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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HARRISBURG – (July 2, 2012) – Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts today announced that 13-year-old Dominic Bubb of Williamsville, New York has won the *Expedition Chesapeake* Essay Contest and will spend a day with Emmy winner and Animal Planet star Jeff Corwin as he and his crew begin filming for the giant screen film.

Whitaker challenged students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades who live in the Chesapeake Bay watershed – New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware and the District of Columbia – to write about their favorite science teacher and how this teacher has had an impact on his or her learning.

Dominic wrote about Charles Bell, a science teacher who, among other feats, surprised his students with a model of the solar system he had made that was so big "...it stretched from one end of the school to another, and Pluto was in the parking lot!"

Finalists for the contest were Ben DeLeo, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader at St. Stephen's Episcopal School in Harrisburg, PA; Ashley Bleiler and Jarrett Mohn, both 7<sup>th</sup> graders at Kutztown Area Middle School in Kutztown, PA; and Rida Merchant, an 8<sup>th</sup> grader at Andrew W. Mellon Middle School in Pittsburgh, PA.

"This is an exciting project for Whitaker and the county, and we're happy to be a part of it." Stated Dauphin County Commission Chairman Jeff Haste, "Dominic's thoughtful essay, as well as the creativity and commitment of his 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher Mr. Bell, is truly inspiring." Dauphin County is a partner with Whitaker in the initiative.

A member of the *Expedition Chesapeake* Advisory team donated a \$100 prize that will be given to Dominic.

*Expedition Chesapeake* is anchored by the 42-minute film that Corwin will host. The project also includes an online curriculum, a hands-on, traveling science exhibit that will be presented at museums and science centers, and a behind-the-scenes documentary.

"Our goal with this initiative is to educate and engage people so that they are more aware of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. We want to make it fun for students to learn about this incredible resource," said Dr. Michael Hanes, President and CEO of Whitaker Center. "It seems that Charles Bell has already figured out how to do that and we can all learn a little something from his approach."

Hanes added that, "Dominic's essay was really well done and we're thrilled that he'll be spending a day with us on the set of *Expedition Chesapeake*."

Hanes noted that the essay contest is just one of several initiatives Whitaker has launched as part of *Expedition Chesapeake*. This fall, the team will host two kayak trips from Harrisburg down to the Chesapeake Bay. In addition, Whitaker has hosted a series of educational seminars that focused on energy, agriculture and development challenges that affect the entire watershed.

A copy of Dominic's 500-word essay is attached.

For more information about the initiative, please visit [www.expeditionchesapeake.org](http://www.expeditionchesapeake.org).