



## 2007 Outstanding Service to Environmental Education by an Organization at the Global Level

### *Laurel Springs K-12 Distance Learning School*

Since 1991, LSS has maintained a clear focus on environmental education, creating a culture for its students that promotes stewardship and activism. LSS actively supports global environmental movements through its involvement in the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), the UN Global 500 Forum, partnerships with NGOs, and its charitable foundation.

Marilyn Mosley Gordanier, LSS Founder and executive director, is the driving force behind the school's commitment to teaching sound living through practicing environmental awareness. In 1991, her environmental studies class was awarded UNEP's Global 500 Award for their video project which motivated youth around the world to "make a difference" in protecting the environment. This led to LSS' induction into the UN Global 500 Forum of Laureates in 1992. The Forum promotes and connects Laureates and their work with millions of people worldwide.

A frequent featured speaker at environmental youth conferences, Ms. Mosley has served as volunteer UN Global 500 Forum President for the past four years.

In 2000, LSS created Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs) to accompany its mission statement, stating that each LSS student shall become a "global citizen," respecting all people and the environment. Furthering its commitment, LSS formed a chapter of the National Honor Society, focusing on education and activism related to climate change. Members complete the online Leaders4Earth environmental course and 56 hours of service and leadership.

Wishing to broaden environmental education to include students worldwide, in 2003, LSS began developing a unique 36-week online course, Kids4Earth, for 10-14-year-old students. Global 500 Laureates around the world enthusiastically contributed to the course's creation. Based upon the work of these award-winning, grassroots environmentalists, the course covers a wide range of environmental issues. It encourages investigation, awareness, and action.

In endorsing the course, Eric Falt, Director of Communication for the United Nations Environment Programme said this: "Kids4Earth, an online educational tool for children, fits well with UNEP's mandate to educate and empower individuals to take a stand on behalf of the environment. The course, with weekly lessons and environmental activities, unites the technology of the Internet with concerns for the environment. It also provides children with role models of real people who have been acknowledged by UNEP as examples of global stewardship or leadership. We welcome this initiative."

To launch Kids4Earth internationally, in 2006, LSS students and teachers developed a plan to offer the course for free international distribution to underserved students through the Laurel Springs Educational Foundation (LSEF). The foundation hopes to reach 50,000 students by the year 2010.