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**For Immediate Release**

# UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY AWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION GRANT TO DREAM IN GREEN

"Dream in Green is both honored and humbled to receive the opportunity to make our vision for the WE-LAB a reality in Miami-Dade County. We are extremely grateful to the U.S. EPA, as well as to our partners at Miami-Dade County's Office of Sustainability, Water and Sewer Department, and the Public Works and Solid Waste Department for their ongoing support."

*Message from Nick Gunia, President and Co-Founder of Dream in Green*

**June 21, 2013 – Miami, Fla.** – The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced that Dream in Green, Inc. in Miami-Dade County is the recipient of the Region 4 Environmental Education (EE) Grant and will receive funding for its Water and Energy Learning and Behavior (WE-LAB) Project starting in September 2013. EPA received approximately eighty three (83) applications from the Southeast region of the United States making the process very competitive. The funds will support the development and implementation of the new WE-LAB Program that evolved from two very successful Dream in Green programs, the Green Schools Challenge, Dream in Green's longest-running K-12 environmental education program, and the two-year community-education series, Home Energy Savings Workshop. The WE-LAB Program will be conducted with support from Miami-Dade County's Office of Sustainability, Water and Sewer Department, and the Public Works and Solid Waste Department.

The WE-LAB Program will focus on delivering urgent and highly relevant environmental education about the Water/Energy Nexus to Miami-Dade County residents, teachers, and school children. By introducing the concept of Energy/Water Nexus, we will explore the relationship between water and energy use behaviors at home, urgent community issues of climate change, air pollution from Green House Gas (GHG) Emissions and limited water supplies. Through educational workshops, classroom learning, and on-line community forums and interactive tools, WE-LAB seeks to motivate community-wide water/energy-saving behaviors and foster long-term environmental stewardship, through money-saving actions. Each WE-LAB will be delivered in either the English, Spanish or Creole language, depending on the community's demography. The program will serve as a replicable educational model for implementation in any community in the United States. Regardless of geography or demography, WE-LAB will be able to be used to educate residents about the water and energy nexus, encourage behavioral changes that can save water, energy, and money.

Dream in Green would like to thank Miami-Dade County's Office of Sustainability, Water and Sewer Department, Public Library System and Public Works and Solid Waste Department, and the Miami-Dade County Public Schools for their support and contributions to the WE-LAB program. We look forward to working with these community partners to further educate the residents of Miami-Dade County on the Water/Energy Nexus.

## ***About Dream in Green***

Dream in Green (DIG) is a Miami-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization focused on promoting energy and water conservation and environmental sustainability in South Florida through innovative educational programs. DIG builds partnerships with schools, local governments, organizations and

businesses for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, waste, and our reliance on fossil fuels. Its programs emphasize education and behavior change. DIG is best known for its award-winning Green Schools Challenge program, currently in its seventh year and serving 165 schools and over 160,000 K-12 students, teachers and staff members in Miami-Dade County. DIG's second most successful program is the Home Energy Savings Program which aims to reverse the trend of global climate change by providing homeowners with information, resources and incentives to reduce household energy and water consumption and minimize waste. It has allowed households to reduce utility costs by 30-40% and lower their carbon emissions by 10,000 pounds per year.

## ***About Miami-Dade County***

Miami-Dade County (MDC) is located along the southeast tip of the Florida peninsula and encompasses more than 2,000 square miles. One-third of the County is located in the Everglades National Park, a World Heritage site. The County is bounded by Biscayne Bay, Biscayne National Park, and the Atlantic Ocean to the east, Everglades National Park to the west, and the Florida Keys to the south. It is home to thirty-five incorporated cities and a large unincorporated area. Since MDC is one of America's most vulnerable communities, its focus is to achieve aggressive water, energy, climate change, and greenhouse gas reduction goals to sustain ourselves, our community and our natural resources. Through its award-winning outreach and water and energy conservation programs, MDC is working towards a sustainable future with opportunities for economic growth and a better quality of life.

## ***About the EPA***

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA or sometimes USEPA) is an agency of the U.S. federal government which was created for the purpose of protecting human health and the environment by writing and enforcing regulations based on laws passed by Congress. The agency conducts environmental assessment, research, and education. It has the responsibility of maintaining and enforcing national standards under a variety of environmental laws, in consultation with state, tribal, and local governments. The agency also works with industries and all levels of government in a wide variety of voluntary pollution prevention programs and energy conservation efforts.

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