

The St. Cloud Apollo YES! team was awarded the second place YES! Award for its 2012-13 project accomplishments by the Southwest Initiative Foundation and Prairie Woods ELC. For their efforts, the team members received \$625 in award funding to be used in future YES! team work. This award was sponsored by Southwest Initiative Foundation and AgStar Financial Services.

The St. Cloud Apollo YES! team was led by St. Cloud Apollo High School teacher Katie Herrboldt and included 12 Apollo students. These students worked to increase the amount of school-wide recycling by putting a recycling bin by every trash can in their school. They also educated faculty and students about what can and cannot be recycled. Their efforts have allowed them to cut down on garbage and increase recycling so much that their school removed a garbage dumpster and added a recycling dumpster to their school for their waste pickup. They also installed two hydration stations in their school in order to decrease plastic bottle waste and partnered with the Minnesota Zoo to implement a cellphone recycling drive to fund rain forest preservation efforts. St. Cloud Apollo YES! team member Kim Colgan also spoke about the team's projects at the St. Cloud Green Forum and the Minnesota Environmental Initiative Awards.

YES! is a unique experiential learning program where youth in grades 7 through 12 engage in hands-on learning and undertake meaningful projects that 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 our workforce such as creativity, innovation, problem-solving, communication, teamwork and project management. These projects also expose students to how science, technology, engineering and math are applied in real life. During the 2012-13 school year, 32 YES! teams participated around central, southwest and southern Minnesota. This is St. Cloud Apollo's first year participating in the YES! Program.

The St. Cloud Apollo YES! team is not the only one winning awards: the YES! Program was recently awarded the Minnesota Environmental Initiative's 2013 Environmental Education award. The MEI awards annually honor innovative projects that have achieved extraordinary environmental results by harnessing the power of partnership.

For information about YES!, visit www.youthenergysummit.org.