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**University of Louisville to Hold First-Ever STEM Camp
for Promise Zone Students July 18-22**

High-schoolers to gain hands-on experience with energy technologies

LONDON, Ky. -- The Kentucky Promise Zone and the Partners *for* Education at Berea College today announced that approximately 30 high school students from Promise Zone counties will attend a free summer camp at the University of Louisville's Conn Center for Renewable Energy Research from July 18-22.

The camp will focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) lectures and hands-on work in the laboratory with a special emphasis on renewable energy.

This is the first-ever opportunity of its kind for students from the Promise Zone, which is comprised of Bell, Harlan, Letcher, Perry, Leslie, Clay, Knox and Whitley counties. Students will spend the week at the Conn Center for Renewable Energy Research within the J. B. Speed School of Engineering working alongside center research scientists and engineers.

Lectures will be held each morning, and students will complete lab exercises, including:

- Solar energy conversion to electricity and fuels;
- Physics and chemistry of advanced energy materials;
- Energy storage; and
- Water splitting for solar fuels.

"We are very pleased to host these students, who will have a jump-start on state and regional science competitions as well as gain an understanding of cutting edge STEM and renewable energy topics from the researchers at the Conn Center," said Dr. Neville Pinto, UofL Interim Provost and co-sponsor of the initiative. "This is an investment in the next generation of innovators who might not otherwise have such opportunities."

Dr. Mahendra Sunkara, director of the Conn Center added: "We strongly believe that inspiring kids into innovation and STEM fields can have a transformational effect on economic revitalization of the region in the long run. We also need an inspired next generation to be able to solve global challenges in energy and sustainability."

Berea College's Partners for Education will chaperone the students all week and provide transportation to and from the camp. Participants will enjoy dinners at UofL's "Ville-Grille" and participate in out-of-class activities in Louisville.

“We are thrilled to bring our expertise in out-of-classroom learning to this partnership,” said Sara White, director of programs, Partners *for* Education. “We’ve been working in partnerships with regional schools and Berea College for over forty years to develop a holistic approach to education.”

“The University of Louisville and Berea’s Partners for Education are generously providing this unprecedented opportunity for students in our region to learn from and work directly with top-notch scientists and engineers who are translating technology concepts into new products and, more importantly, jobs for Kentucky’s work force,” said Jerry Rickett, president and CEO of Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation, which is coordinating and managing the federal Promise Zone. “These students will come back to the region with valuable skills and advanced knowledge.”

About the Conn Center for Renewable Energy Research: *The Conn Center provides leadership, research, support and policy development in renewable energy; advances the goal of renewable energy; and promotes technologies, practices, and programs that increase efficiency for energy utilization in homes, businesses and public buildings. It conducts and facilitates R&D on potentially commercializable renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies. The Center promotes partnerships among the state’s colleges and universities, private industries, and non-profit organizations to actively pursue federally and privately funded research and development resources that are dedicated to renewable energy solutions. Visit <http://conncenter.org/> for more information.*

About Partners for Education: *Partners for Education at Berea College uses a place-based, student-focused approach to improve educational outcomes in Appalachian Kentucky. We braid services and align funding streams to optimize results. Through a suite of programs, including GEAR UP, i3 and the first rural Promise Neighborhood, Partners for Education leverages \$25.8 million annually to serve 35,318 young people and their families. Learn more at <https://www.berea.edu/pfe/>.*

About the Kentucky Promise Zone: *Comprised of Bell, Harlan, Letcher, Perry, Leslie, Clay, Knox and part of Whitley counties, it is one of only 13 Promise Zones in the country and the first in a rural area. The initiative, which Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation is coordinating and managing, gives the area a competitive advantage in applying for federal funding as well as additional assistance from federal agencies that oversee housing, education, economic development, agriculture and safety. More than \$300 million in funding has been identified in 2.5 years. Visit <http://www.kypromisezone.com/> and follow on [Facebook](#).*

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