



CONTACT: Merrill Sikorski

Contest Creator and Coordinator (907)-262-4949

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

“Capt. Conservation” takes 27TH CARING FOR THE KENAI COMPETITION

Kenai, April 20, 2017 As Caring for the Kenai stepped into its twenty seventh year a new super hero was created by Soldotna Prep freshman Anya Hondel and it took first place honors and a \$1,600 cash award in the annual environmental and natural disaster preparedness contest. “I was trying to think of an idea but I was stuck. Science is not my best subject so I wanted to incorporate some of my passions into the idea. I love to teach and I love performing arts so my idea was to create a character that could raise environmental awareness by writing and performing a puppet show,” said Hondel the student of Ms. McGlothen.

The CFK essay prompt challenges high school students to respond to the question “What Can I do, invent or create to better care for the environment of the Kenai Peninsula or improve the area’s preparedness for a natural disaster?” Taking second place and earning \$1,100 was Angela Druedow of Nikiski who invented a wolf yearn dispenser to keep moose off the highways. “My plan is to install my ‘Spook the Moose’ boxes along sections of the highways that have the highest incidence of road kills,” said Mr. Morin’s student. In third place and claiming a \$900 prize was Bradley Walters another Soldotna Prep student from Ms. McGlothen’s class. Walters, a Snow Shoe Gun Club member and skeet shooter has a plan to make lead contamination inert. “We apply a phosphate base fertilizer that immobilizes the lead from seeping into the ground and harming wildlife.” Taking fourth place honors and \$750 was Hunter Beck of KCHS and Kristin Davis’s student. Beck plans to build an outdoor platform to protect streamside vegetation from erosion so the Stream Watch program can continue. Coming in 5th and winning the \$650 prize was Kimberly Trefon from KCHS of Ms. Grossl’s class whose idea is to protect city rain drains from road run off contaminants. The team of Krysten Johnson-Gray and Daisy Terry of Seward, Shoshana Brasher’s students won 6th place and a \$550 prize with a tsunami song that they wrote and performed.

(CFK cont.)

In addition to the \$8,000 in cash awards for the finalists, this year \$20,000 will be awarded to the schools science departments. Thanks to the CFK signature sponsor Tesoro Alaska and the community partners Kenai River Raven Lodge, Hilcorp Energy, Peninsula Community Health Services, ConocoPhillips and Peninsula Radiation Oncology Center. High schools using CFK as part of state standards curriculum were: KCHS, Nikiski, Soldotna Prep, Ninilchik, Vosneszenka, Homer, Seward, Cook Inlet Academy and several home school students. Each school receives \$750 for their participation and the remainder of the \$20,000 will be allocated proportionately to how the students ranked in the CFK competition. Additionally, twenty plus students will receive special recognition awards from local businesses and individuals.

Other finalists that earned \$400 each for making it to the final 12 out of 400 some entries were: Jacob McConnell of Soldotna Prep with his educational pamphlet on how not to get lost and what to do if you do. Kylie Ness of Soldotna Prep wants to organize a fall community roadside clean up with contest incentives. Giorgy Kalugin of Vosneszenka researched a way to deploy lady bugs to kill the aphid outbreak in the Southern Peninsula. Brooke Nash of KCHS addressed the issue of mega food waste. Chelsea Plagge from KCHS did an amazing research on a new triangle that produces electricity from footsteps called Pavegen. She is preparing to run an experiment using the triangles at her school.

In addition to cash awards the finalists will receive the 2017 CFK hooded jacket. Saturday, April 29th finalists, teachers and guests will attend the CFK V.I.P Awards banquet hosted in their honor by Tesoro at the Challenger Learning Center of Alaska. All of the more than 400 participants that entered the contest will receive a custom battery pack for charging handheld electronic devices. This year's oral presentation judges included Borough Mayor Mike Navarre, Tesoro Vice president Kenai Refinery Cameron Hunt, Brendyn Shiflea of ConocoPhillips, Marnie Olcott, CEO Challenger Learning Center, Eric Soderquist for KPBSD Supt. of Schools Sean Dusek, Dick Erkeneff, Kenai River Raven Lodge, Albert Wall PCHS CEO and Hunter Hanson CFK '16 2nd place winner. Caring for the Kenai is administered as part of the Challenger Learning Center of Alaska educational programs.

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(Actualities from an interview of the top 4 winners is available upon request by calling 907-262-4949)