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FINALISTS SELECTED FOR 2011 GREENEST NYER

Contest honors sustainable living, Earth Day

Grand Prize winner of the Greenest NYer contest to be announced April 30

Albany, N.Y. – The public has spoken! Following a period of open voting, three finalists have been selected from a field of ten semi-finalists to compete for the title of *2011 Greenest NYer*. For the second year in a row, I LOVE NEW YORK (<http://www.iloveny.com/>), New York State’s tourism promotion agency, and EscapeMaker.com are holding a contest to celebrate those individuals who are doing their part to keep the Empire State green.

“We’re extremely pleased with the wide range of enthusiastic and well-qualified nominees we’ve received for this year’s Greenest NYer contest,” said Peter Davidson, Executive Director of Empire State Development, which administers the I LOVE NEW YORK campaign. “By acting as an ambassador for the state, the Greenest NYer is able to spread the word about the simple yet environmentally responsible things travelers and residents of the state can do to have a positive impact on our treasured natural assets.”

Public voting for the Greenest NYer took place online, ending on April 17. The top three vote getters will now be judged by a panel of expert judges including Matt Weingarten, Executive Chef, Inside Park at St. Bart’s; Peter Lindabury, LEED AP Consultant for the Conference Center at Lake Placid; Kate Sinding, senior attorney and Deputy Director of the New York urban program at the National Resource Defense Council; Valarie D’Elia, travel correspondent for NY1 News; and Kaity Tsui, Greenest NYer 2010.

The three finalists for Greenest NYer 2011 are:

Erik Baard: A native New Yorker, Baard notes that one of his greatest joys is exploring his home’s natural “natural splendor and food heritages” and finding ways to preserve and share

those gifts as a volunteer. He founded the Long Island City Community Boathouse, which provides free paddle tours on the East River to thousands of people, arranges beach cleanups, and advocates for marine ecology. To promote local eco-tourism and water travel around New York City, he conceived the MetroBoat, a folding kayak manufactured by Folbot that is the only kayak in the world which has the eye-catching iconic New York City subway map infused into its deck. Where he can't kayak, he bikes, and is a founding member of the Queens Volunteer Committee of Transportation Alternatives, marshalling several public rides each year and working to improve his fellow residents' transit, bike, and pedestrian options. He advocates for New York's environment through his Nature Calendar blog, professional articles, and pro bono contributions.

Tara DePorte: For the past ten years, New York City resident Tara DePorte has helped thousands of people connect with their passions for green living through the development and "hands-on" leadership of environmental programs, from water quality and air testing to environmental leadership training. She is the founder of the Human Impacts Institute and the NYC Climate Coalition. DePorte also spreads the green word in the classroom; she is an adjunct professor of environment and sustainable development at the New School and Webster University and a lecturer at Columbia University. She is the developer of a program to provide small business owners with free consulting services on greening their businesses while saving money, and also consults with several corporations on greening their workplaces.

Ed Fondiller: As the founder of Total Tennis, a year-round adult tennis camp at a refurbished Catskill lodge in his hometown of Saugerties, Ed Fondiller actively promotes energy conservation and a green, organic lifestyle for himself, his family and his resort patrons. In keeping with his tradition of energy-saving facility upgrades using sustainable methods and materials, he recently installed the largest photovoltaic (solar power) array in New York State to offset dependence on fossil fuels. He also grows many of the vegetables served at Total Tennis.

The Grand Prize winner of the Greenest NYer contest will be announced just after Earth Day on Saturday, April 30, at Escapemaker.com's *Green Getaways, Local Food & Travel Expo* in New York City with a special press conference held by I LOVE NEW YORK.

The award itself has been designed Chip Fasciana, a New York-based sculptor and painter who works almost exclusively with recycled materials. He recently won a "Masterpiece Award" at The Albany Institute of History and Art for one of his paintings done on a recycled door and also recently exhibited and sold a sculpture made of 100 percent recycled materials at Art Omi International Sculpture Park. Examples of his work can be seen at www.fasciana.com.

As the official I LOVE NEW YORK Greenest NYer, the winner will spend one year traveling New York State (in his or her free time) and experience some of its finest green/eco-tourism offerings, while using the title in his or her networking and work in the promotion of sustainability. In addition, EscapeMaker.com will donate \$500 to the green organization of the winner's choice. (Organization must be a 501(c)3 and is subject to approval.) The winner will

also blog about his or her adventures as the Greenest NYer, and make occasional public appearances, schedule permitting.

Last April, in recognition of the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, I LOVE NEW YORK, along with EscapeMaker.com, introduced the Greenest NYer contest to honor individuals who are making earnest efforts to preserve the environment in their everyday lives and the lives of others. Over the past year, 2010 Greenest NYer Kaity Tsui of New York City has served as an ambassador of green travel in New York State, visiting several of the state's iconic green destinations and spreading the word on sustainable living in travel and everyday life.

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About Green Heart NY

In 2010, Empire State Development, which administers the I LOVE NEW YORK program, unveiled a new "green heart" in its famous I LOVE NEW YORK logo as part of an initiative that promotes green-certified restaurants and hotels, as well as the State's parks, beaches, waterways and mountains. I LOVE NEW YORK chose ten must-see iconic green travel destinations for 2010 spanning the State's 11 tourism regions. The destinations include national icons such as Niagara Falls State Park, the Catskill Scenic Trail, Adirondack Park's high peaks, and the Empire State Building. The list also includes scenic State Parks such as Taughannock Falls and Letchworth, as well as diverse locales such as the Fire Island National Seashore, Storm King Arts Center, Waterways of the Thousand Islands, and Roosevelt Baths and Spa. Information about I LOVE NEW YORK's Green destinations can be found on the Green Heart NY Web site at www.iloveny.com/greenheart.

About EscapeMaker.com

EscapeMaker.com is an online guide to local hotels, B&B's, vacation rentals, events and festivals, weekend getaways and day trip destinations within a day's drive or train ride of New York City. For more information and for tickets to EscapeMaker.com's Green Getaways, Local Food & Travel Expo, on April 30th at Skylight One Hanson in Brooklyn, NY, visit <http://www.escapemaker.com/travelexpo>

About New York State

New York State features 11 beautiful vacation regions. New York's attractions span from landmarks such as Niagara Falls, to the wine trails of Hudson Valley and treasures like the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. Whether it's wide-ranging outdoor activities for the whole family like fishing, hiking and boating, culinary wonders and farm-to-table fresh foods, or the rich history and culture of one of the 13 original colonies, New York State offers diverse activities for all travelers. For more information visit <http://www.iloveny.com/>. Media can find press releases and more at <http://www.thebeat.iloveny.com/>.

Empire State Development is New York's chief economic development agency, committed to being recognized on a global scale as the economic development engine driving job growth, strategic investment and prosperity in New York State. ESD also oversees the marketing of "I LOVE NEW YORK," the State's iconic tourism brand. For more information, visit <http://www.esd.ny.gov/>.