

# Toyota International Teacher Program Sends U.S. Educators to Galapagos for Eco Study Tour

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*Toyota Continues Support of Environmental Stewardship and International Education in Schools*

TORRANCE, Calif., Nov. 3, 2010 ? Focused on enhancing environmental stewardship and international learning in schools, Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. (TMS) will send 24 U.S. teachers to Galapagos, Nov. 20 ? Dec. 4, 2010, through the Toyota International Teacher Program.

Now in its 12th year, more than 600 educators nationwide have traveled to Costa Rica, Galapagos and Japan through the program, completing a two-week study tour to a country where finding innovative solutions to environmental challenges are the highest priority. Upon returning to their classrooms, teachers apply their leanings to the creation of interdisciplinary, hands-on, and solution-focused educational approaches.

“Toyota believes in the importance of providing educators with unique professional development experiences,” said Michael Rouse, TMS vice president of philanthropy. “These can be extremely meaningful opportunities to connect with other teachers and environmental professionals in the Galapagos, as well as learning first-hand about the critical issues facing this World Heritage site.”

Selected through a competitive process conducted by the Institute of International Education (IIE), the 24 educators will explore solutions to environmental challenges and gain valuable insight into the human impact on Galapagos’ fragile ecosystem. While in Galapagos, teachers will visit model conservation initiatives and meet with biologists and conservation experts as they explore the natural wonders of the World Heritage Site. Through visits to local schools and shared service projects, U.S. educators will also have the unique opportunity to exchange teaching practices with Galapagueño educators, fostering lasting ties between both groups.

Through Toyota’s partnership with the Bren School of Environmental Science and Management’s graduate program at the University of California, Santa Barbara, Assistant Professor, Dr. Roland Geyer, will accompany the teachers during the trip. Acting as study leader, Dr. Geyer will give lectures on a variety of key environmental topics throughout the program, providing the scientific background and global connections teachers need to connect learnings acquired in Galapagos with the environmental challenges in their communities and around the world. The Bren School plays a leading role in researching environmental issues, training environmental management professionals and identifying and solving environmental problems around the world.

To kick off the program, teachers will visit Everglades National Park in Miami for a brief orientation and exploration of the Everglades biosphere, which is similar to that of the Galapagos Islands. In 2008 Everglades National Park was one of five national parks designated for support under Toyota’s LEAF program, which entailed a donation of \$5 million and 23 vehicles in support of environmental education programs at these parks.

Toyota’s involvement with the Galapagos Islands began in 2001, when World Wildlife Fund asked for Toyota’s help in transforming the energy system on the islands to one that will help conserve the Islands’ unique ecosystem. Toyota has since supported and/or funded various projects and programs in the Galapagos Islands, not only related to energy, but also to waste management. These include a redesign of the main fuel-handling facility on Baltra, renewable-energy teacher education workshops, and oil and waste recycling programs. In

order to create lasting change, community education and outreach and engagement of local and national governments have been key components of all of these programs and projects.

While traveling in Galapagos, teachers will create their own virtual classrooms through the [Toyota4Education.com](http://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 Galapagos experiences, post photos and lesson plans and correspond with their students.

Representing 22 states and selected from more than 850 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 environmental study experience into the curriculum.

"The Toyota International Teacher Program is a perfect example of how international education can help local communities contribute to solving global problems," said IIE President and CEO Dr. Allan Goodman. "Hundreds of teachers have been able to bring new ideas and perspectives from the Galapagos to their classrooms in the U.S., and the thousands of students in those classrooms are exposed to a global experience that enhances their understanding of environmental issues in their own communities and around the world. The impact of the program is exponential."

Funded by TMS, the Toyota International Teacher Program is the only one of its kind sponsored by a major U.S. corporation. Applicants must be a U.S. citizen, employed full-time as a secondary classroom teacher or teacher-librarian (grades 6-12) and have a minimum of three years teaching experience. The program is open to teachers in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Application information for future programs can be found at [www.Toyota4Education.com](http://www.Toyota4Education.com).

#### **About Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.**

Toyota Motor Sales (TMS), U.S.A., Inc. is the marketing, sales, distribution and customer service arm of Toyota, Lexus and Scion. Established in 1957, TMS markets products and services through a network of nearly 1,500 Toyota, Lexus and Scion dealers which sold more than 1.77 million vehicles in 2009. Toyota directly employs nearly 30,000 people in the U.S. and its investment here is currently valued at more than \$18 billion. Toyota is committed to being a good corporate citizen and focuses its support in the areas of education, the environment and safety. Since 1991, Toyota has contributed more than \$500 million to philanthropic programs in the U.S. For more information visit [www.toyota.com](http://www.toyota.com), [www.lexus.com](http://www.lexus.com), [www.scion.com](http://www.scion.com) or [www.toyotaneewsroom.com](http://www.toyotaneewsroom.com).

#### **About the Institute of International Education**

An independent, nonprofit organization founded in 1919, the Institute is the world's most experienced global higher education and professional exchange organization. IIE designs and implements more than 250 programs of study and training for students, educators, young professionals and trainees from all sectors with funding from government and private sources. IIE also conducts policy research and provides advice and counseling on international educational opportunities abroad. IIE has a network of 18 offices worldwide, over 800 college and university members and more than 5,000 volunteers. For more information, visit [www.iie.org](http://www.iie.org) or contact Mike McCartt at [toyotateach@iie.org](mailto:toyotateach@iie.org).

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