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**IOWA MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER HECTOR IBARRA IS RECIPIENT OF  
FIRST YOUTH SERVICE AMERICA AWARD AT 2004 DISNEYHAND TEACHER AWARDS**

***Performing Artist Clay Aiken Presented Award to 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher,  
Honoring Him for Using Community Service as a Teaching Methodology***

BURBANK, Calif. (July 26, 2004) – The DisneyHand Teacher Awards, dedicated to honoring the most creative and inspiring teachers in America, this year bestowed Hector Ibarra, a 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher from West Branch Middle School in West Branch, Iowa, with the first Youth Service America Award. The honor, presented by multi-platinum performing artist and former special education teacher Clay Aiken, was given to Ibarra for his exemplary use of community service as a teaching methodology.

Since 1993, Ibarra's flagship youth service learning program, Timber Stand Improvement, has successfully linked science to the community. Some of Timber Stand Improvement's success includes planting more than 2,000 oak, hickory and walnut trees in Iowa's Cedar Valley Park; collecting 4,265 used oil filters and extracting 37.2 gallons of oil, preventing the substance from entering the Cedar County landfill; encouraging retrofitting of inefficient shower heads and sink aerators; planting amaryllis bulbs for senior citizen homes and local businesses; and holding a student-run reading program for elementary, preschool and daycare children.

DisneyHand worked in concert with Youth Service America, a resource center that works with thousands of organizations to increase the quality and quantity of volunteer opportunities for young people in America ages 5-25, to select Ibarra for the award. Founded in 1986, Youth Service America's mission is to strengthen the effectiveness, sustainability and scale of the youth service and service-learning fields.

"We are thrilled that the DisneyHand Teacher Awards recognizes innovative teachers who build bridges between classrooms and the unmet needs of communities," said Steve Culbertson, president and chief executive officer of Youth Service America. "Being a good citizen is no different than reading, writing or arithmetic. It must be taught early and practiced often."

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“I am so honored to be the recipient of this award,” said Ibarra. “Timber Stand Improvement’s projects are student-centered and are focused on preserving or rejuvenating the resources that touch the lives of the young people who participate in each program. My students are investigating the earth, planting trees, preventing pollution and even presenting city officials with water conservation strategies. This real life experience provides kids with an appreciation for the earth’s resources that a classroom setting can’t necessarily provide.”

In addition to the Youth Service America Award, Ibarra has received accolades from numerous organizations for his exemplary work in the community, including three President’s Environmental Youth Awards; two Governor Environmental Awards; the State Farm Good Neighbor National Award; West Branch Chamber of Commerce Community Member of the Year Award; the Governor’s Teacher Award for Community Involvement; and President Clinton acknowledged Ibarra’s energy projects in his October 1997 global warming national speech.

DisneyHand Teacher Awards is part of DisneyHand, worldwide outreach for The Walt Disney Company, dedicated to making the dreams of families and children a reality through public service initiatives, community outreach and volunteerism in the areas of learning, compassion, the arts and the environment.

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