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KSB Awards of Excellence Presented

On April 20, Keep Sedona Beautiful (KSB) presented its Annual Awards of Excellence. Having begun shortly after the organization's incorporation in 1972, this was the 51st consecutive year that KSB has recognized businesses and individuals in the Verde Valley whose activities have contributed significantly to our communities.

Layla's Bakery-Café was presented an Award of Excellence for Sustainability by KSB Executive Vice-President Carla Williams. She noted that the bakery minimizes waste in several ways: their streamlined menu results in much less food waste, some leftover pastries become bread pudding and the remaining extra pastries are donated to staff working at the emergency room, police station, and a daycare. Layla's also makes it easier for customers to be more sustainable. Take-out orders come in paper wrappers for sandwiches, a compostable container for salad, and an unlined paper bag for pastries. Avocado-pit straws are available on request and Layla's sells reusable metal straws.

Richard and Monique Sidy from the Village of Oak Creek received an award for sustainable landscaping. The home they moved into in 1982 was essentially on barren land, which they have transformed into an environmentally friendly oasis. Their landscaping includes self-propagating plants and vegetation. Multiple vegetable gardens are flanked by fruit trees, and they use no chemical fertilizers or pesticides. Organic food waste is composted in barrels and used throughout the yard. In addition, their lifestyle is a model for sustainable living. Everything coming into the Sidy's house is used or recycled. They have no garbage pick-up service. Roof rainwater travels through downspouts and collects on the property in swales and dry washes, and the humus soil soaks up excess water. Long before sustainability or xeriscaping were common words, Monique and Richard were developing their land and home with these concepts in mind.

Jean-Christophe Bullet from A Sunset Chateau accepted an Award of Excellence for Sustainability. This award-winning Bed and Breakfast is entirely powered by solar panels. They've upgraded all their HVAC units to 20+ Seer ceiling-mounted electric mini-splits, made sure new refrigerators and wine coolers had climate-friendly refrigerants and have a small electric truck which

gets charged by their solar panels. The salt water pool and hot tub reduces need for chemicals. No chemicals are used in landscaping and they pull weeds by hand. Mattresses in the guest rooms are made with foam certified not to have "TRIS" flame retardants or formaldehyde.

Carla Williams then presented the Award of Excellence for Community Service to the over 95 members of the Friends of the Forest Graffiti Removal Team. Under the direction of the Forest Service, and led by past Chairperson Jerry Piepiora, and present Chairperson Jerry Checchia, the volunteers of the Graffiti Removal Team are tasked with continually removing, remediating, and camouflaging the paint, scratches and rock stacks left behind by users of our public lands. Without this never-ending work, our beautiful red rocks would unfortunately become covered with graffiti. Ms. Williams noted that "the team also educates tourists and residents on the importance of protecting our red rocks because the best way to keep our landscape graffiti-free is to prevent it in the first place."

Located in Cottonwood, Science Vortex is a non-profit children's science, technology, engineering, art and math center. Laurie Altringer accepted KSB's Award of Excellence for Education. Sustainability is integrated into both the curriculum and the operations. The center's purchases and materials are prioritized based on sustainability impacts, seeking used items when possible, shopping locally and minimizing the use of plastic learning materials. The center accepts donations of reusable items such as recycled materials for engineering projects, educational games/toys, and craft supplies.

Verde Valley School received the final award, again for Sustainability. Carla Williams noted that "Despite the pressures of running a small, international boarding school located in the Village of Oak Creek, they continue to push forward on sustainability efforts". One of the programs they're most proud of is farm-to-table. They grow much of their own produce for both staff and students. Some produce is sold to local restaurants, and the proceeds are used to help donate food to those in need. Food waste and horse manure is composted, which nourishes the farm. In addition, they have a system, both in their kitchen and outside, for efficient recycling, including cleaning, separation, processing and pickup that is used by all members of the community. Sustainability Coordinator John Chorlton accepted the award on behalf of Verde Valley School.

In 1972, Keep Sedona Beautiful was founded in a Sedona living room by people who were concerned about keeping litter and "honky tonk" signs off the roadsides – long before the City of Sedona was incorporated in 1988.

For the past fifty years, the nonprofit organization has been dedicated to conserving the area's beauty by opposing ill-considered growth and disregard for maintaining precious resources such as clean water, dark skies, and native plants, as well as addressing noise pollution, etc. To launch KSB's Fiftieth Anniversary, the Board of Directors has updated its mission statement: *To protect and enhance the scenic beauty and natural environment of Sedona and the Verde Valley.* For more information about Keep Sedona Beautiful, please visit <http://www.keepsedonabeautiful.org/>.

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### Photo Names

From left to right: John Chorlton from Verde Valley School, Jerry Checchia, Annie Glickstein, and Jerry Piepiora from Friends of the Forest, Jean-Christophe Bullet from A Sunset Chateau, Monique and Richard Sidy, and Laurie Altringer from Science Vortex. Javier and Amy Franco of Layla's Bakery-Café could not attend.