GLOBAL VIRTUAL CLASSROOM
2012/2013 AWARD WINNING WEBSITES ANNOUNCED

May 13, 2013 – The Give Something Back International Foundation (GSBI) has announced the winners of the 2012/2013 Global Virtual Classroom Contest (GVC) -- a free online collaborative learning project that fosters creativity, cross cultural understanding, helping others and teaches IT and website design skills amongst students working together from around the world.

Sponsored by GSBI, the GVC program provides an opportunity for primary and secondary school students from different countries to work with and learn from students in other countries, as they collaboratively design a website on a topic of their choosing. Teams are comprised of either three primary or three secondary schools from different countries. A panel of international judges evaluates the final work and determines the winners.

Contest participants virtually collaborated with students in other countries to build and submit websites designed around a provocative theme. As such, the contest aims to enhance abilities required for the 21st century such as: cross-cultural communication, collaboration and technology skills. This year the contest had participants from 17 countries including participants from India, Kenya, Malaysia, Russia, Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Spain, Nigeria, Greece, Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan, Indonesia, Cote d'Ivoire, Hungary, Pakistan and the USA. A map of participants is available at http://goo.gl/maps/Ezmed.

Their efforts were judged for content, presentation, collaboration, and a helping focus. The helping focus encourages students to also demonstrate achievement of a helpful objective such as personal, social and/or environmental responsibility or support for a worthy cause.

JoAnn Patrick-Ezzell, the Chairman and one of the co-founders of the Give Something Back International Foundation said, "Beyond the impressive accomplishments of the website projects, we are so pleased that the teams found a myriad of ways to give back to their schools, their communities, and to others around the world in very meaningful ways. This years winners represent wonderful diversity from around the world. "

This year's Grand Prize winner for the primary school category is the "Heal the World" website created and built by students from Percy Julian Middle School in Oak Park, Illinois; USA, the Primary School Balatonboglár, Balatonboglár, Hungary; and St Mark's Senior Secondary School, Meera Bagh, New Delhi, India. The website highlights the importance of making a personal commitment to making a difference in the world. Topics cover social and environmental issues as well as personal well being.

The Second Place winner in the primary school category is the "Innovation and Invention" website designed by Sih-Wei Primary School, Kaohsiung City, Taiwan and Harper McCaughan Elementary, Long Beach, Mississippi, USA.

In Third Place of the primary school category is "A Look into Technology" website presented by Tainan Municipal Haidong Elementary School, Tainan, Taiwan; Abraham Lincoln Elementary School, Oak Park, Illinois, USA; and the International Magnet School, East Hartford, Connecticut, USA.

The secondary school category's Grand Prize winner is the "True Heroes and Heroines" website presented by students at St Mark's Senior Secondary School, Meera Bagh, New Delhi, India and Littleton High School, Littleton, Colorado, USA.   The website highlights what it means to be a true hero. In the students' own words, "*a true hero is a person who dedicates his life for the benefit of others, who is humble, who spreads love wherever he goes and possesses the following qualities: leadership, honesty, discipline, punctuality, compassion, and an optimistic attitude.*"

The Second Place winner for the secondary school category is the "Teenage Health" website developed by La Salle-Virgen del Mar, Almería, Spain; SMJK POI LAM, Perak, Malaysia; and Menchville High School, Newport News, Virginia, USA.

In Third Place of the secondary school category is the "School Dinners = Nutrition + Healthy Eating" website created by St. Paul Lutheran High School, Farmington, Missouri, USA; Riverside Senior High School, Prague, Czech Republic; and Percy Julian Middle School in Oak Park, Illinois, USA.

Certificates of participation are awarded to all students. Plaques and cash awards are presented to the schools of the winning teams. The Grand Prize award is $1,500 for the winning primary school team and $1,500 for the secondary school team. The second place award is $750 for each winning team and the third place award is $250 to each team. Special Merit awards are also presented for exceptional academic merit, for significant helping focus accomplishments, for creativity, for collaboration, and for the innovative use of multimedia. Merit award winners receive software from Tech4Learning.com.

To view the winning websites visit www.VirtualClassroom.org.

Online applications for the 2013/14 program are also available on the site. Contest sign-up begins each June. There is no cost for participation. The contest runs from late October until April 1, with results announced in May.

The international website contest is made possible by Give Something Back International (GSBI), a nonprofit educational foundation headquartered in Sarasota, Florida. GSBI's goal is to provide lifechanging, quality educational opportunities to children, young adults, and teachers around the world.

"GSBI is dedicated to empowering, enabling and connecting students around the world using Internet technologies," said their President Andrew Ezzell. "It is enormously gratifying to watch kids learn to use technology to reach out to each other across great distances, and we're delighted to see the Global Virtual Classroom contest facilitate that kind of cross-cultural collaboration."

The contest is now seeking a new sponsor for the event. Interested parties should contact Andrew Ezzell at ezzell@gsbi.org for additional information.