

Toyota International Teacher Program Supports Environmental Conservation Learning in Schools and Communities

May 11, 2010

U.S. Educators to Travel to Costa Rica for Environmental Stewardship Program

TORRANCE, Calif., May 11, 2010 ? Toyota is continuing its legacy of promoting environmental education in schools and communities through the Toyota International Teacher Program. Twenty-six U.S. teachers will travel to Costa Rica from June 18 ? July 3, 2010 to study global conservation issues with the goal of educating and inspiring their students about the importance of environmental stewardship. Since its inception 12 years ago, more than 600 teachers nationwide have traveled to Costa Rica, Galapagos and Japan through the program.

“Toyota believes it’s critical for educators to understand the complexities surrounding today’s global environmental issues. The more we learn about the world at large, the better we take care of our own communities,” said Michael Rouse, vice president of philanthropy, Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. (TMS). “Through this program, U.S. teachers have the unique opportunity to discuss ideas, share best practices, and confront the difficult challenges of sustainability with teachers and experts from other countries. Together, they connect concepts and create a virtual classroom.”

Selected through a competitive process conducted by the Institute of International Education, the 26 educators will explore solutions to environmental challenges. A unique highlight this year will be the group’s visit to Osa Peninsula, one of the most dense, biodiverse and pristine areas in Costa Rica.

For the first time in this program, the selected teachers will visit the remote Corcovado National park and the Terraba-Sierpe wetlands and mangroves. They will tour community-based enterprises, as well as mega tourist projects along the South Pacific Coastal region to study sustainable development and ecotourism.

As the teachers explore Costa Rica, they’ll be able to stay in touch with their students and colleagues in the U.S. through the Toyota4Education.com wiki. Designed to serve as a virtual classroom and facilitate distance learning, this social media tool enables teachers to communicate their experiences in real time with their schools and communities. Educators will blog about their Costa Rica experiences, post photos and lesson plans and correspond with their students.

To kick off the program, teachers will gather at Everglades National Park in Miami for a brief orientation and exploration of the Everglades biosphere to prepare them for the environmental issues they will see in Costa Rica. In 2008, Toyota contributed more than \$1 million and five vehicles to Everglades in support of environmental initiatives at the park over a three-year period. Dedicated to fostering park environmental education programs, the Everglades was among five national parks to receive a total donation of \$5 million and 23 vehicles.

A new element to this year’s program is the introduction of a curriculum study leader to assist teachers before, during and after the trip. A former Toyota International Teacher Program participant, Dr. Bronwyn MacFarlane, Assistant Professor of Gifted Education in the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, will provide curriculum development guidance to teachers by facilitating

online discussions, writing articles and giving several lectures throughout the study tour. After the teachers return, they will develop curriculum projects specific to their schools which will be shared with teachers from all over the U.S. in an effort to exchange ideas and lesson plans.

Representing 22 states and selected from nearly 800 applications – the highest number of applications ever received for the Costa Rica program – the 26 participating teachers were chosen through a competitive, merit-based process administered by the Institute of International Education (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.

“Providing educators with this unique opportunity to travel abroad and exchange ideas with Costa Rican educators and environmental experts has expanded global understanding in U.S. classrooms,” said IIE President and CEO Dr. Allan E. Goodman. “Thousands of students have benefitted from their teachers’ experiences, inspiring them to be more aware and involved in environmental and international issues.”

A second program for 2010 will take teachers to the Galapagos Islands from November 20 – December 4. Applications for this trip are being accepted through May 26. Funded by Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc., 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 the 2010 Galapagos program can be found at 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 34,000 people in the U.S. and its investment here is currently valued at more than \$18 billion. For more information about Toyota, visit www.toyota.com, www.lexus.com, www.scion.com or www.toyotaneewsroom.com.

Toyota is committed to being a good corporate citizen in the communities where it does business and believes in supporting programs with long-term sustainable results. Toyota supports numerous organizations across the country, focusing on education, the environment and safety. Since 1991, Toyota has contributed more than \$500 million to philanthropic programs in the U.S. For more information on Toyota’s commitment to improving communities nationwide, visit <http://www.toyota.com/about/philanthropy>.

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 or contact Mike McCartt at toyotateach@iie.org.

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