

Winners to be honored for Bringing Nature Home



Hammond Academy of Science and Technology was awarded a "Bringing Nature Home" Award by Friends of Shirley Heinze Land Trust. Curriculum Director Deb Snedden, Liz Gomez, Principal Sean Egan, Tyshaun Jordan; and Wildlife Habitat Council representative Daniel Goldfarb are shown in the native landscape designed and executed by students with financial support of BP and technical help from WHC.

VALPARAISO | Shirley Heinze Land Trust will host its second annual Community Luncheon on Nov. 16. This event is open to the public and will honor six unique groups for creating their native landscapes.

Registration will begin at 11:30 a.m. and lunch starts at noon at Strongbow Inn, 2405 E. U.S. 30. Mark Maassel, president and CEO of the Northwest Indiana Forum, is the keynote speaker.

Tickets cost \$25, with the opportunity to sponsor a full or half table. To register, call (219) 879-4725 or email reservations to development@heinzetrust.org. Send checks to Shirley Heinze Land Trust, 444 Barker Road, Michigan City, IN 46360.

This luncheon will recognize key organizations and groups with "Bringing Nature Home" Awards for utilizing native plants in landscaping and thereby helping bring back ecosystems lost to development.

Valparaiso Parks entered rain gardens in their downtown area which are engineered to catch excess runoff from rain events. Krueger Middle School in Michigan City will be granted an award for a rain garden which is part of a large environmental complex planned at the school. International Friendship Gardens of Michigan City will be cited for its native plant garden and their Native American garden.

Hammond Academy of Science and Technology students will be given an award for the native landscaping they planned and executed in their new school grounds. BP and Wildlife Habitat Council will receive awards for funding and partnership in the project. The Beverly Shores Environmental Restoration Group planted a demonstration native plant garden on Broadway which will be honored. Safe Harbor After School Program at Joy School in Michigan City earned an award for their native plant garden and the educational activities surrounding the planting.

Each of these entities has used native plants with the effect of bringing back ecosystems that human development has greatly reduced. The ecosystems of pre-European settlement were built on a foundation of native plants which provided food and shelter for butterflies, birds, amphibians, reptiles and more.

The Friends of Shirley Heinze are dedicated to supporting the Heinze Trust's mission by promoting the development of natural "corridors" throughout Northwest Indiana and encouraging homeowners, parks, schools, developers, and other entities to plant native species.



Arlene Beglin, Bill Shaudt and Phoebe Boelter, members of the Environmental Restoration Group of Beverly Shores, are shown in their award-winning native plant landscape, which will receive a "Bringing Nature Home" Award from Friends of the Shirley Heinze Land Trust.