



King County
Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Solid Waste Division

Class Act

School Recycling Program Newsletter — June 2009



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Earth Heroes at School 2009 Winners

King County recognized teachers, students, staff, and programs from 16 schools as Earth Heroes at a ceremony on April 30. King County Council President Dow Constantine awarded certificates to this year's award winners for their outstanding contributions to protect the environment. Projects ranged from making significant reductions in waste generation to basing a student-run espresso business on environmentally sustainable principles. See [photos](#) of the [winners and information](#) about their projects.

Green Team News

Each year the King County Solid Waste Division recognizes Green Teams that complete projects that conserve resources and improve their school environment. Listed below are some of this year's winning Green Teams. Those designated EH also received King County's Earth Hero at School Award this year; those designated GSP are King County Green School Program participants. Look for additional updates on the King County Education and School Assistance [webpage](#) this summer.

Elementary Schools

Reducing Waste and Recycling

Linda Reiter's fifth grade class at **Black Diamond Elementary** has been busy educating the younger grades about the importance of reusing and recycling. To recognize Earth Day, the fifth grade students supplied every member of the school community with reusable shopping bags donated by local businesses. (EH)

The second grade students in **Jan Miller's** classroom at **Fall City Elementary** are sorting trash more efficiently, reusing scrap paper, and serving as waste reduction role models for younger students. Their efforts at school also include clean-up projects on school grounds and along the nearby river. (GSP)

In this issue

- Earth Heroes at School 2009 Winners
- Green Team News
- Greening Our Schools
- Resources and Events
- Professional Development

Greening Our Schools

King County Green Schools Program Wins Recycler of the Year Award

[King County's Green Schools Program](#) was named Outstanding Public Education Program by the Washington State Recycling Association for its work helping schools conserve resources. Established in 2003, the program has helped nearly 300 schools and 10 school districts to increase recycling, decrease water and energy use, and engage students in doing something good for the environment. This school year, four school districts and 75 individual schools have received assistance.

With the goal of making conservation part of school culture and daily practice, the program helps schools organize Green School Teams that promote recycling and other conservation practices to the entire school community. Program representatives visit schools and provide hands-on assistance. The program also provides recycling containers and signs, informational resources and recognition. When participants complete criteria in each of the program's three levels, they receive a banner, a certificate and a

Intent on improving the school recycling program, **Laure Thiébaux's** third grade R Team at the **French Immersion School of Washington**, designed and hung posters in the school hallways; weighed and analyzed the trash created daily over a one-week period; and performed recycling skits and led waste reduction games in younger-grade classrooms. The R Team continues to monitor their cafeteria in order to support the rest of the student body in developing responsible recycling habits.

Chris Andrews and fourth and fifth grade students at **Mirror Lake Elementary** are doing their part to keep unnecessary waste out of the landfills by managing a printer cartridge recycling program for the local school and business community.

Ginger Ott, a custodian at **Scenic Hill Elementary**, has been working closely with fourth through sixth grade students to educate the entire school population about waste reduction methods. A poster campaign and a milk carton recycling program are making huge dents in the amount of garbage the school produces. (GSP)

Joanne Burkett's Green Team at **Sunrise Elementary** in Redmond held a GREEN Week in honor of Earth Day. Each day focused on a specific activity, such as a waste-free lunch or a paperless day. In addition, the team has initiated a milk carton recycling program, and added scrap-paper boxes and recycling bins for each classroom. The school's recycling rate has increased more than twenty percent and its garbage production has decreased by almost half a dumpster per week. (GSP)



The Brownie Girl Scout Troop led by **April Carl** at **Westhill Elementary** in Bothell built a three-bin compost structure for their community garden with assistance from local volunteers to reduce waste going to the landfill. The

troop has also been learning about the importance of native mason bees in the local ecosystem.

Reducing the Ecological Footprint

Deborah Edwards and the Earth Keepers at **Eagle Rock Multi-age K-5** have been busy reducing their school's ecological footprint. The Earth Keepers facilitated a change from disposable to reusable lunch trays, effectively reducing cafeteria waste by 50 to 70 percent. They also initiated a once-a-month waste-free lunch day for the entire school and planted trees on the school campus. Students have been excited and amazed by the positive results that can result from patient action. (GSP)

Concerned about the condition of our environment, fifth and sixth graders led by **Scott Meyer** at **Martin Sortun Elementary**

success story on the program Web site.

[Applications](#) are being considered for the 2009-10 school year: There is one application for schools and another for school districts.

Success Story: Scenic Hill Elementary (Kent)

Scenic Hill Elementary joined the King County Green Schools Program in January 2009 with a recycling rate of 12 percent. By April, the school had increased its recycling rate 36 percent. The school is now recycling almost half of its solid waste. The school was able to increase the size of its outdoor recycling dumpster and reduce the frequency of garbage collection, saving approximately \$190 per month. The school accomplished this by

- promoting waste reduction and recycling practices, including creating and hanging colorful posters throughout the school.
- adding recycling containers to the lunchroom for milk cartons, juice boxes, plastic bottles, aluminum cans and food scraps.
- placing labels that list what can and can't be recycled on all recycling containers.
- involving students in worm bin composting of food scraps. Custodian Ginger Ott helped supply worm bins and four classrooms learned the basics through a Green Team workshop.

The King County Green Schools Program provided recycling containers and labels.

Issaquah School District Receives Leader in Green Schools Award

The **Issaquah School District** recently received the **Leader in Green Schools Award** as part of the Green Globe awards given biennially by the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks. The award was accepted by Superintendent **Steve Rasmussen**, Resource Conservation Manager **John Macartney**, and Director of Facilities Services **Keith Simmonds**.

The Green Globe awards recognize businesses, organizations and individuals that go the extra mile to protect our natural resources. The Issaquah School District has set an excellent example for other school districts by expanding recycling and waste reduction practices and by

implemented a school-wide composting and recycling program that cuts the school's garbage output in half. **Debbie Sells'** fourth grade class and **Kathy Gundlach's** fifth graders are creating native plant gardens on the school grounds. Through the use of educational art, the young gardeners are illustrating the connection between native plant gardens and healthy watershed ecosystems. (GSP)

Secondary Schools



Green Spirit Week

Students **Cora Byers** and **Audrey Phillips** organized a creative Green Spirit Week at **Leota Junior High**. Each day highlighted a different environmental issue designated by a specific color. For

example, Wednesday was the day to wear black with an emphasis on turning off lights and electronics, while on Thursday students wore white and were encouraged to reduce paper use. The week culminated with a lunchtime event. (EH) (GSP) (Photo: Audrey Phillips and Cora Byers (Leota JHS) with Dow at podium.jpg - crop to head shots)

Reducing Waste and Recycling

Eighth grade students at **Thunder Mountain Middle School** organized a Recycling Kick-off Week that involved the whole school. These students made morning announcements using fun facts about recycling. During lunch periods, they assisted other students with proper recycling practices and led lunchroom games and activities to reinforce good habits. Teachers and administrative staff got on board with paperless days and "half-light" days. As a result, these students have instilled behavior changes within the school that will help reduce garbage and protect our precious natural resources. (GSP)

Elise Cooksley received a Green Team mini-grant to purchase a Nitrogen Cycle Lab Kit for her high school science students at **Two Rivers High School**. Students investigated different substances in the process of decomposing. This activity led to a school-wide composting program of lunch waste, with the compost being used by cooking students for their herb garden as well as by the middle school students who tend a native plant garden. (GSP)

Gardening and Habitat

Arbor Montessori received a Green Team mini-grant to plant a native garden on school grounds and to replace an old footbridge. Students researched and designed the new environmentally sound footbridge which was built by many parent volunteers. For expert

reducing energy and water consumption.

The district, which includes 24 public schools, increased its recycling rate from 30 to 50 percent. And even with a 15 percent increase in new building square footage, the district decreased energy use by six percent, reduced water consumption by 33 percent and irrigation by 20 percent.

The district replaced disposable polystyrene trays with compostable trays and initiated food scrap recycling in four schools, with plans to expand this program to four additional schools. The currently participating schools reduced their solid waste by 50 to 75 percent.

Resources and Events

Art and the Environment

View a thought-provoking image of [Mount Rainier](#) as seen from the Cedar Hills landfill. Below the artwork are some activities to inspire you and your students to think about how to reduce the amount of waste produced. Also find links to other artwork that explores the environment and our relationship with it.

Green Schools Best Practices Workshop Materials Available Online Soon

On May 21, Green Schools Program participants gathered for a best practices workshop. Sessions included waste reduction, recycling, food scrap recycling and energy conservation. Presentations will be posted on the program's web site before the start of school in September 2009.

Professional Development

King County Hazards on the Homefront Teacher Workshop

Looking for new ways to go GREEN this year? Do you want NEW IDEAS to teach your students and still meet curriculum requirements? Attend a [free teacher workshop](#) to learn fun, hands-on activities that teach your students about household hazardous products, bioaccumulation, proper disposal, and safer alternatives—lessons your students will use for the rest of their lives.

Kohlwes Education Center, Renton 8

advice on native plants, the school teamed up with Mountains to Sound Greenway. The overall outcome is an increase in wildlife and an improvement to the health of the soil.

The **Federal Way High School** Environmental Club used a Green Team mini-grant to restore the school's courtyard with native plants, creating a beautiful space that the school can be proud of. This is truly a team effort where birdhouses built by woodshop students will be put to use. Posters and flyers help to inform the whole student body of the benefits of using native plants and encourage the protection and conservation of the earth's resources.

Alana Vinther's Green Team at **Global Connections High School** is replanting two gardens at the school with drought tolerant and pest resistant plants. Students have been working with the grounds crew to plant the garden. Costs of the project are being offset with a grant from Sustainable Seattle. (GSP)

Dianne Thompson's Environmental Science class at **Kent-Meridian High School** is building a wildlife habitat on campus. Students are designing and building a pond and a garden that will attract hummingbirds, songbirds and butterflies. Wood shop students are making benches to create an outdoor classroom within the habitat. They also received a grant for worm bins and will be mentors for the school, teaching other students proper recycling of food waste in worm bins. The results will be a reduction in garbage along with a beautiful outdoor space to conduct hands-on environmental classes. (GSP)

The Green Team at **Tahoma Middle School** held a tree planting event on Earth Day. Using funds they had raised by selling Earth Day T-shirts, they bought 14 Douglas fir trees to replace others that had recently been cut down. Parents, staff and students are proud and delighted with the result. (GSP)

Sustainability Survey Available Online

The Green Team at **Skyview Junior High** conducted its annual Earth Day Sustainability Survey, which encourages families to make more sustainable choices. Now available online, the [survey](#) includes fifty actions you can take to lessen your impact on the earth. Each year, science teachers John Schmied, Tom Nowak, and Claire Farr encourage their students in a variety of environmental projects, including completing this survey with their students. (EH) (GSP)

AM – 4 PM

Tuesday August 11: Grade 4-6 Teachers.

Connects to FOSS and STC Kit curricula, as well as water, salmon, and habitat studies!

Wednesday August 12: Grades 6-12 Teachers

Lessons updated in 2009 to include new activities and resources.

Thursday August 13: Follow-Up Tour of Wastewater Treatment Plant, 9:00 a.m. - Noon

Tour is available to all workshop teachers and is required for college credit.

Register by [email](#) or call 206-583-0655 or toll free 1-800-227-0977.



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