through the Toyota International Teacher Program. In the program's 14-year history, this is the first time educators will travel to South Africa to learn about the local sociopolitical climate as well as education and environmental efforts in the area. Fully funded by Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. (TMS), the program provides educators with this unique study-abroad experience to enhance environmental and global awareness in schools.

Over the course of the program's history, a total of 635 teachers nationwide have traveled to Japan, Costa Rica, and the Galapagos Islands, where they were provided with global, environmental and cultural learning opportunities. Upon returning to their classrooms, teachers apply their experiences to the creation of interdisciplinary, hands-on, and solution-focused teaching based on their experiences abroad, giving their students a unique perspective and learning opportunity.

Program Overview

Administered by the Institute of International Education (IIE), the Toyota International Teacher Program will provide teachers the opportunity to learn first-hand about sustainability and conservation efforts in South Africa, the country's rich cultural heritage and the economic and political issues facing the country today. During their travels to Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, Cape Town, and Kruger National Park, teachers will participate in a variety of activities that highlight the relationship between South African history, culture, and the environment.

While in Johannesburg, teachers will visit the Apartheid Museum and Soweto Township.

In Durban, teachers will tour the Toyota South Africa plant and learn about Toyota South Africa's efforts to support local schools and educators. While in Cape Town, the group will collaborate with local South African teachers during five days of shared learning activities and visits to local schools. U.S. teachers will be matched with South African educators of similar grade level and focus area to better aid in collaboration both in the field and after the program. This collaboration is a first of its kind for the program.

Teachers also will experience South Africa's natural beauty and biodiversity during a visit to Kruger National Park. Other highlights include partnering with Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens and the Western Cape Department of Education.

During their time in South Africa, teachers will stay connected with their students via personalized virtual classrooms on the Toyota4Education.com wiki. Facilitating distance learning, the social media tool enables teachers to communicate their experiences in real time with their schools and communities. Educators will blog about their South African experiences, post photos and lesson plans and correspond with their students.

Representing 18 states and selected from a record number of 1,026 applications, the 24 participating teachers were chosen through a competitive, merit-based process administered by IIE, the nation's most experienced nonprofit educational exchange organization. Selection criteria include professional qualifications, evidence of interest in international education, and feasibility of incorporating the study experience into the curriculum.

Applications are now being accepted for the next program, taking place in Costa Rica, November 19 – December 3, 2011. The Toyota International Teacher Program values diversity and encourages educators of all backgrounds, subjects, and school types to apply for this unique professional development opportunity. Applicants must be a U.S. citizen, employed full-time as a secondary classroom teacher or teacher-librarian (grades 7-12) and have a minimum of three years teaching experience. To apply for the Costa Rica Program, visit <http://www.iie.org/toyota>. The application deadline is May 4, 2011.

Quotes

“Supporting education by providing professional development opportunities to teachers has always been a core mission for Toyota. The expansion of the Toyota International Teacher Program to South Africa, and our partnership with the Western Cape school system, provides a meaningful opportunity for a broad spectrum of teachers to connect and integrate environmental and cultural themes in various disciplines. We are looking forward to a very exciting and impactful program for the U.S. and South African teachers.” – Michael Rouse, vice president of philanthropy, Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.

“Through the Toyota International Teacher Program, thousands of students have benefitted from their teachers' experiences abroad, allowing educators to diversify classroom curriculum. It is our hope that this group of teachers will continue to collaborate with the local South African educators after the program, helping to diversity classroom curricula in the U.S.” – Dr. Allan E. Goodman, IIE President and CEO