



Earth Heroes at School

King County Executive Dow Constantine recently recognized



teachers, students, staff, and programs at 21 schools across the county for their outstanding contributions to protecting the environment. Fourteen of these schools have completed level one or higher in the King County Green Schools Program and three are past participants. These schools have increased their recycling rates, decreased garbage volumes, and taken on projects to conserve energy, compost lunch waste, educate their peers, encourage carpooling, and more. See photos of the [2010 Earth Heroes at School](#) and descriptions of their [projects](#).

Green Teams 2009-10

Over 100 student Green Teams throughout King County are reducing waste, improving recycling programs, reducing their carbon footprint, and planting gardens to make a difference at their school and in their communities. Find some of their stories and photos on the new [Go, Green Team! blog](#).

At the end of each semester, King County sends out certificates of appreciation as well as awards such as water bottles and pens made of recycled materials to Green Teams that have completed projects. Below are some highlights from this year's award-winning Green Teams.

Elementary Schools

Waste Reduction and Recycling

Second through sixth grade students at **Benjamin Franklin Elementary School** (Kirkland) produced a series of waste reduction

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In this issue

- Earth Heroes at School
- Green Teams 2009-10
Elementary Schools
Secondary Schools
- Hazards on the Homefront News
- Greening Our Schools

Greening Our Schools

King County Green Schools Program Provides Assistance and Recognition

During the 2009-10 school year, 101 schools participated in the King County Green Schools Program, receiving hands-on assistance, recycling containers and signs to engage students and staff in conservation practices. This month the Green Schools Program recognized 64 schools: 34 completed level one, 29 completed level two, and one school completed both levels. Level one focuses on waste reduction and recycling, and level two includes energy conservation.

If your school would like to participate in the program during the 2010-11 school year, fill out a short [application](#)

and recycling advertisements for their school-wide television network. As a result, students and teachers throughout their school are constantly rethinking their choices when it comes to preventing waste.



“Waste Less Wednesdays” at **Carl Sandburg Elementary** (Kirkland) is an ongoing campaign to reduce the school’s lunchtime waste. Green Team students under the guidance of parent Susan Vossler and teacher Heidi Yamamoto initiated the project by weighing pre-campaign lunch garbage and setting a reduction goal for the school.

Fifth grade students in Michael Robinett’s class at **Cedar Valley Elementary** (Kent) designed a “Life of Paper” obstacle course. The awareness generated through this activity has resulted in a dramatic increase of paper reuse in their classroom. Students will present their obstacle course concept to their PE teacher for future use.

Fourth grade students in Belinda Feller’s classroom at **Cherry Valley Elementary** (Duvall) have significantly cut down the school’s paper waste by making and placing reuse bins in every classroom. They also eliminated the use of polystyrene trays and plastic eating utensils in their cafeteria.

Endeavour Elementary (Issaquah) fifth graders each adopted and visited other classrooms in the school to share recycle, reuse, and rethink facts. Their teacher Kimberly Ralph has noticed a greater awareness about the importance of waste reduction and recycling among the entire student body.

The second grade students in Jan Miller’s classroom at **Fall City Elementary** (Fall City) are sorting trash more efficiently, reusing scrap paper, and serving as waste reduction role models for younger students. The students recently organized a school-wide Earth Day Spirit Day.

Terry Thibodeaux’s third grade students at **Lake Youngs Elementary** (Kent) collect drink pouches, chip bags, and cookie wrappers and send them to a company that uses them to create new products. As a result, students are reducing the amount of material sent to the landfill.

Sixth grade students at **Laura Ingalls Wilder Elementary**

[form](#). Schools and districts are accepted into the program on a first come, first served basis.

Email [Dale Alekel](mailto:Dale.Alekel@tahomaschools.org) or call her at 206-296-8457 if you have questions about the program.

Tahoma School District: A Green School District, Level One

Not only have all eight schools in the Tahoma School District completed level one, but in May 2010, the district also met the requirements, the first in King County to do so.

- To reduce paper use, the district has a double-sided photocopying and printing policy, and purchased a fax machine that prints double-sided pages. A voice mail system is used for district-wide messages to parents.
- To avoid food waste, prior to the end of the school year, the food service team uses up all food that would otherwise spoil over the summer or reach expiration dates before September.
- Durable trays are used in every school, and compostable cardboard trays are used only when necessary.
- Utility bills are monitored by district staff and reported to the school board.

Glacier Park Elementary was the first school in Tahoma to participate in the program, followed by Lake Wilderness Elementary, Rock Creek Elementary, Shadow Lake Elementary, Tahoma Middle, Cedar River Middle, Tahoma Junior High, and Tahoma Senior High. In May, Glacier Park, Cedar River, and

(Woodinville), teacher Ryan Scott and their extended learning community started a food-scrap collection system. After just two months, the school reduced its waste by 25 percent.

Barbara Egan's students at **Mark Twain Elementary** (Federal Way) combined lessons on advertising with a waste reduction and recycling information campaign. They used posters and radio announcements to inform the student body that buying individually packaged food items wastes natural resources and takes up space in our landfill.

Students at **Sunrise Elementary** (Redmond) are thinking twice before they throw anything into the garbage bin because the school's Green Team, led by Joanne Burkett, is watching! Green Team members provided classroom training, new signage, and recycling bin monitors for the school-wide milk carton recycling program.



Camelot Elementary's Green Team, under the leadership of teacher Danielle Smith, educates their peers in composting and recycling. Camelot (Auburn) is a level one King County Green School.

Talbot Hill Elementary (Renton) third through fifth grade students, led by teacher Jeanne Kalnick, created works of art using items from the school's recycling bins. The art pieces were exhibited to the entire school to raise awareness about reducing waste and conserving natural resources.

Gardening and Habitat

Liza Rickey and Ellen Ferrin's fourth and fifth grade students at **Clark Elementary** (Issaquah) prepared a field guide for visitors to the school's native garden and staffed several booths at the school's watershed festival. Increased water quality awareness, community pride, and environmental stewardship are just some of the outcomes.

To learn more about air quality, Marie Hartford's Green Team students at **Horace Mann Elementary** (Redmond) collected data in the school's parking lot. Their findings, which they presented to the PTSA, resulted in a "no idle" zone in front of the school and two "walk-to-school" days. The fifth graders also built and maintain a worm bin to learn about decomposers and their role in reducing food waste.

Sherry Edwards' fifth grade class at **North Hill Elementary** (Des

Tahoma Junior High completed level two. Five of the schools recycle food scraps and food-soiled paper, which Cedar Grove Composting collects and composts.



Lunchroom recycling at Glacier Park Elementary

Woodinville Montessori Recycles 72 Percent of School Waste

Woodinville Montessori School engaged students from preschool through eighth grade in waste reduction and recycling practices, resulting in a 72 percent recycling rate. The school

- promotes daily waste-free lunches and adjusts the snack menu to use existing supplies before purchasing new food.
- purchased reusable dish and drinkware to replace disposable ones in the cafeteria and classrooms.
- collects food scraps and food-soiled paper for composting by Cedar Grove Composting.

As part of the school's culture of conservation, each grade level became informed about

Moines) converted a school courtyard into a native plant ecosystem. The entire school now uses the area for lessons on ecology, plant and animal identification, and environmental stewardship.

Energy Conservation

Fourth through sixth grade Green Team students at **Gregory Heights Elementary** (Burien) have helped their school achieve level two status in the King County Green Schools Program. They have created a school culture in which waste reduction, energy conservation and a shrinking carbon footprint are daily priorities.

Green Team students under the guidance of custodian Ginger Ott at **Scenic Hill Elementary** (Kent) have reduced their school's power usage by 9 percent through a simple campaign. Students placed "Turn off the lights" handprints near all light switches and doorways throughout the school.

Secondary Schools

Trash Meets the Arts

Julia Vasiliauskas's Green Team students at **Mill Creek Middle School** ((Kent) created fun, short videos to teach others what can and cannot be recycled. They were shown during lunches and at the district's Technology Expo. The effort helped the school reduce its garbage by half, saving the district \$200 a month in garbage pick-up costs.

Judy Ellis and Dawn MacArthur's ninth grade students at **Secondary Academy for Success** (Bothell) organized several after-school sessions to create "Trash Art," using non-recyclable contaminants found in the recycling bins. The project has encouraged students to think more carefully about where they place their garbage.

Waste Prevention and Recycling

Treena Fritsch's Green Team at **Cedar River Middle School** (Maple Valley) created a "Green Award" out of a liter plastic bottle and bottle caps. The award rotates monthly among classrooms, reminding students and teachers to recycle and compost. Students and teachers also signed Earth Day pledges to conserve energy and resources.

The Green Club at **Leota Junior High** (Woodinville), led by Burton Barrager and Jane Vincent, learned how to conduct a project from inception to evaluation when they started a food composting program in the lunchroom and kitchen. Their efforts reduced the garbage by 100 lbs daily and increased recycling rates dramatically.

Students and staff signed a "Go Green Pledge" developed by the Green Team at **Maywood Middle School** (Renton). The Green

one section of the Green Schools level one checklist, and presented this information to other classrooms. Each classroom also started worm bins and maintain a garden. Each week students separate the recyclable materials collected in their classrooms, a task that allows students to learn which materials can and can't be recycled. Newsletters inform parents of conservation activities, such as the brainstorming and information session about sustainable building the school hosted to plan for a new facility.



Bag Your Bags Campaign

King County has launched a campaign to encourage people to bring their plastic bags, such as grocery, newspaper, and dry cleaning bags, to grocery stores for recycling. Plastic bags collected at grocery stores stay cleaner and are easier to process than those placed in your home recycling bin. And be sure to keep them out of the garbage! About 61,000 tons of recyclable plastic bags are thrown into King County's landfill every year. Students at Kennydale Elementary in Renton kicked off the campaign by collecting 43,000 bags in a month.

Team conducted training sessions and promoted the new lunchroom recycling program through morning announcements and hallway signs, helping to increase the school's recycling rate from 24 to 62 percent.

Pine Lake Middle School (Sammamish) added food scrap collection to its existing recycling program. Creative signage and an outstanding original video contributed to the success of the expanded program and decreased garbage costs by 62 percent. Megan Elliot leads the Green Team in these activities.

Gardening and Habitat

Middle school Green Team students at **Nautilus K-8** (Federal Way), led by Lisa Torres, cleaned up a ravine and organized a school-wide clean-up on Earth Day. The Green Team is teaching younger students to monitor their lunchtime recycling practices, and presenting them with awards made from recycled materials for a job well done.

John Schmied's group at **Skyview Junior High** (Bothell) has focused on environmental education and sustainability for the past four years. This year they expanded the uses of their Outdoor Environmental Learning Center. Students planted over 150 native species, fostering stewardship and appreciation of the natural environment.

Hazards on the Homefront (HHF) News

HHF at WSTA

At the WSTA Conference in March, **Lisa Chi** (Shoreline School District), **Jessica Levine** (Eckstein Middle School), and **Dianne Thompson** and **Jodie Spitz** (Kent-Meridian High School) described how they have integrated the Hazards on the Homefront lessons into their curriculum. Elementary students learning how to conduct a scientific investigation, middle school students studying acids and bases, and high school students using the research process all do so within the context of household hazardous products and their effect on health and the environment.

HHF Teacher Training This August

Teacher training workshops on the newly updated Hazards on the Homefront teacher guide are scheduled for August 10 (grades 4-6) and August 11 (grades 6-12) with an optional follow-up tour of the South Wastewater Treatment Plant on August 12. Clock hours and college credit are available. For more information or to register, send [email](#) or call 206-583-0655 or download a [brochure](#).

Einstein Middle School Edible Garden Flourishing

Students at **Einstein Middle School** invited community members to participate in their "Embrace Einstein" garden and campus beautification event. Boy Scout Troop 325 raised the new



greenhouse, students sampled the first radishes from the garden,
and the jazz band provided entertainment.



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