



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
February 26, 2008



**Contact:** Vanessa Bullwinkle (Natl. PLT)  
202-463-2472  
[vbullwinkle@plt.org](mailto:vbullwinkle@plt.org)  
Lisa Deaton (VA PLT)  
804-328-3031  
[lisa.deaton@dof.virginia.gov](mailto:lisa.deaton@dof.virginia.gov)

**Brita Hampton of Virginia Beach Named Project Learning Tree®  
2008 Outstanding Educator of the Year**

Washington, D.C. – Project Learning Tree® (PLT), the environmental education program of the American Forest Foundation, has announced its 2008 National Outstanding Educators of the Year.

Brita Hampton of Virginia Beach is one of five educators selected nationwide for their commitment to environmental education, exemplary use of PLT, and exceptional teaching skills. She will be honored at PLT's 22nd International Coordinators' Conference, May 13–16, in Jackson, MS.

Hampton teaches science to grades 6, 7, and 8 and is Science Coordinator at Star of the Sea Regional Catholic School in Virginia Beach. She was first trained in PLT in 2004 when she arranged for a workshop for 25 teachers from six Catholic schools in her area. Since then, she has organized numerous environmental education (EE) trainings for teachers at Star of the Sea and other area schools. As Science Coordinator, Hampton engages teachers and students at all grade levels in her school in PLT and other EE activities. She finds ways to involve her students in the community, such as having them make presentations and display their work at EE professional conferences that have met in Virginia Beach.

Hampton's passion for good stewardship of natural resources permeates into her teaching. "My students have grown so accustomed to 're-using' paper that they instinctively look at both sides before putting their name on that page!" says Hampton. Hampton uses every form of communication to teach about the environment. For example, she recently worked with WHRO on a program for middle school students called "The Forest Files" about environmental issues, forestry and urban forestry in particular, and ways students can have both a positive and negative impact.

"Brita's involvement in PLT has significantly impacted her teaching style, student learning at our school, and other Catholic schools in the area," said Star of the Sea Principal Susan Fentress. "One of her greatest strengths is her ability to provide leadership opportunities for her students both in her class and in the community."

In May 2006, 31 of the school's students in all nine grade levels from PreK through eighth presented a general session at PLT's International Coordinators' Conference in Virginia Beach to share their learning experiences from six PLT activities they completed that semester in their classrooms. They provided PLT state coordinators, facilitators, and educators from around the country, and Japan and Mexico, with classroom-tested feedback on PLT's revised *PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide*. Last November, Hampton organized a display of over two hundred pieces of student artwork produced through

Cont. pg 2. - Hampton

seven different PLT activities for 1,100 participants at the 2007 North American Association for Environmental Education Conference, also held in Virginia Beach, and her students taught papermaking.

“Brita understands how a school can be an active member of a local community and a responsible member of the global community,” said Lisa Deaton, Virginia PLT Coordinator. “She was very excited about these opportunities for her students to share their PLT experiences at international conferences. She also encourages her students to discuss what they learn with family and friends.”

In 2006, Hampton attended a week-long Forestry Camp sponsored by the Virginia Department of Forestry that included advanced training in PLT. Upon her return, she implemented several activities in her Summer Science Program and facilitated a workshop for other teachers to share what she learned. As a result, Hampton and other Star of the Sea teachers regularly incorporate PLT activities, resources, and ideas into their classes and students at the school spend more time learning outdoors.

“Brita Hampton exemplifies how a great teacher can inspire students and other educators,” said Kathy McGlaufflin, Director of Project Learning Tree and Senior Vice President of Education for the American Forest Foundation. “PLT is known for quality environmental education because teachers like her use PLT in classrooms and outdoors to help students learn about the world around them, their place within it, and their responsibility to it.”

In addition to attending the PLT International Coordinators’ Conference, May 13-16, in Jackson, MS, Hampton is invited to attend the World Forestry Center’s International Educators’ Institute, July 14-19, in Portland, OR.

*Project Learning Tree® (PLT) is the environmental education program of the American Forest Foundation. . PLT provides educators with comprehensive environmental education curriculum resources that can be integrated into lesson plans for all grades and subject areas. PLT teaches students “how to think, not what to think” about complex environmental issues, and helps students learn the skills they need to make sound choices about the environment.*

*Developed in 1976, PLT has an international network of more than 500,000 trained educators using PLT materials that cover the total environment. The American Forest Foundation, a nonprofit 501(c)3 conservation and education organization, works for healthy forests, quality environmental education, and informed decision-making about our communities and our world. The Virginia Department of Forestry, Virginia Forestry Association, and Virginia Tech College of Natural Resources are the state PLT sponsors in Virginia.*

###