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Students, Veterans, Green Builders & Educators Join Forces to Build a “Tiny House” in Annapolis as Part of Student Sustainability Lab

Annapolis, MD – From July 7th - 25th this summer, 50+ middle and high school students from Annapolis, Baltimore and surrounding areas will join forces with military veterans, building experts, educators and the sustainability leaders from SustainaFest to take on the unique and exciting challenge of building a mobile, hi-tech, hyper-efficient, and sustainable “Tiny House”. This 210 square foot, off-grid construction marvel will demonstrate the latest in sustainable building materials and green technology including solar electricity, rainwater filtration, and innovative interior design to maximize space and efficiency. The project will take place over three weeks at The Key School in Annapolis as part of its Summer Camp program. A few slots remain for students in Grade 6 and up to participate in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. After completion, the house will be brought to schools, festivals and events to showcase sustainable shelter and promote SustainaFest’s Student Sustainability Lab program.

Students will be mentored by construction professionals and will work with veterans, educators, volunteers and SustainaFest staff as they take a journey of exploration and discovery to plan, design, and build the house. Lead builder and military veteran, Rogers Belch, explains, “Having students work together to build this house with their own hands ensures that they acquire construction know-how and critical teamwork and planning skills while also learning about the impact that lifestyle choices have on our communities.” Jonathan Oglesbee, a Key School teacher, notes, “This one-of-a-kind experience is not about suggesting that people need to live in tiny houses. We’re educating students to understand sustainable options and make better choices in meeting society’s needs.”

The effort is part of SustainaFest’s Student Sustainability Lab (Lab), a groundbreaking educational program that provides students an opportunity to understand human-environment interactions, sustainable living, and our connectedness with ecosystems, economic systems, and one another. The goal of the Lab is to provide students with an age-appropriate and engaging introduction to the complexities of today’s world and the tools needed to address 21st century challenges. “The Lab seeks to complement traditional Pre K-12 educational disciplines by combining art, humanities, social sciences, and the physical and life sciences in a way that excites students to explore alternatives and create a more sustainable future for themselves,” explains George Chmael II, SustainaFest’s Board Chairman.

Local companies including Annapolis Painting Services, Council Fire, SKA Studio, The Tower Company, Nexus Energy Homes; and organizations including Connected Warrior Foundation, Living Classrooms Foundation, Mountainfilm in Telluride, The Key School and US Fish & Wildlife Service, are supporting the effort. Great opportunities remain to sponsor students and the project and/or donate building materials, money and time; all of which will enrich the experience for the students and other participants. For more information about SustainaFest and how to get involved, please visit www.sustainafest.org or email info@sustainafest.org. The project can be followed on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/sustainafest and on Twitter @sustainafest.

SustainaFest is a 501(c)(3) Maryland nonprofit organization whose mission is to educate and engage people of all ages and interests to take action in their everyday lives to strengthen our community, improve our environment, and support our local economy. We leverage the power of cutting-edge film, awe-inspiring music, visionary speakers, social entrepreneurs and seasoned educators to spark dialogue,