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## Toyota grants will pay for a TAPESTRY of research

Seabury, Kihei Charter teachers each receive award

By CLAUDINE SAN NICOLAS, Staff Writer

POSTED: April 26, 2009

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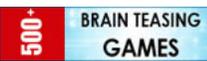
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TORRANCE, Calif. - Two Maui teachers each have been honored with a \$10,000 grant for excellence and innovation in science education to be used for projects in their classrooms.

The Toyota TAPESTRY awards to Kathleen Ireland and Dan Kuhar are sponsored by Toyota Motor Sales USA Inc. and administered by the National Science Teachers Association.

Ireland, a biology teacher at Seabury Hall, will lead her students in a project to harvest and press oils from native Hawaiian plant seeds. The oil will then be tested for energy production and used to run a student-designed motor.

The Seabury Hall students also will work in conjunction with University of Hawaii at Manoa students to uncover the optimal growing environment for a new type of oil-producing plant.

Kuhar, a science and health teacher at the Kihei Charter Middle School, will use his grant money to create a program for students to study the statewide spread of invasive algae. Kuhar's class has partnered with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to determine which species of algae cause the most problems and which water conditions cause the biggest algae blooms.

Toyota TAPESTRY is the largest annual K-12 science teacher grant program in the country, according to the company's news release. Award-winning projects are selected from three critical areas for youth: environmental science, physical science and science applications that promote literacy.

Fifty grants of up to \$10,000 are awarded each year, along with a minimum of 20 grants of as much as \$2,500 each. More than \$8.5 million has been awarded to 1,064 teams of teachers throughout the program's 19-year history.

Kuhar said he and others at Kihei Charter School are excited about embarking on the algae project.

"Students will be empowered to be stewards of their community, aina and kai," Kuhar wrote in an e-mail. "Students will also benefit from the positive and healthy impacts of spending time outdoors, observing the natural world, and cooperative learning," he added.

The Kihei Charter project will involve approximately 160 students in grades 6 to 8 working in partnership with community members, scientists and partners at NOAA. The program emphasizes community-based education and a classroom-without-walls concept of hands-on work that takes place in the field.

At Seabury Hall, Ireland will start the first segment of her project with approximately 70 freshmen. They will locate kukui nut trees, analyze the microenvironments of these trees and harvest the nuts. They will then work with student mentors in Seabury's engineering class to press oil from the collected nuts.

The project moves forward with sophomores adding findings; then seniors in an engineering class will use the oil to power their biofuel motor. They will record any observations they find in the use of the oil.

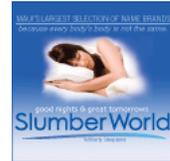
Ireland expects some 170 students will be involved in the project, and will present their findings to Seabury's entire student body.

### Article Photos



Kihei Charter School photo

Kihei Charter Middle School student Lucas Zarro (left), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Maui Programs Assistant Alastair Hebard and fellow students Tatiana Kealilinohomoku and Kiana Soloria conduct field research as part of a science class. The students' teacher, Dan Kuhar, received a \$10,000 Toyota TAPESTRY grant to create a program for students to study the impact of invasive algae. Kuhar's class has partnered with NOAA to determine which species of algae cause the biggest problems and which water conditions cause the biggest algae blooms.



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"I am very interested in providing authentic learning experiences in my classrooms as well as stimulating interest in 'real life' science," Ireland said in an e-mail. "The take-home message from this project is that Seabury Hall students will be working in a large cohesive group to identify possible solutions to our dwindling fuel issues. They will learn the importance of careful and clear data collection, as well as discovering the challenges of working on real world problems in a group setting.

"With any luck, Seabury Hall students will be able to produce a viable alternative fuel, complete with some efficiency testing!"

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