



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Fall City Elementary School

School district: Snoqualmie Valley

School location: Fall City

Began participating in the Green Schools Program:
September 2007

Level One of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2009

Level Two of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2010

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- The school increased its recycling rate from 25% to 38%, and reduced garbage volume by 447 cubic yards in one year.
- The school received indoor recycling bins and stickers from the Green Schools Program.
- In addition to adding milk carton recycling in the lunchroom, the school collected cell phones and printer cartridges to be recycled.
- Fall City Elementary used worm bins to compost food scraps from classroom snacks.
- Several teachers and student groups tackled environmental projects including setting up and maintaining worm bins, conducting litter pickups, and recycling education.
- Fall City promoted Waste Free Wednesdays to encourage students to bring lunches from home in durable and recyclable containers.



Students picked up litter along a nearby river



From left to right: Dan Schlotfeldt, Colleen Myers, Meg Handy, Laurie Shepherd, Jan Miller, Betsy Zurfluh and Chris Guyer.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- With grant money from Snoqualmie Valley School Foundation and the school PTA, and electrician labor donated by A&R Solar, Fall City installed four solar panels worth \$5,300.
- Staff placed "Turn off the lights" stickers from the Green Schools Program on all manual light switches.



- Students shared energy conservation messages via morning announcements and a bulletin board display titled The Power is in your Hands.
- Students created end-of-day classroom energy checklists.
- Librarian Meg Handy developed curricula to guide students in monitoring the school's energy use.

Additional Environmental Education

- Teachers included waste reduction and recycling messages into their curricula.
- For example, all students read Wangari Maathai's *Trees of Peace*, fourth-grade students calculated their carbon footprints with online calculators, and third-graders learned about plastics in the ocean and the importance of reducing plastic use.
- Using the school learning garden, teachers helped students connect conservation concepts to real-world experiences.
- During Earth Week, students created raps with ten actions students can take to protect the planet. The campaign focused on a different activity for each letter in EARTH: E for Energy Conservation; A for alternative transportation; R for the four "R's" – rethink, reduce, reuse and recycle; T for trade (bringing in a gently used book to trade for another), and H for hero and helping hand such as sharing conservation ideas with others.

Award

Meg Handy received the King County Earth Hero at School award in April 2009 for improving the lunchroom recycling program, obtaining grant funds for solar panels, starting worm bins for composting food scraps, restoring the school garden, and supporting teachers in their classroom lessons on conservation.

Comment

In discussing Stewardship this quote was shared from Mother Teresa: "*The Ocean Is Made of Drops.*" The question was posed to the children about what she meant, and how they could apply this idea to our own lives and the environment. One student said, "I think we are all just drops of helpfulness, but if we all work together we can become a tsunami of helpfulness!"