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Schools Reap Benefits of ‘Rain Barrel Art Auction’

Challenging students to learn about water conservation and to take action to conserve resources will be easier this fall at three Hill Country area schools thanks to grants from the 2011 Rainwater Revival and the Hill Country Alliance.

Each year the Rainwater Revival, a day-long festival that promotes rainwater catchment as an alternative to using dwindling supplies of surface and ground water, auctions rain barrels decorated by the Hill Country region’s professional artists. The funds raised go to help elementary and middle school teachers design and implement water conservation-focused programs and projects.

“The innovative school projects selected by the grants committee were spot-on for encouraging students to get involved and become the water-wise community leaders of our future,” Christy Muse, director of the Hill Country Alliance which sponsors the event, said. “HCA was so delighted with the quality of the applications and the passion of the applicants that we decided to match some of the funding so that all three of these projects could be fully implemented this fall.”

The schools selected to receive \$900 grants for the 2012-2013 school year include:

-Bandera Middle School (Bandera ISD), which will expand the use of captured HVAC condensate for irrigation purposes, a project designed, implemented and guided by a cooperative effort involving students, faculty and staff;

-Eden Park Academy (Austin Charter School), which will add rain barrels to its existing classroom sustainable gardening project, expand the amount of garden area, and use the rain barrels as canvases for student art projects;

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-J.J. Pickle Elementary School (Austin ISD), which will turn an eroding slope into a rain garden and grassland area and add a self-sustaining pond ecosystem, which will complement the school's existing outdoor educational areas that include butterfly and vegetable gardens.

The 2012 Rainwater Revival, a free event filled with music, food, fun and rainwater education from basic to advanced, is set for Saturday, October 27, at the Boerne Convention Center, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information about the Rainwater Revival and to view some of the past year's rain barrel works of art, visit www.rainwaterrevival.com. Hill Country Alliance is a non-profit organization dedicated to caring for the unique features of the Texas Hill Country for the benefit of future generations – more at www.hillcountryalliance.org.

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Note to Editors: High-resolution photos of art barrels are available

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