




Class Act

School Recycling Program Newsletter — February 2010



Look for the new Green Team Blog coming in March on the King County School Programs [Web page](#).

Earth Heroes at School

It's not too late to send in your [nomination](#) if you are doing exceptional work for the environment in King County or if you know a teacher, student, staff, volunteer, program or school doing so. Deadline is March 1. Earth Heroes will be honored at a reception on April 29, 2010.



2009 Earth Heroes, North Hill Elementary Green Team, with County Executive Dow Constantine

Elementary School Green Team Projects

At **Bennett Elementary** (Bellevue), the PTA designated 2009-2010 as the Go Green school year. The Eco-Kids under the guidance of Wendy Shol held a Go Green Walkathon with booths set up to educate the parents on a variety of environmental topics. The students also challenged the teachers not to use paper coffee cups during Go Green Week. A video to teach the school how to sort and stack lunch milk cartons, straws, leftovers and trays; a presentation to the PTA; and a fundraiser selling reusable bags are among the team's other projects.

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Greening Our Schools

King County Green Schools Program honors eleven more schools

In January eleven schools were recognized for initiating or improving their waste reduction and recycling practices, the focus of level one of the program. The following eleven schools joined the 42 schools that completed level one in the spring of 2009.

- **Highline School District** - Gregory Heights Elementary
- **Issaquah School District** - Cascade Ridge Elementary, Challenger Elementary, Discovery Elementary, Issaquah Middle School, Maywood Middle School
- **Tahoma School District** - Cedar River Middle School, Lake Wilderness Elementary, Rock Creek Elementary, Shadow Lake Elementary, Tahoma Middle School

"Each of these 11 schools has involved its whole school community — students, teachers and administrators — in reducing garbage and increasing recycling," said Dale Alekel, King County Green Schools

Through a school-wide information campaign, Dee Miller's fifth and sixth graders at **Cedarhurst Elementary** (Burien) are reducing the amount of recyclables thrown into garbage bins. Activities include delivering presentations to classrooms throughout the school and conducting a recycling competition that will focus on putting litter in its place.

Liza Rickey and Ellen Ferrin's fourth and fifth grade Green Team at **Clark Elementary** (Issaquah) maintain and cultivate the school's native plant garden. Students are writing a field guide for visitors. They also conduct a watershed festival with interactive stations to educate the entire third to fifth grade population about water conservation and waste reduction and recycling.

Marianne Sager's Green Team students at **Rock Creek Elementary** (Tahoma) are planning a school-wide Clean Recycling competition for classrooms. The team is developing a rubric to judge the competition, and Green Team students will be assigned classrooms to spot check recycling bins. Reports will be provided to classroom teachers to share with their students, and monthly awards will be given to classrooms with the highest score in their grade level.

Jennifer Gjurasic's **Snoqualmie Elementary** (Snoqualmie) Green Team is making GOOS (Good on one side) boxes for classrooms that do not have paper reuse boxes and conducting a monthly Green Award for the classroom that shows the greenest behavior that month.

Joanne Burkett's multi-grade Green Team at **Sunrise Elementary** (Redmond) implemented a milk carton recycling program. Green Team members created signs, trained each classroom in proper recycling, and now monitor garbage cans and recycling bins to encourage students to participate. The Green Team also has been collecting Capri Sun containers and cell phones for recycling. As a result, recycling has increased, garbage is down, and students are bringing fewer packaged drinks with their lunch.



The Brownie Troop at **Syre Elementary** (Shoreline), under the leadership of Michele Earl-Hubbard, initiated a lunchroom recycling program. The group presented

Program manager.

Read a [success story](#) for each of these schools.

Food Scrap Recycling in Schools

What do apple cores, banana peels, half-eaten cheeseburgers, napkins and food-soiled pizza boxes have in common? These items are all organic and are being collected for composting in more and more King County schools. By setting up food scrap recycling in their lunchrooms, schools have reduced garbage volumes, increased recycling rates and decreased garbage disposal costs. Within eight weeks, the collected food scraps and other compostable materials such as napkins are turned into a valuable soil amendment. Who would think that leftover food scraps could be so valuable!

Here's a look at two school lunchroom recycling programs in the Tahoma School District:

Cedar River Middle School

Before Cedar River Middle School started to recycle food scraps in its lunchroom, it generated an average of eight bags of garbage each day at lunchtime. Now, due to recycling food scraps and other compostable materials such as napkins, the school generates an average of just two bags of garbage each day at lunchtime.

To prepare the students for the new lunchroom procedure, Cedar River's 40-member student Green Team created lunchtime presentations, painted signs and posters that were placed throughout campus, and shared recycling facts during morning announcements. They developed and presented a fun "Test Your Knowledge" classroom presentation, and made a presentation at an all-staff meeting.

The Green Team also worked with [TerraCycle](#) to set up recycling for Capri-Sun juice pouches and chip bags.



Steps to success - Footprints on the floor guide students through three lunchroom stations: one

information about recycling during lunchtime and then asked students to sign a chart saying that they recycled. Most students chose to delay recess in order to sign the chart! On their first day of the lunchroom recycling program, they collected 92 milk cartons, 37 juice boxes, one can and one water bottle.



Jeanne Kalnick's Green Team at **Talbot Hill Elementary** (Renton) continues its recycling efforts. To support its school-wide collection program, students made

posters using examples of real recyclables and common sources of contamination. The Green Team also shares a recycling tip-of-the-week during intercom announcements, and a line has been added to the school constitution committing the school to green behaviors.

Secondary School Green Team Projects

Dianne Thompson's Environmental Science classes at **Kent-Meridian High School** (Kent) worked hard to kick off a cafeteria recycling program. In addition to promoting can, bottle, and milk carton recycling, the students recycle Styrofoam trays and collect food scraps for their worm bin. The first week saw a 66 percent reduction in garbage! To prepare for the education campaign, students met with the principal for a question and answer session and coordinated efforts with the kitchen and custodial staff.

Tahoma Middle School (Tahoma) is hosting a poster contest on the benefits of recycling for the school and community. All students will be asked to participate and will be given time during sixth-period classrooms to create a poster. Winning posters will be hung in local businesses, and all other posters will be displayed around the school. Students who pledge to be active recyclers will receive a reusable water bottle with the school name and reminder of their pledge. Vice-principal Paul Gardner initiated this project with the school's Green Team.

Michelle Pickard's **Issaquah Middle School** (Issaquah) Green Team was written up in the [Issaquah Press](#) for its efforts to continue greening the middle school. Students visited classrooms

for emptying and placing recyclable containers; one for placing garbage; one for placing food scraps and other compostable materials.

Shadow Lake Elementary School
Shadow Lake Elementary increased its recycling rate from 11 percent to 50 percent by improving classroom recycling and starting a recycling program in the lunchroom. School staff first initiated a lunchroom recycling program for aluminum cans, milk cartons and plastic bottles. Once students were familiar with lunchtime sorting, food scrap recycling was added.

The school's lunchtime practices presented some challenges. Students eat both indoors in the cafeteria and outdoors in the courtyard throughout the year. To create a successful set-up for proper recycling and to save resources, head custodian Bill Smith converted school garbage cans into recycling containers and hung samples of recyclable materials from a plastic pipe above the recycling containers. Smith also created containers for leftover liquids by painting black and white "cow spots" on old garbage containers. The students love these visually appealing containers.

Resources and Events

Chemical Hazards in the Arts

Attend a free lecture and workshop on practicing art while protecting yourselves, your students and the environment from hazards that can come from the materials and techniques used in creating art. This presentation by the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County is scheduled for March 9 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at the American Lung Association, 2625 Third Avenue in Seattle. RSVP to [Dave Waddell](#), 206-263-3069.

Storming the Sound, March 26 at the Seattle Art Museum, is a one-day conference for environmental and sustainability educators in the region. It provides a great opportunity for teachers, non-formal educators, environmental organizations with education programs, and students with an interest in a career in environmental education to learn about Puget Sound environmental education programs and network with others. Scholarships for substitute reimbursement are available.

and challenged the class to properly sort recyclable materials from non-recyclables. They also shared information on the conservation benefits of recycling.

Hazards on the Homefront News

The Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County has a new [Web site](#)! Find the sixth edition of *Grow Smart, Grow Safe*, resources for schools, updates on Bisphenol-A in plastics and other important information.

Missed the October 2009 Northwest Children's Environmental Health Forum? View PowerPoints and videos of [presentations](#). Topics include children's exposure to electromagnetic fields through cell phone use, learning disabilities and phthalate exposures, and the effect of toxic chemical exposures on male reproductive development.

Want to keep current on the latest in children's environmental health? Join the [news feed](#) for CHE (the Collaborative on Health and the Environment).

Meet others interested in children's environmental health. Attend the monthly meetings of the Children's Environmental Health Working Group of the WA CHE chapter or just get the meeting minutes. Contact [Gail Gensler](#) for more information.

[Terracycle.net](#) has added three brands of writing utensils to the list of 24 different materials such as chips, cookie and candy wrappers that can be collected and recycled through their Brigade programs. Schools can earn two cents for each item collected. Collected materials are remade into a variety of products.

The [No Impact Man Web](#) site now has a free downloadable secondary school curriculum on consumption, food, transportation, and water.

Celebrate Earth Day's 40th anniversary with [resources and lesson plans](#).

Grant Opportunities

High school students can apply for \$500 from the [Washington Foundation for the Environment](#) to support an environmental project. Apply between September and June.

The Coca-Cola Company and Keep American Beautiful have announced their Recycling Bin Grant Program, an effort to promote and support community recycling. Submit an online [grant application](#) through March 12.



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