



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT: Katelyn Larsen, Southern YES! Coordinator
218.209.5690**

**katelyn@youthenergysummit.org
www.youthenergysummit.org**

Westbrook-Walnut Grove Earth YES! Team Wins Awards!

Henderson, MN—Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center and the Ney Nature Center are excited to announce that the Westbrook-Walnut Grove Earth/YES! Team was awarded the All-Star and WOW Factor Awards for their 2015-16 project accomplishments. For their efforts, the team received \$750 in award funding to be used in future YES! team work. This year's awards were sponsored by the Henderson Fire Department and United Fund of Le Sueur.

The Westbrook-Walnut Grove team incorporated the YES! Program into their curriculum years ago, which allows the students to complete projects during class time. As a result, the team completed nine major projects this year, but most notable to the judges were the solar pop can heaters and trombe walls. After working with their community entering in energy data to the B3 database for the past three years, the team knew they wanted to focus on some projects that could eventually give back to the community and help reduce its carbon footprint. They got the idea for the solar pop can heaters and trombe walls after seeing some ideas online. For each project, the students came up with the idea, sourced the materials, and fabricated and tested the designs. One student commented, "I thought there would be a really interesting way to keep our classrooms warm while using recycled materials. If done right, I thought it would be really cool to put in our school." The team plans to mass produce both the solar pop can heaters and trombe walls and sell them to the community as a way to fund future projects. More information on both projects can be found on the YES! blog at <http://www.youthenergysummit.org/news/blog/>

YES! is a unique experiential learning program where youth in grades 7 through 12 engage in hands-on learning and undertake meaningful projects that expose students to how science, technology, engineering, and math are applied in real life. These projects not only lead to dramatic demonstrations of renewable energy technology and conservation practices, but also build skills that will directly impact their future in education and the workforce like creativity, innovation, problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and project management. During the 2015-16 school year, 31 YES! teams participated around southern, central, and northeastern Minnesota. This is Westbrook-Walnut Grove's 7th year participating in the YES! Program.

ABOUT YOUTH ENERGY SUMMIT

YES! empowers youth to partner with their community to create economic and environmental vitality through hands-on learning and team-based projects related to energy efficiency, renewable energy, waste reduction, recycling, composting, local foods, and more. The YES! Program is a collaboration between Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center, Laurentian Environmental Center, Saint John's Outdoor University, and Ney Nature Center. Major funding for the 2015-2016 season is provided by the McKnight Foundation and the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, a constitutionally-established permanent fund for protecting and enhancing Minnesota's environment and natural resources, as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). For more information, visit www.youthenergysummit.org

###