



## Earth Heroes at School Grow in Number in 2008

King County Executive Ron Sims recognized this year's Earth Heroes at School at a reception in Renton on April 24. The eleven teachers, three students, two custodial staff, one home-school and eight school programs (the largest group of honorees in the eight years of the program) were recognized for their extraordinary work in conserving resources, protecting the environment, and conducting environmental stewardship projects in King County. Projects ranged from reducing greenhouse gases to creating sustainable gardens. Ten of the winners participate in the [King County Green Schools Program](#), which helps schools and school districts initiate or expand conservation practices, including waste reduction and recycling, food scrap composting and environmentally appropriate purchasing. See a complete list and photos of the [2008 award-winners](#).

## Green Teams Continue to Make a Difference

King County has registered 77 Green Teams at elementary schools this year and 19 at the secondary level. Several were recognized as Earth Heroes at School. Projects range from improving recycling programs to protecting water quality. In addition, Green Teams play an important role in the success of many of the county's Green Schools Program participants.

Each year, the King County Solid Waste Division invites Green Teams to submit applications for recognition and prizes. Here is a sample of projects sent in so far. (The school district is listed for each school where applicable.)

The Attic School, Woodinville  
Students in Lee Rotweiller's class completed their project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at their school and their overall ecological footprint. In addition to repairing the school greenhouse,


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### Greening Our Schools

*The following schools have made great strides in becoming Green Schools in 2007-08. (The school district is listed for each school.)*



Arrowhead Elementary has eliminated the use of 200 polystyrene trays per school day or 36,000 per year.

Arrowhead Elementary,  
Northshore  
A large team of parents, teachers



they distributed canvas bags to replace the use of disposable ones and started a worm bin to compost food scraps.

**Benjamin Franklin Elementary, Lake Washington**  
This Green Team advised by Kristin Wobker conducted a variety of school-wide projects for Earth Day, including organizing a Waste Free Lunch Day and decorating over 500 grocery bags that were distributed at the local Red Apple. Ms. Wobker and fellow teacher Kate Berten recently received a Green Team mini-grant so members will have safety vests as they pick up litter around the community and help remove invasive plants at Bridle Trails Park.

**Dimmitt Middle School, Renton**  
Kandi Field's seventh-grade Green Team made posters, prepared morning announcements and developed presentations to help the school improve its recycling program. They focused on keeping recycling bins free of contamination.

**Liberty High School, Issaquah**  
Liberty's Environmental Club, guided by science teacher Diane Allen, has expanded its activities beyond its highly successful recycling education efforts to include other environmental activities. They recently joined the Adopt-A-Road program to pick up litter on the roads surrounding the school and plan to improve the school's habitat by reintroducing native species to the property.

**Marvista Elementary, Highline**  
Keith Matthews and his fourth-grade Green Team, motivated by King County's Earth Challenge assembly program, decided to start a classroom composting program that soon expanded to seven classrooms. After conducting research as part of their pioneer education curriculum, the students became composting experts and made speeches to educate other classrooms. The students collect the lunch waste each day and place it in a large worm bin contributed by the community and located near the garden where they plan to use the compost.

**Margaret Mead Elementary, Lake Washington**  
The STARS (Students That Are Responsible Scholars) group of kindergarten through second graders have become worm bin scholars with their teacher Pierina Austin. They have learned about the contents, habitat, purpose, and care of their worm bin and collect lunch scraps to feed their worms. They are using the castings to enhance the soil in the school garden.

**Meridian Elementary, Kent**  
Esther Onishi's third-grade team made presentations to classrooms and staff to educate them on what can and cannot be recycled. They give periodic updates as needed. As a result, participation has increased, more materials are being recycled, and contamination has decreased.

**Puget Sound Skills Center, Highline**

and staff has accomplished a great deal since joining the Green Schools Program in the fall. Principal Pete Misner and parent Amy McKendry have led the efforts with support from teacher Deb Henderson and the student council to accomplish the following activities.

- Improve milk carton recycling through classroom presentations by student council and parents and a school-wide assembly.
- Encourage waste reduction practices such as making double-sided copies and packing lunches with less waste
- Use durable, reusable lunchroom trays.
- Conduct a school-wide litter clean-up.

**Carl Sandburg Elementary and Discovery Community School, Lake Washington**  
Since fall 2007, under the leadership of parents Susan Vossler and Christie Damico and Principal Toby Brenner, these two schools that share one facility have

- begun to recycle milk cartons.
- increased the school's recycling rate.
- reduced waste by promoting double-sided copies and waste-free lunches.
- started switching to paperless parent newsletters.

**Islander Middle School, Mercer Island**  
Due to the tireless efforts of parent Kenlyn Emerson, Islander Middle School has taken huge steps to improve its waste reduction and recycling practices. Working closely with custodians, administrators and district staff, Kenlyn led the student Green Club in reinstating a lunchroom recycling program. Together they

- launched a recycling kick-off week that included skits,

Jill Price-Crawley's Trash Fashion week was so successful last year that she repeated it this year. Her students designed clothing and accessories made from discarded materials that were highlighted at a show on May 2.

Two Rivers High School, Snoqualmie Valley  
Elise Cooksley's Green Team has been surveying the South Fork of the Snoqualmie River and discussing ideas to keep the river clean. They are studying options on how to inform the larger community of the impacts it has on water quality in the river.

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## Hazards on the Homefront Student Projects

After attending the *Hazards on the Homefront* teacher workshop, many teachers incorporate household hazardous waste activities into their curriculum to encourage students and their families to protect their personal health as well as the health of the environment.

West Seattle High School, Seattle  
Ninth-grade health students at West Seattle High School are creating projects that compare hazardous products found around the home to safer alternatives. The students will present their projects to the rest of the high school and have the option to present them to students at the nearby middle school as well. Students will answer questions from their audiences about the messages and implications of their projects.

Kennydale Elementary, Renton  
Sara Taylor's fourth-grade students made posters and wrote songs, plays, and poems about how kids can go green in easy ways at home, school, and in their neighborhoods, such as using safer alternatives to household hazardous products. Parents and family members were invited to attend an environmental fair to view the final student projects. Ms. Taylor is also forming a student group to help clean up their community.

Auburn High School, Auburn  
Students in the Horticulture Club, under direction of Bruce Morris, are educating other students and the public about hazardous products and less harmful alternatives. They received a King County mini-grant to purchase supplies to conduct surveys and create educational materials. They plan to complete their project before the end of the school year. The club recently received media attention for planting fruit trees and other produce for future use in the school lunchroom.

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## ***Hazards on the Homefront*** FREE Teacher Workshop for 6th-12th Grade Teachers

Tuesday August 12, 2008, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm  
With Optional Day Two on Personal Care Products Safety and

announcements, and a recycling fashion show.

- coordinated with parent and high school volunteers to monitor recycling bins and educate the school about waste reduction and recycling.
- recycled 60 percent of the school's plastic bottles during the first week of the program.
- begun advocating that the school and district replace Styrofoam lunch trays with a durable alternative.

This spring, Islander received a \$1,600 Terry Husseman Sustainable Public Schools grant from the WA State Dept. of Ecology. The club is investigating a matching grant from the school's PTA for the remaining half needed to fund set-up costs for the durable tray option.

Madrona Elementary,  
Highline

This school tripled its recycling volume, thanks to the leadership of teacher Eve Kolakowski and the school's Green Schools Team of teachers and staff. This spring the school

- started milk carton recycling.
- discontinued unwanted catalogs and newsletters to reduce the amount of unwanted mail the school receives.
- reduced paper use by making double-sided copies and using the back of sheets that were only printed on one side.
- reduced parent newsletter distribution to one per household.

Skyview Junior High,  
Northshore

Science teacher John Schmied has created [environmental grounding assignments](#) for all the seventh-grade students as part of the [Environment and Ecology Unit](#). Students use the assignments to answer questions such as *Where does your water come from?*, *Where does your waste go?*, and *Where does your wastewater go?* Students then complete a Sustainability Survey with their families to review what

Labeling on August 13 Lake Washington Technical College,  
Kirkland WA (A pesticide-free campus!)

Learn fun, hands-on activities that teach your students about household hazardous products, bioaccumulation, proper disposal, and safer alternatives -- real-life skills students will use for the rest of their lives.

Receive ready-to-use lesson plans that are easy to integrate into existing curricula.

Fulfill Science, Health and Fitness GLEs.

Earn 7 clock hours per workshop or one college credit for attending both days.

This free workshop includes

- *Hazards on the Homefront* Teacher Guide.
- Green Cleaning Kit filled with safer products.
- stipend for certified King County teachers upon completion of workshop objectives.
- information on free, follow-up classroom presentations and mini-grants.
- lunch.

Optional Day Two Workshop

### **Consumer Awareness: Personal Care Products Safety and Labeling**

Wednesday August 13, 2008, 8:00 am-4:00 pm  
*Northwest Association for Biomedical Research (NWABR)*  
*This workshop is made possible through funding from the Chiron Foundation.*

How can you tell if a shampoo or lotion really does what it says it does? What does "Not Tested on Animals" really mean? Evaluating cosmetic claims requires an understanding of the science behind the ingredients and the regulations behind the labels and safety testing.

This free workshop includes

- lesson materials, including teacher guidelines, student hand-outs, and background resources.
- access to a loaner kit with materials for making hand lotion in class
- lunch.

Space is limited to 25 teachers. To register for one or both workshop days, please call Erin McGourty at 206-583-0655 or send [email](#).

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### **Earth Challenge: the Choice is Rs Assembly Program**

they can do at home to conserve resources. Over 350 Skyview students have taken this survey and pledged to take action to conserve energy and sustain our environment.

Somerset Elementary,  
Bellevue

One of the newest Green Schools participants, this school started a milk carton recycling program, and is preparing to phase out paper newsletters for parents. Recycling pick-ups have doubled and garbage volume has been reduced. Teacher Stephanie Wright is continuing to organize the Green Schools Team to pursue more waste reduction and recycling activities.

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### Green Teams at Green Schools

*Green Teams or environmental clubs at Green Schools play an important role in educating their classmates and engaging and motivating their peers to make exciting changes. Here are some examples. (The school district is listed for each school.)*

Mercer Island High School,  
Mercer Island

Mercer Island High kicked off its "Week of Awesome" April 28. Students, administrators and custodians alike are thrilled with the progress being made on litter reduction and recycling. In the first two days of the program, the reduction in litter and increase in recycling was dramatic. Parent volunteers are assisting with lunchroom monitoring, as well as generating ideas for continuing the program successfully in the fall.

Tahoma Junior High,  
Tahoma

Kim McHenry's Green Team organized an Earth Day event that promoted the school recycling program. Students won



King County Solid Waste Division's elementary school assembly program reminds students why waste reduction and recycling are important and how they can participate at home and at school. The program has become so popular that the schedule fills quickly. Take advantage of this opportunity to add your school to next fall's schedule. Get more [information](#) or contact Emily States by [email](#) or call 206-

583-0655.

*My students were so proud/pleased that we already had a recycle bin and a re-use box in our classroom. They now intend to use it even more often! -4th grade teacher, Brookside Elementary*

*I liked how they showed the kids simple ways to make a difference. It really got them talking and excited. - 2nd grade teacher, Carl Sandburg Elementary*

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## End Your School Year Green

Find [ideas](#), along with step by step instructions, on how to reduce waste at the end of the school year. Ideas include organizing a Swap Day after cubbies and lockers are cleaned out and donating leftover edible food from school kitchens.

Look for new resources at King County's Education and Assistance [website](#).

prizes for correctly sorting recyclables and garbage, and signed pledges to recycle as much as possible. The pledges were posted in the main hallway. A raffle drew many students to the Earth Day booth, among them the three lucky students that won a 'green' Earth Day shirt

Tahoma Middle School,  
Tahoma  
This Green Team and its leader, Dean of Students Paul Gardner, generated enthusiasm in students and staff with posters, announcements and a cafeteria event for the new can and bottle recycling program.

Auburn High School,  
Auburn  
Bess Owens and her leadership classes have taken the initiative to increase awareness of the importance of recycling at school and are planning a competition to further ignite interest.

Terminal Park Elementary,  
Auburn  
Leah McIntyre and her fifth-grade students are educating the rest of the school about recycling, reusing, and reducing. They made games on PowerPoint, created posters, and presented skits to the rest of the classrooms in the school. As a result, recycling is up and the amount of garbage greatly reduced.



King County Solid Waste Division's School Recycling Program Newsletter

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