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4th Grade Student Names New Species of Gecko

Name Designed To Act As Reminder: Take Care Of Our Planet

FRANKLIN, Wis.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--

After its discovery by Dr. Aaron Bauer on the South Pacific island of New Caledonia, a new gecko species remained nameless, until now. New Jersey fourth grader, Gemma Farquhar has given the once nameless species of gecko an identity. As the grand prize winner of the nationwide contest, Project Gecko presented by Zilla, Farquhar's name *Bavayia periclitata* will be given to the new species.

"*Bavayia periclitata* was chosen for its accurate and artistic description. Gemma was able to combine scientific language with creative intellect forming a name that depicts the importance of taking care of the animals that share our world with us," said Dr. Aaron Bauer, Villanova professor of biology.

In her contest submission, Farquhar, a student at Oaklyn Elementary School in Oaklyn, NJ, dared to be different and strayed away from using typical Latin names that describe the gecko's habitat or physical features. *Bavayia periclitata* means "endangered" in Latin. Farquhar says she chose this name to help emphasize the importance of taking care of geckos, other endangered species as well as our environment in general.

"I chose this name because it means endangered and it will make people think about how our geckos are disappearing and are on the endangered list. I hope people will try harder to protect our geckos," said Farquhar. "Winning Project Gecko means a lot to me because I named a whole new species of gecko for eternity and giving the gecko this name may mean there's a better chance to help other species."

The contest organizers Zilla, manufacturer of reptile products, believe Farquhar's name is perfect for the new species. "We were thrilled to read about why Gemma chose this name for the gecko," said Daniel Lorica, Zilla brand manager. "She recognizes that we all have a responsibility to preserve the endangered species of animals with whom we share our world. And her appreciation for the environment is what made her entry stand out from the others."

Farquhar, her teacher Linda Hess, and fellow students were honored at a celebration at PETCO in Sewell, NJ. They were given a party with food, a reptile show and a Q&A session with Dr. Bauer on Saturday, May 31.

A panel consisting of three judges - educators and reptile experts - evaluated each entry

submitted in the contest. The entries were judged based on creativity, explanation of name, adherence to rules, grammar and spelling.

As the grand prize winner, Farquhar was presented with a \$1,000 savings bond from NARBC (North American Reptile Breeders Conference & Trade Show). Plus, she and her family received a trip to Busch Gardens and Adventure Island in Tampa, FL. Linda Hess, Farquhar's teacher at Oaklyn Elementary School, received a Lenovo Laptop and reptile books for the class. REPTILES Magazine also donated subscriptions to the students.

In addition to Farquhar, the panel of judges for Project Gecko also selected individual grade student winners Madilyn Bragg of West Monroe, LA for the fifth grade and Daniel Carr of Tampa, FL for the sixth grade.

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