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### **Sleepy Eye YES! Team Wins Awards!**

Henderson, MN—Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center and the Ney Nature Center are excited to announce that the Sleepy Eye YES! Team was awarded the Community Leadership & Education and Goal Setting & Teamwork Awards for their 2015-16 project accomplishments. For their efforts, the team received \$500 in award funding to be used in future YES! team work. This year's awards were sponsored by the Henderson Fire Department and United Fund of Le Sueur.

The Sleepy Eye YES! Team is a collaboration between the Sleepy Eye Public School and Saint Mary's Catholic School. For the last several years, the team has impressed judges with their teamwork and community involvement. "Every summer, we do something called Party in the Park, and we do activities with kids, and the adults come through and learn about what things we do as a team. It is really interesting to see how people can get involved. This year, we had the kids learn the difference between recycling, composting, and sending stuff to the landfill," commented one of their students.

The team continues to focus on projects that their community has come to appreciate including Party in the Park, Great Grassroots Gathering, and Holiday Lights in Motion. In the future, the team has plans to include more junior high students, conduct garbage audits, and pursue organic composting. Students received their award at the awards ceremony at St. Mary's Catholic School on May 25. For more information on the Sleepy Eye YES! team, visit [www.youthenergysummit.org](http://www.youthenergysummit.org) and click on Current YES! Teams under "Teams." A full list of Sleepy Eye's projects can be found toward the bottom.

YES! is a unique experiential learning program where youth in grades 7 through 12 engage in hands-on learning and undertake meaningful projects that expose students to how science, technology, engineering, and math are applied in real life. These projects 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 the workforce like creativity, innovation, problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and project management. During the 2015-16 school year, 31 YES! teams participated around southern, central, and northeastern Minnesota. This is Sleepy Eye's 5<sup>th</sup> year participating in the YES! Program.

#### **ABOUT YOUTH ENERGY SUMMIT**

YES! empowers youth to partner with their community to create economic and environmental vitality through hands-on learning and team-based projects related to energy efficiency, renewable energy, waste reduction, recycling, composting, local foods, and more. The YES! Program is a collaboration between Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center, Laurentian Environmental Center, Saint John's Outdoor University, and Ney Nature Center. Major funding for the 2015-2016 season is provided by the McKnight Foundation and the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, a constitutionally-established permanent fund for protecting and enhancing Minnesota's environment and natural resources, as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). For more information, visit [www.youthenergysummit.org](http://www.youthenergysummit.org)

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