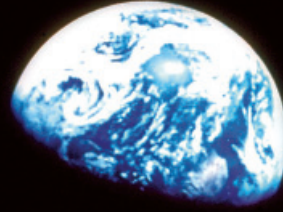


# Earth Heroes at School 2009 Winners



**King County**

Department of  
Natural Resources and Parks  
**Solid Waste Division**

For their outstanding contributions  
in schools and beyond, King  
County recognizes the following  
Earth Heroes and their work to  
protect the environment.

**Awards Presentation – April 30, 2009**

## Teachers

### **Sherry Edwards, North Hill Elementary School Des Moines, Highline School District**

Sherry Edwards led North Hill's effort to become a King County Green School and was essential to the launching of the school's lunchroom recycling program. Ms. Edwards coordinated participation of students, teachers, custodian, PTSA and district staff to accomplish a number of actions, including waste audits in classrooms, effective distribution of recycling bins and signs, and the use of worm bins to compost lunch scraps. She also obtained a grant to purchase T-shirts for teachers to wear each Monday in support of the school's green efforts.

### **Heather Mirczak, Forest Ridge School of the Sacred Heart Bellevue**

Heather Mirczak is a physical education teacher with a commitment to conserving resources and protecting the environment. She has dedicated a great deal of time and energy to starting a composting and recycling program, forming a student group to promote the program, helping students sew durable bags to replace disposable ones, and setting up paper reuse stations by printers, among other actions. As a result of Ms. Mirczak's efforts, the school has reduced its garbage output by at least two cubic yards per week.

### **Linda Reiter, Black Diamond Elementary School Black Diamond, Enumclaw School District**

Linda Reiter joined the King County Green Team program when it started in 1993. Since then she has worked continuously with her Green Team students to oversee the recycling program as well as accomplish a number of other environmental projects. Over the years, she has guided her students in setting up worm bins for composting lunch scraps, stenciling storm drains with "no dump" messages to keep waterways clean, planting trees to make shade for streams and salmon, and educating others through bulletin boards, posters, assemblies and a book of environmental poems.

### **Wendy Shol, Bennett Elementary and Sherwood Elementary School Bellevue, Bellevue School District**

Wendy Shol has been a Green Team leader since 1993, during which time she has led students in environmental projects at three Kent schools and two schools in Bellevue. Among the projects she has worked on with her students are butterfly gardens, worm bin composting, recycling programs, and water conservation. While at

Crestwood Elementary in Kent she founded the Defenders of the Planet Club which was responsible for having the green darner dragonfly designated as the Washington state insect. At Bennett Elementary she and the Eco-Kids are busy with the Nike Re-Use a Shoe Program and a Save the Whales in Puget Sound project.

### **John Spiess, Twin Falls Middle School North Bend, Snoqualmie Valley School District**

John Spiess leads his students in both the Cool School Challenge and the King County Green Schools Program, as they put into practice waste reduction and recycling strategies, improve water and energy conservation, and lower greenhouse gas emissions. John worked closely with custodian Betty Hamilton and with the PTA to ensure an efficient and properly equipped recycling program. He guides the environmental club in educating others about conservation actions through no-print days, waste-free lunch days, and weekly green tips for the parent newsletter.

### **Kristen Wobker, Benjamin Franklin Elementary School Kirkland, Lake Washington School District**

As the leader of the school's Green Team, Kristen Wobker has implemented a variety of programs to encourage reducing, reusing, recycling, and rethinking waste among staff and students. Each month there is a focus on one of the four Rs, and Ms. Wobker guides her Green Team in creating posters, writing an article for the PTA newsletter, and sharing information on the school news broadcast. Students assume leadership roles as they involve parents and community members in actions such as waste-free lunches and a campaign to encourage reuse of shopping bags at the local grocery store.

## Students

### **Cora Byers and Audrey Phillips, Leota Junior High School Woodinville, Northshore School District**

These two students organized an environmental club and initiated their school's participation in the Cool Schools Challenge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and in the King County Green Schools Program to recycle and conserve natural resources. They led the club in creating a Green Spirit Week, which highlighted a different environmental issue each day. They also established a Green Bulletin with information for students on conservation practices and are creating a recycling center for batteries, cell phones and printer cartridges.

## Special Recognition

Bruce Laing, King County Councilmember from 1979 to 1995, applied his leadership and his experience as a professional planner to develop consensus on growth management, public transit and land use planning in the King County region. During his tenure on the council, he also served on the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority Board (now Sound Transit), on the Executive Board of the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), and on the Council of the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle (METRO). In 1988, Councilmember Laing foresaw the threats of climate change and joined across the aisle with fellow Councilmember Ron Sims to propose an "office of global warming." Councilmember Laing's legacy continues as a basis for King County's work on climate change, social justice, economic development and more.



## Staff

### **Meg Handy, Fall City Elementary School Fall City, Snoqualmie Valley School District**

Under Meg Handy's leadership, Fall City Elementary has achieved many of its goals as a King County Green School. She has lent her energetic efforts to helping improve a lunchroom recycling program, obtain grant funds for solar panels for the school, start and maintain worm bins for composting food scraps, and restore a school garden. As the school librarian, Ms. Handy also supports teachers in their classroom lessons on conservation. She has worked with both the school and the local community to help implement conservation practices at Fall City Elementary.

### **Hank Klein and Michael Getty, Challenger Elementary School Issaquah, Issaquah School District**

Teacher Hank Klein and custodian Michael Getty have worked together to successfully establish a recycling station in the cafeteria that resulted in a 50 percent reduction in garbage and a 60 percent increase in recycling. Mr. Klein formed a student group called Waste Watchers that monitors the recycling program and promotes proper recycling practices to other students. Due to the efforts of Mr. Klein and Mr. Getty, food waste containers and biobags are not only in the cafeteria, but in many classrooms as well. Both men have helped foster a sense of stewardship for the environment and the community.

### **Pete Misner, Arrowhead Elementary School Kenmore, Northshore School District**

Principal Pete Misner was instrumental in bringing the King County Green Schools Program to Arrowhead Elementary. Some of the changes he has helped to bring about include the elimination of all polystyrene lunch trays, the use of durable trays, placement of clearly marked recycling bins in classrooms and offices, a switch from paper to email newsletters, and a school-wide clean-up event. Mr. Misner attends every Green Team meeting, ensures that both students and staff are knowledgeable about the school's recycling system, and encourages initiation of classroom environmental projects that can be expanded to the entire school.

## Programs/Schools

### **EPIC at Eastside Preparatory School, Kirkland**

The Eastside Prep Impact Center (EPIC) for Sustainability was created in the fall of 2006 as a place for "conscious, deliberate and constructive" interdisciplinary education and actions that take into consideration human impact on the environment. The program consists of classroom study paired with hands-on practice of sustainable actions such as habitat restoration, soil renewal and a comprehensive recycling program. Partnerships with local government agencies, the University of Washington and the Cascade Land Conservancy give students access to current research and information and increase their own awareness of and commitment to the environment.

### **The Evergreen School – Intermediate Section, Shoreline**

Each year, the fourth and fifth graders at The Evergreen School assume the leadership for advancing awareness of conservation practices and personal responsibility for the earth and its resources. Students are organized into stewardship groups responsible for daily jobs such as maintenance of worm bins; collection, sorting and weighing of waste and recyclables; and cleaning of school grounds and interior common spaces. In addition, students engage in a six-week research project on a conservation theme which culminates in a teaching presentation to the primary students at a conservation carnival.

### **Hot Spot at Global Connections High School SeaTac, Highline School District**

This student-run espresso stand, a campus enterprise for twelve years, recently changed its business focus to include sustainability. Students researched, identified and selected products, vendors and practices that are founded on sustainable principles. Over the past year, The Hot Spot has served over 200 pounds of organic, fair-traded, shade grown coffee and tea; kept over 3000 petroleum based cups from the landfill; and used safer alternatives to chemical products to maintain cleanliness. Signage, promotional pieces and student salespeople inform every customer of The Hot Spot's sustainability mission.

### **Islander Middle School Mercer Island, Mercer Island School District**

The school's Gators Go Green environmental club launched a lunchroom waste reduction and recycling program with the invaluable support of parent volunteer Kenlyn Emerson and head custodian Roger Curtis, and assistance from the King County Green Schools Program. The Gators Go Green replaced disposable food trays with durable ones, conducted an education campaign to maximize participation in recycling, and shared their expertise with the nearby elementary school. The enthusiasm and hard work of Ms. Emerson, the Gators Go Green and the custodial staff have helped the conservation efforts to flourish at the school.

### **Issaquah Middle School Issaquah, Issaquah School District**

The recycling program at Issaquah Middle School owes its success not to one or even a few people, but to dozens of committed staff and students that fine-tuned an existing program in 2006, enhanced it in 2007 and expanded it once again in 2008. The result has been a 66 percent reduction in garbage and a 60 percent increase in recycling, all of which translates to a savings of 42 percent in collection costs. Staff and students developed educational events and materials to promote participation in the program and the custodial team, principal and assistant principal provided invaluable support.

### **Sustainability Team at Skyview Junior High School Bothell, Northshore School District**

Skyview Junior High staff and students have embedded environmental education and actions in the fabric of the school. They developed a recycling and waste monitoring project, which in the past year has increased their recycling rate from 10 to 50 percent. Staff developed family sustainability surveys and action plans that highlight the importance of balancing needs with wants. A rigorous hazardous waste reduction program and a successful student-led effort to convince McLendon's Hardware to accept fluorescent light bulbs for recycling are among the other accomplishments of the Skyview Sustainability Team.

Many of the Earth Heroes at School participate in the King County Green Schools Program, which helps schools and school districts initiate or expand conservation practices. For more information about the Green Schools Program, contact **Dale Alekel** at [dale.alekel@kingcounty.gov](mailto:dale.alekel@kingcounty.gov) or 206-296-8457.

**Alternative Formats On Request**  
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