

2015 Earth Heroes at School



King County
Department of
Natural Resources and Parks
Solid Waste Division

Awards Presentation — May 5, 2015

CLIMATE CHANGE

Alexandria Chuang – Student, Garfield High School, Seattle

As president of Garfield High School's Earth Corps club, Alexandria collaborated with the Black Student Union to organize an after-school forum to discuss race and class issues in environmentalism, mainly focusing on food justice. At the forum, participants explored barriers to participation in environmentalism. Alexandria led a reflection and debriefing session as well as a discussion of solutions.

Green Team – Tiffany Park Elementary School, Renton

Tiffany Park Elementary School's Green Team helped increase the school's recycling rate from 40 percent to over 60 percent last year. Team members assist other students daily in proper recycling and advocate energy conservation in the classroom. Energy usage data shows a 3.5 percent reduction in electricity from the previous year. These actions also reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



FOOD WASTE

Environmental Club – Students Eastlake High School, Sammamish

The Eastlake High School Environmental Club started a food-scrap collection program and in a three-month period diverted over 4,300 pounds of food scraps from the landfill. The club members have spent more than 360 hours volunteering at lunch sorting stations and after school to plan, develop, and improve the program.

French American School of Puget Sound – Mercer Island
FASPS started a Green Team in September 2011 to first reduce their waste in general and then to focus more specifically on the issue of food waste. The school regularly measures lunch waste per classroom, and has a policy of having students put uneaten food back in their lunch boxes to remind families to reduce portions. They also encourage the use of recyclable and reusable utensils.

Brian Healy – Teacher Environmental and Adventure School, Kirkland

Brian started the food-scrap recycling program in the cafeteria shared by Finn Hill Middle School and Environmental Adventure School (EAS) in 2014. He created a lunchroom collection system, insisted on reusable utensils, and combined student efforts from both Finn Hill and EAS to promote the program. The daily lunch trash has been reduced from six 33-gallon containers down to one and a half containers.

Paula Konrady – Teacher, St. Luke School, Shoreline

Paula has been a galvanizing force in the school's food-scrap collection program begun two years ago. Paula has encouraged proper sorting of lunch waste, taught students about composting in science class, and scheduled recycling assemblies and classroom workshops to further educate students and staff. In the first year of the program, St. Luke increased its recycling rate from 26 to 61 percent.

Fay Koyfman – Student, The Jewish Day School, Bellevue

Fay monitors the lunch waste area each day, making sure that students are aware of what goes where. Contamination levels are low, allowing the school to maintain the high standards to meet its King County Green Schools goals. Fay's efforts have affected the entire school environment. She continues to pursue ways to increase participation and enhance the program.

John Olson – Custodian Shadow Lake Elementary School, Maple Valley

John mentors the school's Breakfast Buddies who rinse the compost buckets each morning. John works side by side with students as they sort materials for recycling, composting, and waste. John identifies unnecessary lunch packaging so that Food Services can revise its menu to adhere to the school's waste-free standards. John's commitment to the food waste collection program goes beyond his normal duties as custodian.



HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

Carol Hall and Teresa O'Shea – Teachers Tolt Middle School, Carnation

Carol and Teresa created a four-week project for their sixth-grade science students. Students surveyed their homes for hazardous products and did research on safer alternatives to chemical products. They also prepared a presentation on reading product labels, and proper use and disposal of chemical products. They delivered their presentation to their parents at a family workshop.



WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING

Ilako Elementary School Green Team – Auburn

Among the activities of the Ilako Elementary School Green Team is the lunchroom recycling program in which 30 to 40 students oversee the recycling of milk cartons and other items. They rid the lunchroom of disposable utensils, created reuse boxes for classroom paper, and educate their peers on recycling and waste reduction. During the holidays, they collect tree lights and cords for recycling.

Issaquah School District – Issaquah

When the Issaquah School District joined the King County Green Schools Program in April 2005, the district recycling rate was 30 percent. By May 2011, it had risen to 56 percent. All 24 schools in the district improved their recycling and waste reduction programs. A district-wide Green Team of teachers and custodians from each school meets three times a year to share best practices. Issaquah School District is a model for other districts.

Lea Hill Elementary School – Auburn

Lea Hill increased its recycling rate from 33 percent to 73 percent by recycling in every classroom, collecting lunchtime food scraps, eliminating Styrofoam lunch trays, and switching to paperless communication, among other strategies to reduce waste. The school conducts special events such as Earth Day beautification projects, hosts a waste reduction and recycling assembly, and collects holiday lights for recycling.

Ridgecrest Elementary School – Shoreline

Ridgecrest Elementary joined the King County Green Schools Program in January 2014. The school recycles paper, cans, and bottles in classrooms, and recently began a lunchroom recycling program that includes milk carton recycling. Students monitor the recycling containers, and the student council performed skits on proper recycling. The school has a recycling rate of over 43 percent.



Judy Ellis – Teacher

Secondary Academy for Success (SAS), Bothell

Called the Green Queen by students, Judy has been a leader in the school's recycling program since 2005. She oversees a weekly waste audit to determine if items are being thrown away instead of recycled. She helped obtain reusable aluminum water bottles to reduce the use of single-use plastic bottles, and made sure that compostable dishes and utensils were used in the lunchroom, all of which contributed to a recycling rate of 84 percent.

Maria Kearney – Parent, St. Luke School, Shoreline

Maria and the Girl Scouts at St. Luke School worked with the school's garbage and recycling hauler to conduct a waste audit. This led to the collection of recyclables and lunchroom food scraps to achieve Level One in the King County Green Schools Program. Maria helped create a waste-free lunch campaign and other activities to encourage participation among the St. Luke community and spur enthusiasm for pursuing the next level of Green Schools Program achievement.

Nick Skinner – Student, Interlake High School, Bellevue

Nick has shown environmental leadership at his school, by leading a waste audit; helping to ensure proper lunchtime waste sorting; making informational posters and announcements that urge improvement in reducing and recycling waste; and leading a group of students in the creation of a video on proper waste sorting. He was also a crucial part of the student-run electronic waste collection drive.

Meredith von Trapp – Teacher

North Bend Elementary, North Bend

Meredith initiated the school's involvement with the King County Green Schools Program in 2008 and helped set up a framework for recycling in the lunchroom and classrooms. For the last three years, she has led the student Green Team, which promotes recycling and waste reduction actions on campus. At staff meetings, Meredith provides updates on recycling and other conservation strategies for achieving the next level in the King County Green Schools Program.



The following Earth Hero schools also participate in the King County Green Schools Program:

- Environmental and Adventure School, Kirkland
- French American School of Puget Sound, Mercer Island
- Ilako Elementary School, Auburn
- Interlake High School, Bellevue
- Issaquah School District, Issaquah
- Lea Hill Elementary School, Auburn
- North Bend Elementary, North Bend
- Ridgecrest Elementary School, Shoreline
- Secondary Academy for Success, Bothell
- Shadow Lake Elementary School, Maple Valley
- St. Luke School, Shoreline
- Tiffany Park Elementary School, Renton
- The Jewish Day School, Bellevue
- Tolt Middle School, Carnation