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North Little Rock school certified as Pulaski County's first Litter-Free Zone

NORTH LITTLE ROCK (April 6, 2010) – Park Hill Elementary in North Little Rock has been certified as a Litter-Free Zone by Keep Arkansas Beautiful (KAB), making it the first school in Pulaski County to achieve certification.

Having met all the requirements for certification the school was recognized during a special assembly March 31. The school received Litter-Free Zone signs to post around campus and $1,500 in award money from the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Foundation for its participation in the program. At the assembly, North Little Rock Mayor Patrick Henry Hays announced an additional contribution of $500 to the school. The school will use the grant money to build a butterfly garden and begin a recycling program.

"The Litter-Free Zone program is a student-led initiative that empowers students to not only eliminate campus litter but also understand the greater impact litter has on a community, its appearance, pride and environmental quality of life," said Robert Phelps, KAB director. "The unexpected announcement of the additional funds is a welcomed surprise that demonstrates to the students the impact they can have on the larger community."

The Litter-Free Zone program, funded by an $80,000 Wal-Mart Foundation grant and designed for elementary students, encourages students to apply the program's principles in class, on campus, in the school's neighborhood and eventually throughout the community. Students participating in the Litter-Free Zone program become "Litter Scene Investigators." As they

discover litter on campus and apply critical thinking, they question where it comes from and who or what might be responsible for creating it. As students collect and analyze their findings, they create solutions for controlling and eliminating the problem, using skills from other core curricula, including math, science, social studies and English. They also visit with local law enforcement officers to learn about litter laws and enforcement practices.

"This program is centered on service learning, providing students a hands-on educational opportunity that extends beyond the classroom and into the community," said Jack Singleton, Litter-Free Zone statewide coordinator. "Park Hill Elementary students have the opportunity to improve their school campus and local community, while learning civic responsibility."

A new initiative of the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Foundation, the Litter-Free Zone program is available to 10 Arkansas schools each semester. Schools interested in applying for the program are encouraged to contact Singleton at litterfreezonekab@gmail.com.

The Keep Arkansas Beautiful Foundation provides ongoing support to help certified schools maintain their Litter-Free Zone status. To maintain their certification, Litter-Free Zone schools must have a group of students in the program each year and must participate in the Great American Cleanup™ in Arkansas each spring and the Great Arkansas Cleanup each fall.

About Keep Arkansas Beautiful
As a certified state affiliate of Keep America Beautiful Inc., Keep Arkansas Beautiful works to inspire and educate individuals to reduce litter, recycle and keep Arkansas beautiful. It operates as a division of the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism and is overseen by a nine-member commission appointed by the governor. KAB is funded by 1 percent of the eighth-cent conservation tax and, by utilizing volunteers, returns to the state a cost benefit of $15.34 in community service for each program dollar spent. The Keep Arkansas Beautiful Foundation is a nonprofit organization with the exclusive purpose of supporting the programs and activities of the KAB Commission. For more information about KAB, call toll-free 888-742-8701 or visit KeepArkansasBeautiful.com or stay connected at Facebook.com/KeepArkansasBeautiful.