



Press Release

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For Immediate Release
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Afton Elementary's Green Team Shines at NEED Youth Energy Conference and Awards in Washington, D.C.

(Yardley, PA)—From June 22 to June 25, Afton Elementary's Green Team attended the prestigious [NEED](#) (National Energy Education Development) Youth Energy Conference and Awards in Washington, D.C. The event is designed to bring students from around the country together to learn and exchange ideas centered around energy education in schools.

The following students proudly represented the Green Team and their school at the conference: Jack Fitch, Henry Bankoske, Maddie Behme, Caitlin Castner, Reuben Hollins, Nayaan Aggarwal, Mackenzie Holmgren, Caroline Fitch, Ishaan Moghe, Gloria Namouvich, and Kaitlin Savage. The team was led by teachers and Green Team Advisors Kristin Slota, Emily Kopchinski, Emily Kirsh, and Angela Petrucci. Dr. Joanna Steere, the president of the Pennsbury School Board of Directors also attended the conference.

The students' participation was made possible through the generous support of PECO, which sponsored 90% of the conference fees.

The conference kicked off on Saturday, June 22, with an opening banquet attended by students and parents. The evening included singing Energy Songs, a Sidekick Circuit Activity, a State Role Call, and a trinket gift exchange with students from 20 different states and the District of Columbia.

On Sunday, Students engaged in a STEM Design Challenge, where they built an ice cream truck using a cardboard box and miscellaneous craft supplies. The challenge required the truck to keep the temperature cool enough to prevent the ice cream from melting. Each truck had to have wheels, a company name, a list of items to be sold, and special offerings by the company. Students tested their trucks and presented them to their peers, parents, teachers, and judges.

Students Jack Fitch and Caitlin Castner were recognized for the Best Elementary Presentation and received ice cream cone trophies. All participants enjoyed a popsicle treat upon completing the challenge. The day concluded with a Dinner Cruise on the Spirit of Washington, where over 300 conference attendees enjoyed dinner, dancing, and sightseeing along the Potomac River.

Monday began with a Trolley Tour of D.C., including visits to the WWII Memorial, the Marine Memorial, the MLK and FDR Memorials, and the Lincoln Memorial. Families then explored various sites of their choice, such as the Smithsonian Museum, the National Zoo, and the Holocaust Museum.

On the final day of the conference, the Green Team attended an awards reception where approximately 150 students from across the country and the District of Columbia were recognized for their energy projects. Afton Elementary was honored as the PA School of the Year and a National Elementary Runner-Up. Following the reception, the Green Team received a private tour of the Capitol by interns from Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick's office. The Congressman met the Afton group in the Rotunda, presented citations to the students and teachers, and gave the school a framed Congressional Record, a citation, and a flag. The group also held a question and answer session with the Congressman in the Visitors Gallery and witnessed legislative proceedings before returning home.

About Afton Elementary's Green Team:

Afton Elementary's Green Team consists of environmentally conscious students in grades three through five. They meet throughout the school year to engage in activities and initiatives designed to promote sustainability and energy education in their school and community. Past projects have included raising awareness about natural gas safety, beautification of school grounds, fundraising efforts to raise awareness for endangered wildlife, and vital conservation projects essential for providing Earth's biodiversity.

For the 2023-2024 school year, Afton's Green Team was composed of 38 students - Abigail Perez, Easton Samuels, Hailey Powell, Jack Fitch, Keshav Dave, Maddie Behme, Rose Nini, Violette Hausner, Agalya Manikandan, Brooklyn Bromberg, Daniel Hartman, Ethan Moses, Hazel DeSantis, Jay Dave, Lila Kally, Nayan Aggarwal, Sienna Burton, Xander Matlick, Avery Cumberland, Caitlin Castner, Daniel Strauss, Gloria Naumovich, Henry Bankosky, Justin Navon, Luca Incontro, Reuben Hollins, Stevie Birnbaum, Benjamin Strauss, Caroline Fitch, Danielle Bosque, Grace Carr, Ishaan Moghe, Kaitlin Savage, Mackenzie Holmgren, Riley Fitzpatrick, and Veer Gandhi.

About NEED:

Started in 1980, The National Energy Education Development (NEED) Project began as a one-day celebration of energy education when National Energy Education Day was recognized

by a Joint Congressional Resolution. In the same year, President Jimmy Carter issued a Presidential Proclamation stressing the need for comprehensive energy education in our schools, a reduction in our dependence of fossil fuels, and increasing energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy technologies. Since its founding over 40 years ago, NEED has kept its Kids Teaching Kids philosophy as a fundamental principle of NEED programming – encouraging students to explore, experiment, engage, and encouraging teachers to embrace student leadership in the classroom. NEED trains and assists teachers in harnessing the energy of the classroom – the energy of students.

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Attached Photos:

Afton NEED 1: Afton’s Green Team is recognized as the NEED PA School of the Year and a National Elementary Runner-Up

Afton NEED 2: Afton’s Green Team poses for a group picture at the NEED Conference in Washington D.C.

Afton NEED: Photo of the framed Congressional Record presented to the Afton Green Team by Pennsylvania Representative Brian Fitzpatrick