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Grades of Green's VERTE 2021 Gala a Major Success, Honoring Kathy Kellogg Johnson of Kellogg Garden Products and James Hartzberg of LAcarGUY

LOS ANGELES, CA (November 1, 2021) — Grades of Green, a nonprofit that inspires and empowers students across the world to take environmental action, hosted its annual fundraising gala VERTE 2021, on Saturday, October 9, 2021. The gala was a major success, beating the organization's goals by raising more than \$330,000 in much-needed funding to sustain the nonprofit's work to empower the next generation of environmental leaders.

Hosted by LAcarGUY at Audi Pacific, Grades of Green presented Kathy Kellogg Johnson, Chair of the Board of Kellogg Garden Products, with the first-ever Mother Earth Award for Global Impact for her lifelong dedication to the environment. Grades of Green also presented James Hartzberg, Chief Operating Officer of LAcarGUY, with the Environmental Business Leadership Award for helping lead LAcarGUY to be one of the top hybrid and electric vehicle dealers in the world with a culture that is deeply committed to ushering in a greener future.

VERTE 2021 marked the first opportunity that Grades of Green's dedicated community of supporters has been able to gather to celebrate the organizations' student Eco-Leaders since 2019 as last year's event was canceled due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. VERTE is the source of one-third of Grades of Green's annual operating budget, so the funds raised during this year's gala are essential to ensuring the organization can continue to grow and support the next generation of environmental leaders.

Proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test were required for all attendees. In addition, the event was held in accordance with all Los Angeles County regulations concerning COVID-19.

Event Photos: High resolution, professional event photos and photo caption information have been collected at the following link. A few compressed samples of these photos have been copied below.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1nqq6_G4Z2B8AuaSdlFsv7uOj6-a8tieJ?usp=sharing



Grades of Green's Board of Directors: Priscilla Munoz; Co-Founder Shaya Kirkpatrick; Co-Founder Lisa Coppedge; Kapil Singh; Dawnyell Goolsby, Ed.D; Secretary Rachel Tornek; Steven Davis, M.D.; Vice Chair Camela Ott, M.D.; Chair Chrissie Clay; Co-Treasurer David James; Co-Treasurer Kimberly Nelson



Brian Johnson, Connor Johnson, Athena Nikolakopulos, Verte Honoree Kathy Kellogg Johnson, Gayle Theadora Drake, Laura Turner Seydel, Chair of Captain Planet Foundation; Actor Mykelti Williamson



Grades of Green Board Co-Founders Shaya Kirkpatrick and Lisa Coppedge, Verte Honoree James Hartzberg, COO of LAcAR GUY; Mike Sullivan, Owner of LAcAR GUY; Meghan Simpson, Director of Marketing for LAcAR GUY

Kathy Kellogg Johnson – Recipient of the Mother Earth Award for Global Impact
Grades of Green is proud to award Kathy Kellogg Johnson with our very first Mother Earth Award to recognize



her incredible environmental impact across the globe as a champion of regenerative agriculture. Kellogg Johnson has proven her passion to the environment through her leadership as Chairwoman of the Board and Corporate Secretary for Kellogg Garden Products – an all-organic garden products company founded in 1925 that sells its organic soils across the U.S.

Kellogg Johnson has led Kellogg Garden Products to support hundreds of school gardens across the country, including a recent partnership with Grades of Green to revitalize and sustain the school garden at Kelso Elementary School in Inglewood, CA. Through her close work with the organization Plants With Purpose/Floresta, Kellogg has supported the planting of tens of millions of trees and has educated impoverished subsistence farmers around the world to feed their families and protect healthy soil to radically improve the quality of life in their communities.

Grades of Green launched the Mother Earth Awards to recognize the women environmentalists who have changed the lives of young people by working to address environmental challenges and by empowering students to take environmental action. Grades of Green was inspired to create this award when reflecting on its four passionate founders, all mothers, who began the nonprofit to bring environmental education to their children's schools. The award was also inspired by Grades of Green's students, who consistently credit their mothers as the primary source of their environmental passion. As a women-run organization that is primarily staffed by mothers, Grades of Green knows firsthand the importance of elevating the women and mothers who lead the environmental movement and is proud to have created this exciting reward to recognize their world-changing efforts.

James Hartzberg – Recipient of the Environmental Business Leadership Award

James Hartzberg will receive the Environmental Business Leadership Award for championing the environment throughout his career at LAcarGUY and his long-standing support of environmental causes especially Grades of Green. After beginning his career at LAcarGUY by selling cars to pay for college, Hartzberg worked his way up to General Manager. As GM, Hartzberg built Subaru Pacific from the ground up to include sustainable construction throughout the building, leading the dealership to receive Subaru USA's very first Eco-Friendly Dealership certification.

As a keystone of Hartzberg's environmental leadership, he has lead Subaru Pacific and LAcarGUY to become Grades of Green top corporate funder and supporter year after year. Not only has Hartzberg sustained Grades of Green's students through financial support, but he has also consistently uplifted the organization's students by partnering with them directly including hosting the annual Youth Leadership Impact-a-thon at Subaru Pacific. Hartzberg and his team at Subaru Pacific and LAcarGUY have participated in students' projects, providing them with donations and volunteers, and have hosted numerous events throughout the years to showcase Grades of Green's student projects.

Because many of its students will go on to enter the business world, Grades of Green feels that it's important for young people to witness leaders bringing environmentalism into their business practices. Hartzberg is the ideal candidate to receive this award as someone who has consistently prioritized the environment in his work and has directed so many resources to sustain environmental causes like Grades of Green's student Eco-Leaders and their dreams for a sustainable future.

To learn more about both Kathy Kellogg Johnson and James Hartzberg, please [read their full biographies found here](#).

The public is invited to further support Grades of Green's mission by donating at <https://gradesofgreen.givingfuel.com/verte-2021>



ABOUT GRADES OF GREEN

Founded in 2009, Grades of Green is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit that has been mentoring and equipping students with the knowledge and leadership skills they need to create meaningful environmental change locally and globally. The organization's award-winning programs and project-based approach have a proven track record of empowering the next generation of Eco-Leaders as they make measurable and scalable environmental impact in their communities, create lasting policy change through civic engagement, and engage with a global network of fellow Eco-Leaders. Grades of Green provides these services to students at no cost to the students, their parents or schools.

Learn more about [Grades of Green, here.](#)

ABOUT KELLOGG GARDEN PRODUCTS

Kellogg Garden Products has operated as a family-owned and operated company spanning four generations. Established in 1925, Kellogg has remained a stable, steadfast family business guided by the core values of its founder, H. Clay Kellogg: integrity, innovation, loyalty, experience, commitment, and generosity. These values have led the company to seek the highest level of organic certification available, not just from one agency but from two. Kellogg has registered all of its soils and fertilizers with the California Department of Agriculture's rigorous Organic Input Materials (OIM) review as well as with the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) — the leading independent, third-party review agency also accredited by USDA's NOP. Kellogg is still the first and only manufacturer to have all its branded organic soils and fertilizers OMRI Listed and OIM approved making Kellogg the first to offer Proven Organic soils and fertilizers that build life in the soil, in waterways and in communities with all its products.

Today, Kellogg has expanded from its original base of operations in Los Angeles County and now produce and sell its organic soils and fertilizers across the entire country. Kellogg Garden Products can be found in home centers and independent garden centers — as well as in the gardens and lawns of their customers — across the US.

Learn more about [Kellogg Garden Products, here.](#)

ABOUT LAcAR GUY

The LAcAR GUY family of dealerships has been a Los Angeles fixture since "Sully" Sullivan opened his first dealership, Volkswagen Santa Monica, in 1964. Today, LAcAR GUY includes 13 award-winning dealerships throughout Los Angeles. In addition to its focus on outstanding customer service and community involvement, LAcAR GUY also prides itself in being a leader in both Hybrid/EV sales and dealership sustainability.

Community involvement and sustainability have always been a priority at LAcAR GUY. Giving back to the communities they serve is an important part of the LAcAR GUY culture, whether it's supporting a great cause via sponsorship or activating its 600+ employees for volunteer opportunities.

As one of the top hybrid/EV dealers in the world, the company is committed to a greener future in an environmentally challenged industry. LAcAR GUY is active in a number of local environmental organizations and owner Mike Sullivan currently serves on the boards of Heal The Bay and the Environmental Media Association (EMA).

Learn more about [LAcAR GUY, here.](#)

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