



USGBC South Florida Chapter Wins "Green Your Alma Mater Challenge"

Published on 21 Sep 2011

Posted in [Center for Green Schools](#)

Earlier this summer, the [Center for Green Schools](#) hosted the "Green Your Alma Mater Challenge," a competition that engaged both [USGBC](#) staff and chapters to reach out to their alma maters and applaud their sustainability initiatives, and directing them to resources [USGBC](#) has developed to sustain and support their green initiatives. Based on the highest percentage of participation, [USGBC](#) chapters competed for the grand prize: a dinner with [USGBC's](#) President and CEO, [Rick Fedrizzi](#).

[USGBC's South Florida chapter](#) wrote more letters to their alma maters than any other chapter, largely due to the enthusiastic leadership of two volunteers: Linda Smithe and Robert Cannellos. "We marshaled the troops," said Smithe, "and they came through." South Florida's executive director, Lee Cooke, noted: "We have a very special group. Volunteers are the life-blood of our organization. Linda and Robert are two of our finest volunteers."

Linda Smithe at the Learn Green Conference

- [Learn Green](#) This annual conference targets teachers, administrators, parents, students and other green schools advocates. The two day event includes a daylong conference followed by a daylong tour of green schools in the area. Last year Rachel Gutter, director of the Center for Green Schools, was the keynote speaker.
- [Green Apple Awards](#) This new event will premier in 2012. It will recognize the hard work of teachers and parents who have "implemented and committed to green innovation in their community, campus, classroom, and at home."
- [Gala Verde](#) This LEEDership and Green Awards Program recognizes and honors green businesses and projects that go "above and beyond the call" of sustainable green initiatives. Last year's gala hosted nearly 450 attendees.

South Florida is beginning to work more closely with colleges and universities in their area, and are particularly impressed with the sustainable efforts of Florida Atlantic University. Emerging Professionals in the chapter are also working with high school students through the ACE mentorship program, including administering a sustainability scavenger hunt where students go from building to building to note their key green features.

Congratulations, South Florida Chapter! And as for their prize? "We can't wait to pick Rick's brains," says Cannellos about the upcoming dinner with [USGBC's](#) president and CEO. "We take what happens at [USGBC](#) national seriously, and look to integrate ideas right back into our programs."

Click [here](#) to read an interview with Linda Smithe!

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