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Ed Begley, Jr. speaks at UCM's Earth Week 2010 Celebration

WARRENSBURG, MO (April 23, 2010) – Environmentally speaking, Ed Begley, Jr. doesn't just walk the walk, he drives the drive. Making the trip from Los Angeles, Ca. to Warrensburg in a hybrid vehicle, Begley was the keynote speaker for the University of Central Missouri's Earth Week 2010 celebration.

On Thursday afternoon Begley visited with more than 750 students from Warrensburg Middle School and later spoke in Hendricks Hall to an audience of students, faculty, staff, community members, corporate sponsors, and out-of-town visitors, some traveling from as far as St. Louis to see Begley.

"Mr. Begley instantly related to both his audiences: the Warrensburg Middle School students and the University and Community audience," said Steve Boone, associate dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and chair of the Earth Week committee. "He shared with us many simple, inexpensive, and practical environmentally friendly ideas that lead to behavioral changes, which will undoubtedly change the world in which we live."

Begley's presentation focused on living sustainably, not only on Earth Day, but also on the other 364 days of the year. Begley encouraged everyone to start with inexpensive practices such as riding bikes, recycling, and using cloth grocery bags.

"I want people to do the cheap and easy stuff first, like I did in 1970," Begley said. "I was a broke and struggling actor, but I saved money right away. Later you can do the intermediate stuff, and then you will be able to afford things like solar panels and hybrid cars."

Begley said that his "hemp shoes were full of hope" because of the results he has seen in the last 40 years. This includes the fact that Los Angeles has half the smog than it had in 1970, yet four times the number of cars. Also, the once growing hole in the ozone layer actually has shrunk in the last 20 years. These results show that living sustainably and reducing our carbon footprint have had a positive impact on our planet.

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Begley first came to audiences' attention for his portrayal of Victor Ehrlich on the hit television series *St. Elsewhere*. He has also appeared in *Batman Forever*, *The Inlaws*, *Pineapple Express*, *Six Feet Under*, *Arrested Development*, *The West Wing*, and *CSI: Miami*. Currently, Begley is the co-star of the hit Planet Green series *Living with Ed*. He is also active in numerous environmental organizations and has earned both praise and awards for his involvement.

There were also other successful Earth Week 2010 events. On Saturday, April 17, more than 80 Volunteer Service Day participants helped clean up the Warrensburg area. Some of the service projects included cleaning up nature trails, helping build a Habitat for Humanity House, and volunteering at Nature Central. More than 125 audience members attended Monday's Haute Trash Fashion Show, and several students, faculty, staff, and community members participated as models. On Wednesday, Green Energy at Central brought more than 30 Kansas City area business leaders to participate in a round table discussion that will be featured in the May issue of Ingram's magazine.

This was the first time UCM has sponsored a full week of activities celebrating Earth Day. A campus committee made up of faculty and student organization representatives developed the week of events. Additional assistance was provided by Trane, the contractor for UCM's Energy Savings Contract (ESCO) project.

Cutline information: Actor and environmentalist Ed Begley, Jr. spoke to Warrensburg Middle School students about sustainable living as part of UCM's Earth Week 2010 celebration.

Innovative Public Relations (IPR), a student-led public relations firm, is under the direction of the University of Central Missouri Office of University Relations in Warrensburg, Mo. Founded in January 2010, the firm consists of six public relations students, all of whom are committed to professional development and public relations initiatives. IPR is committed to providing clients with quality public relations in a timely, accurate and ethical manner. IPR's future goals include opening its doors to prospective clients affiliated with the university. For more information, visit www.ucmo.edu/ur/studentpr or contact IPR at studentpr@ucmo.edu or 660-543-8557.

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