

Fundación Toyota awards over \$100 thousand in grants to projects ^[1]

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Saskia Gómez de Toyota de Puerto Rico junto a los ganadores de los Donativos Ambientales de la Fundación Toyota

San Juan, Puerto Rico - Seven organizations focused on environmental affairs received economic support from the Fundación Toyota Environmental Grants program, thus fueling their respective projects. In this 18th edition of the program, Fundación Toyota awarded over \$100,000 in grants.

The organizations that were chosen to receive the Fundación Toyota environmental grant were: the Yauco Center for Sustainable Microbusinesses and Agricultural Technologies (CMTAS, its Spanish acronym); the Accredited Urban High School in Aguas Buenas; Madre Tierra Atabey Corp.; Nuestra Escuela, Inc.; Protectores de Cuencas, Inc.; the Marine Environment Society (SAM, its Spanish acronym); and the Northeast Sea Turtle Program of the University of Puerto Rico, Aguadilla campus.

According to Saskia Gómez, Public Relations Executive at ToyotadePuerto Rico, Corp., Toyota's commitment to the environment is global in reach. "We are aware of the delicate state of the environment as well as the effects of climate change. This is why we see ourselves as a company that is dedicated to the development of responsible transportation solutions that foster a harmonious coexistence between man and automotive technologies. This grant program, which allows us to work directly with the community, is a reflection of a commitment that complements our efforts in the development of 'green' technologies, such as hybrid, electric, hydrogen and other low-emission systems".

The executive also commented that between the Toyota and Lexus brands, the company possesses the most complete line of hybrid vehicles, including those with alternative fuel sources such as the plug-in electric and the recently launched Toyota Mirai, the company's fuel-cell hydrogen model, and other low-emission vehicles.

Gómez also made note of Fundación Toyota's unquestionable commitment. He highlighted the fact that, since the organization was created in 1997, it has **awarded over one million dollars to more than 75 organizations and their projects**. "Each grant that we award is an acknowledgement of the important work that these organizations undertake. Fundación Toyota continues to recognize the effort that these entities invest in their projects, so that with their ideas we can contribute to the creation of a better quality of life," she stated.

The grants help fund proposals that cover a wide range of projects:

CMTAS seeks to develop a community education program for residents of four neighborhoods in Yauco, through workshops aimed at achieving an increase in the rate of the recycling of urban organic waste, as well as obtaining fertilizers for community gardens. The **Accredited Urban High School in Aguas Buenas** will develop an Urban Rooftop Garden at the school, so that students and the rest of the school community experience, firsthand, what goes into developing and working at an urban garden.

Madre Tierra Atabey will continue their work in the Guayanilla Bay estuary and its watershed systems, with the aim of promoting ecological resilience, helping the communities face climate change, and reducing the risk of natural disaster. **Nuestra Escuela** seeks to improve environmental conservation efforts through the development of urban agricultural production systems using recyclable and reusable materials, methods and techniques.

The group **Protectores de Cuencas** will work to restore the coastal forest at Tamarindo Beach using cost-effective "green" infrastructure techniques. **SAM** will promote the rehabilitation of shallow reef zones in the coastal waters of Culebra, in which staghorn corals predominate.

The **Northeast Sea Turtle Program** at UPR, Aguadilla will monitor the nesting activities and successful hatching of sea turtles in Puerto Rico's northeast coast.

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