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Saint Joseph Academy’s Team Enerjagers Wins National Grand Prize Lexus Eco Challenge

Commitment and Hard Work Pays Off for Cleveland Students
Grand Prize Wins a Total of $40,000 for Environmental Action

CLEVELAND, OH – A team of seven highly motivated students from Saint Joseph Academy in Cleveland are celebrating their contribution to the Earth. Not only have they done their part to protect the planet, they’ve also emerged as the national Grand Prize winner in the High School category nationwide, winning the national Lexus Eco Challenge, an educational STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) program and contest that inspires and empowers middle and high school students to learn about the environment and take action to improve it.

Three out of the past four years, Team Enerjagers have placed as a finalist for the national Lexus Eco Challenge contest, earning more than $60,000 in scholarships. With this being their last year to make an impact, the Seniors had an inspiring idea and were even more motivated to win the grand prize. The team competed and beat out teams from coast to coast, including teams from New Mexico, Washington, South Carolina, Texas, New York and Missouri.

This year’s 11th annual Lexus Eco Challenge (www.scholastic.com/lexus), created by Lexus and Scholastic, had more than 2,300 students participate nationwide. From the 32 Final Challenge participating teams, Lexus and Scholastic have chosen two (one middle school and one high school) $30,000 Grand Prize-winning teams.

Saint Joseph Academy’s team “Team Enerjagers” focused their Final Challenge efforts on spreading awareness about reducing carbon footprint through the reuse of materials that would normally be thrown
away or energy spent on recycling them, which allowed the team to examine their reliance on fossil fuels. This resulted in creating “Second Chance Candles,” to address the issue of the use of fossil fuels and the related production of carbon dioxide emissions which contribute to global warming. The candles were created using clear bread bags, made up of plastic #4, a material that is no longer recycled. The team, comprised of seven Seniors, conducted research to see if burning the fumes coming from plastic #4 was harmful and learned it burns as a fuel. Instead of using components that contribute to our fossil fuel dependence, the students reused discarded glassware, crayons, beeswax and other eco-friendly ingredients. They removed more than 200 pieces of trash from a local beach to use in decorating their candle jars. To promote awareness of reducing the global carbon footprint, Team Enerjagers created an instructional video about their candles which was uploaded to BuzzFeed and YouTube, partnered with local organizations, shared their ideas with more than 500 people at a summit.

On Monday, March 19, the seven Seniors—Tatyjana Henry, Joslyn Muniz, Jadalise Pacheco, Alicia Valladares, Esther Ngemba, Angelia Johnson and Stephanie Rolon—were told in front of the entire student body that they had won the Lexus Eco Challenge grand prize! This amazing accomplishment resulted in a grand prize of $30,000—$20,000 in scholarships for the seven team members and $10,000 for the Academy. After four years of hard work and dedication, Team Enerjagers ensured an amazing product would be created, shared with various constituents, kept sustainability as the focal point and was able to raise awareness for global warming on a national scale.

Congratulations to Team Enerjagers on a fantastic win for Saint Joseph Academy!

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*Now in its 128th year, Saint Joseph Academy is the only Catholic high school for girls in the City of Cleveland. With a current enrollment of 725 young women, Saint Joseph Academy is rooted in the spirituality of the Congregation of St. Joseph and works to foster unifying relationships with God and all creation. Each young woman is empowered to achieve academic excellence, and inspired to a life of compassionate leadership and service in a global society. Saint Joseph Academy is located at 3470 Rocky River Drive in Cleveland. For more information, visit [www.sja1890.org](http://www.sja1890.org) or call 216.251.6788.*