



**WELCOME!**

We are excited to be sharing our first newsletter with the growing network of YES! participants and supporters. As YES! gears up for its 5<sup>th</sup> season, we can't help but reflect on how amazing last season was. Teams completed outstanding projects over the course of the 2010-2011 season, and were recognized at the April and May Earth Day events. ACGC YES! team and Westbrook-Walnut Grove YES! team were this year's overall winners, earning top prizes in both energy conservation categories and overall distinction in their respective regions. To learn more about last season's accomplishments please check out the 2011 [Team Action Summary](#).

The 2011-2012 season will mark a year of great growth for the YES! Program as we continue to expand to new regions of the state. Through partnerships with Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation and Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center, YES! will now include the southeast region of Minnesota. Earlier this year, YES! also secured funding through the [Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Natural Resources \(LCCMR\)](#). Under these funds, YES! will be expanding further north too. These expansions provide an exciting opportunity for new teams to engage in YES! as we work together to create a sustainable and vibrant future for our communities. Thank you for your signing up to 'Stay Connected' to the YES! program! We're looking forward to an eventful season!

*Sincerely,*

YES! staff

**IN THIS ISSUE**

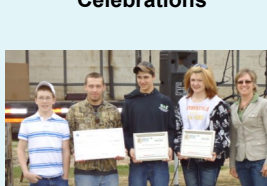
- 2011 YES! team accomplishments
- YES! welcomes new staff
- Invitation for new teams
- YES! funding

**MISSION**

**YES! empowers youth to partner with their community to create economic and environmental vitality through hands-on learning and team-based projects.**



ACGC (above) and WWG (below) accept their 1st-place awards at the YES! Earth Day Celebrations



**YES! NOW AVAILABLE IN MORE MINNESOTA COUNTIES**

**YES! is inviting communities and schools in 48 counties to field YES! teams for the 2011-2012 season!**

Partnership with Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center in Lanesboro and Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) in Owatonna are making it possible for the YES!

Program expand into southeastern Minnesota.

Eagle Bluff is excited to be a part of this partnership with the YES! program and to extend their impact to the high school students involved in the YES! program. They are also excited to host YES! events for teams in the southeastern region of Minnesota.

SMIF is in its second year of partnership with the YES! program and has been working hard to recruit YES! teams in the southeastern part of Minnesota. SMIF hopes to develop an entrepreneurial spirit in high school students through the YES! program by challenging the southeastern YES! teams to pursue ideas that could be turned into viable businesses.

Meanwhile, YES! partners Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center (PWELC) in Spicer and Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF) in Hutchinson are seeking new YES! teams in an expanded region of central, west-central and southwest Minnesota, in part through ENRTF/LCCMR funding. Since 2007, SWIF and PWELC have worked together to engage youth in economic and environmental vitality through the YES! program in an area that has already encompassed much of west central and southwest Minnesota. This year's expansion means that YES! will be available as far north as Ottertail, Todd, and Morrison Counties. YES! has been met with considerable interest in the new area, notably from the St. Cloud Area Sustainability Committee, who threw their support behind YES! as a proven way to involve young people in achieving the goals of their sustainability plan.

Check the map to identify which counties are targeted for YES! this season. If YES! is available in or near your area, we encourage you to get in touch with us to find out how to support YES! in your community.



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**CONTACT US**

[E-mail YES! staff](#)

or

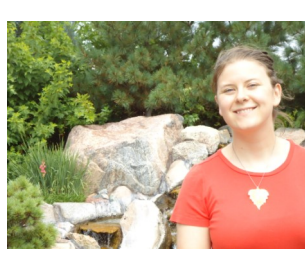
Individual staff contact available [here](#)



**YES! COORDINATOR WELCOMED TO YES!**

The YES! teams in southeastern region of Minnesota will be coordinated by myself, **Aleta Kolan**. My office is located at the Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center in Lanesboro. I am excited to be a part of the expansion of the YES! Program to southeastern Minnesota for the 2011-2012 school year!

I was born and raised in Northfield, Minnesota and graduated this past spring from St. Olaf College with a degree in biology. While at St. Olaf, I had opportunities to explore many areas of biology including science education. Outside of school, I have also had opportunities to use my biological knowledge while working. Last summer I interned at the Science Museum of Minnesota and at an organic farm just outside of Northfield. My experiences at these organizations instilled in me a desire to educate others about sustainable practices such as those highlighted by the YES! Program. I am impressed by the projects that have been implemented by YES! teams thus far and I look forward to seeing what YES! teams will accomplish in the next year.



**pictured:** Aleta Kolan, Southeast region YES! coordinator

**CURRENTLY ON OUR BLOG**

[Student funding opportunity](#)

[Fall Summit date announced!](#)

[Springfield's YES! project wins award](#)

[YES! announces Earth Tub recipient](#)

**PROJECT LEADER WELCOMED TO YES!**



**pictured:** Shelli-Kae S. Foster

In anticipation of welcoming new teams in an expanded region, the YES! program sought to fill a new full-time position: YES! Unit Coordinator and Grant Project Leader. This role will provide support and coordination for teams in the new northwest region, along with managing the LCCMR project budget and meeting reporting requirements. The YES! staff cohort is pleased to welcome aboard **Shelli-Kae Sonstegard Foster** to fill this important role.

**DID YOU KNOW THAT?**

**"In on second, our sun produces enough energy to meet the current needs of the entire EARTH for 500,000 years"**

[solarenergyfactsblog.com](#)

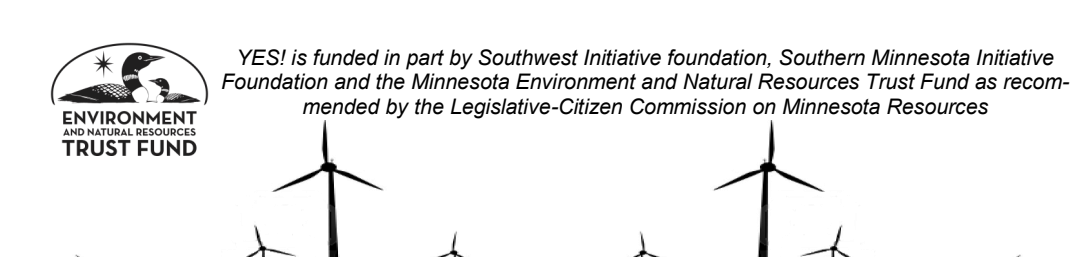
**YES! APPROVED FOR FUNDING FROM THE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND**

As the saying goes, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." A few modest steps back in early 2010 set us on the path we are now on we enter the 2011-2012 school year. As of June, YES! will be funded in part by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF), as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). The Trust Fund is a permanent fund constitutionally established by the citizens of Minnesota to assist in the conservation and enhancement of the state's natural resources. Currently 40% of net Minnesota State Lottery proceeds are dedicated to building the Trust Fund and ensuring future benefits for Minnesota's environment and natural resources.

[click here to continue reading](#)



YES! is funded in part by Southwest Initiative foundation, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation and the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources



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SOUTHWEST INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

