

PR- Jiminy Cricket Enviro Challenge 2006

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla., May 4, 2006 – Thirty-four students from Joseph Williams Elementary School in Gainesville were guests of honor today at Disney's Animal Kingdom as winners of Jiminy Cricket's Environmental Challenge; a statewide environmental education program that encourages students to think and act environmentally at home, at school and in the community.

Jiminy Cricket's Environmental Challenge is the result of a partnership between Walt Disney World Co. and the State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection to promote environmental education and action. Earlier this school year, all fifth-grade students throughout Florida's public school system were presented with the opportunity to get involved. More than 7,800 students made a pledge to take action to help the environment, and over 53 extensive environmental programs were submitted.

The grand prizewinners – 34 students in Ms. Melinda Craine's class – demonstrated what a tremendous impact a group of young people can make on the environment.

Through "Project Shade", the students learned how to address a problem, find various ways to solve the problem, how to gain support from others in their community and appreciate the value of their solution. They mapped out their playground and planted seven shade trees in the best locations. Through their project they came to appreciate the trees as wildlife habitats, air-purifiers and climate controllers. While their project may not provide immediate benefits to themselves, they are improving their school community for future students.

In their honor, Walt Disney World Co. will make a donation of \$2,000 to Joseph Williams Elementary School.

The students arrived at the Walt Disney World Resort on May 3rd, and will stay overnight at Disney's Yacht Club Resort. That evening a private party will be held in their honor and they will enjoy watching Illuminations at Epcot. The fun continues the following day, when they will enjoy special recognition at Disney's Animal Kingdom and participate in a behind-the-scenes educational experience. The awards ceremony will feature Bob Ballard, Deputy Secretary for Land and Recreation, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Dr. Beth Stevens, Vice President of Disney's Animal Kingdom, and Diane Ledder, Director of Community Relations, Walt Disney World Resort.

Jiminy Cricket's Environmental Challenge originated in California and expanded to Florida nine years ago. Nearly 100,000 students have participated in the Florida program.

For more information about Disney's dedication to Environmentalism, please go to www.disneyhand.com.

PHOTO: Jiminy Cricket congratulates winners of the Jiminy Cricket's Environmental Challenge.