

AZ Students Receive National Award for Community Action Plan

September 27, 2006

Contact: [Amy Koenig](#) (602) 340-7357

PHOENIX – Becky Fitch’s 8th grade class from Park View Middle School in Prescott Valley, AZ received a Superior Award in the Showcase, which took place in August during the National Conference for State Legislators (NCSL) in Nashville Tennessee.

A nation-wide civic education program, We the People: Project Citizen, is conducted locally by the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education. It leads students through the public policy-making process and lets students experience the Office of Citizen first-hand. Project Citizen calls on students to solve a problem in their community, big or small, from bullying to traffic. Project Citizen teaches students to honor civic duty and become active members of their community.

Fitch's students decided as a class to tackle the problem of auto-related accidents on Highway 69 between Prescott and Prescott Valley. Titling their portfolio presentation “Highway 69: Blood Alley”, they proposed that the Arizona Department of Transportation along with City officials place grated lines or “Rumble Strips” along the side of the highway to alert drivers and save lives. They also proposed rumble strips between lanes to help cars avoid swerving into other lanes as well as medians in the middle of the road. They talked to government officials, researched many different solutions and suggested a budget and timeline for this public project.

Legislators and staffers at the NCSL were invited to evaluate the work done by each class, which represented 48 states and the District of Colombia. Three evaluators gave ratings to each portfolio, which were then assigned an achievement category of Superior, Exceptional, Outstanding, or Honorable Mention. Because of the high quality of student work this year, all portfolios reached one of the top three categories.

A nation-wide civic education program, We the People: Project Citizen, is conducted locally by the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education. It leads students through the public policy-making process and lets students experience the Office of Citizen first-hand. Project Citizen calls on students to solve a problem in their community, big or small, from bullying to traffic. Project Citizen teaches students to honor civic duty and become active members of their community.

About the Project Citizen Program

Project Citizen is portfolio-based civic education project for middle grade students sponsored nationally by the Center for Civic Education (CCE) and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). It is supported locally by the Arizona Legislature and the **Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education**. The program teaches young people to monitor and influence public policy. Students work cooperatively to identify a public problem in their community. They then research the problem, evaluate alternative solutions, develop their own solution in the form of a public policy, and create a political action plan to enlist local or state authorities to adopt their proposed policy. Participants develop a portfolio of their work and present their project in an oral hearing before a panel of civic-minded community volunteers.

About the Foundation

The **Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education** plays a leading role in preparing Arizona students for civic responsibility. The Foundation reaches more than 100,000 children by training teachers, school resource officers and probation officers about our laws, justice system and the foundations of democracy. It is also home of LawForKids.org, America's first Web site dedicated to teaching students about the law. The Foundation also awards nearly \$2 million in grants to more than 20 non-profit organizations providing legal services to those in need, so all people in Arizona can have a voice in our justice system.

Helpful Websites:

Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education: <http://www.azflse.org>

Arizona Project Citizen: <http://www.azflse.org/pcitizen>

Arizona State Legislature: <http://www.azleg.state.az.us>

Center for Civic Education (CCE): <http://www.civiced.org>

National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL): <http://www.ncsl.org/>