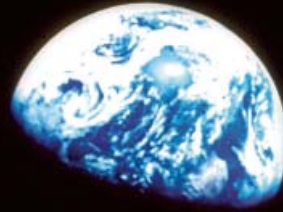


# Earth Heroes at School 2008 Winners



**King County**

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

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

**Awards Presentation – April 24, 2008**

## Teachers

### **Deborah Edwards, Eagle Rock Multi-Age School, Duvall**

Ms. Edwards began an environmental science course that encourages students to interact with and act for the natural world. She initiated a recycling program, planted a school garden, established worm bins for composting food scraps, developed her own carbon footprint curriculum, received a grant to set up a "growarium" to help students understand plant growth, and has gone paperless in all communications with parents.

### **Kim Johnson, David Leviten, Susan O'Malley, Explorer Community School, Redmond**

This team of teachers is leading the school in two major projects that will drastically reduce carbon dioxide emissions, teach students about sustainable landscape and gardening practices, and provide fresh produce to the Redmond Food Bank. As a result, each Explorer student is not only aware of the complex environmental challenges we face, but is learning many tools to address those challenges.

### **Tasha Kirby and Sue McNamara, Discovery Elementary, Sammamish**

This team of teachers inspired the Green Team at their school to go beyond their traditional recycling program. They guided their students in replacing throwaway materials with washable tableware for classroom parties, starting a food scrap recycling program, and collecting plastic bags for recycling. Due to their efforts, the school has reduced the school's garbage and recycling fees by 50 percent.

### **Jessica Levine, Eckstein Middle School, Seattle**

Ms. Levine was active in incorporating environmental sustainability into the sixth-grade science curriculum. Utilizing resources from local environmental agencies, she created innovative curricula that give students a deeper understanding of science concepts and a real-world context for how their choices affect the environment. Her students are learning to be environmental leaders among their peers and in the community.

### **Michael Martin, Terminal Park Elementary, Auburn**

Mr. Martin formed a Green Team with his fourth grade students to cut down on waste, reuse paper in the classroom, and teach the value of proper recycling. Each month the Green Team awards the title "Earth Idol" to the classroom that reuses the most scrap and printer paper. Mr. Martin and the Green Team also maintain a worm bin to compost food scraps and further reduce the amount of material going into the garbage.

### **Beth Robinson, Hollywood Hill Elementary, Woodinville**

Ms. Robinson engages her students in many earth advocacy projects that teach them about environmental sustainability. Among the projects she has led are the creation of a native plant garden and installation of student-built birdhouses, collaboration with local businesses to build and manage

worm bins and market the worm castings, and support of local farming through participation with the Sammamish Valley Alliance's agro-eco float.

### **Erin Spiess, Chief Kanim Middle School, Fall City**

Ms. Spiess transformed an inconsistent recycling program into a firmly established system with high participation. She ensured that all classrooms had recycling bins for paper, and that the lunchroom had recycling bins for milk cartons and plastic bottles. She initiated the process to become a King County Green School and established the Green Team to involve students in educating others about the importance of recycling.

### **Stuart Steere, Lake Youngs Elementary School, Kent**

Mr. Steere teaches his students environmental stewardship through projects such as tree planting, repair of storm drainage areas, and field trips to learn about local water issues. Raising salmon, releasing them in Soos Creek, and picking up litter on the way back is an annual activity with his students. In his off hours, Mr. Steere volunteers numerous hours to habitat restoration. He also bikes home from school – a 30-mile, earth-saving practice.

## Students

### **Cody Finke, Seattle Academy, Seattle**

Cody rallied the Environment Club and facilities staff to design attention-grabbing recycling and compost bins, created a program to recycle CDs, old keyboards and other "techno-trash" at school, and initiated events to motivate participation. Under Cody's leadership, membership in the Environmental Club has tripled and the weekly trash has been reduced by 20 percent. He is now seeking funding for solar panels for the school.

### **Cool School Challenge Student Team, Redmond High School, Redmond**

Five students– Zachary Doleac, Emily Guo, Jamie Hall, Joseph Hegge, and Laura Wang – worked on this project created by teacher Mike Town to reduce greenhouse gas emissions school wide. They fine-tuned the project at their school and made sure it was adaptable to other schools by training students from other schools in the district. They also presented the Cool Schools concepts at the recent Puget Sound Energy Sustainability Conference.

### **Christopher Katsafanas and Evan Sullivan, Crestwood Elementary, Covington**

For three years these two students have demonstrated a consistent dedication to the school's composting program. They have played a vital role in collecting and weighing food scraps and documenting the waste diverted from the landfill. They have shared their knowledge with students and teachers alike and their names will always be synonymous with the success of Crestwood's Earth Tub.

### **Lindsey Parkinson, Eastlake High School, Sammamish**

Lindsey Parkinson, an innovative and outspoken proponent for the environment, has been a leader in the school's Cool Schools Challenge project to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Lindsey created action plans for each of the 60 participating teachers to guide them in reducing their emissions. As a result of this program and Lindsey's efforts, the school will reduce its carbon dioxide emissions by at least 120,000 pounds over the school year.

Visit the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks website for environmental resources for teachers and students.  
<http://dnr.metrokc.gov/topics/learning/LRNtop.htm>

Become a King County Green School  
[www.metrokc.gov/dnpr/swd/greenschools](http://www.metrokc.gov/dnpr/swd/greenschools)



## Staff

### **Judi Benjamin, Kings Schools, Shoreline**

As Custodial Supervisor, Ms. Benjamin has exercised extraordinary ability to involve staff and students in both large and small conservation projects. Her leadership and inspiration have resulted in effective recycling, including a food scrap composting program and an e-waste recycling project. Other actions include installing energy efficient lights and fixtures and switching to earth-friendly cleaning products.

### **Thanh Nguyen, Newport High School, Bellevue**

Mr. Nguyen took considerable steps to ensure the success of the recycling program at Newport High School. Working with the City of Bellevue, Mr. Nguyen helped set up the collection system, promote its use among students, teachers and staff, and increase awareness of the importance of recycling. As a result, the school collects an additional 20 cubic yards of recyclables each week and has reduced disposal costs for the district.

## Programs/Schools

### **Audubon Elementary School, Redmond**

Teacher Dori West, with help from custodian Tony Marckese, improved the school recycling program and added a food scrap composting element. Ms. West led the fifth grade students in forming the "Make a Better Future" company to set and help achieve goals for reducing and recycling waste. The school's recycling rate jumped from 29 to 55 percent in four months and 9,500 pounds of food is being composted annually.

### **Clark Elementary Science-Technology Magnet Program, Issaquah**

This program, led by Ellen Ferrin and Liza Rickey, integrates field trips, hands-on exploration, and field projects, involving a vast array of skills and topics, into the study of forest and water ecology, fish lifecycles, natural resource management, and the impact of hazardous chemicals. Planting a native garden and hosting an eco-friendly car wash are among the ways the students in this program are working to protect the environment.

### **Family Link Lorax Club, Vashon Island**

Inspired by Dr. Seuss' book about ecology, the Lorax Club provides opportunities for home-school students and families to learn about and act on behalf of the environment. The group planted the first 60 of a planned 1200 trees on former pasture land, hosted an evening workshop on earth-friendly cleaning products, and is currently creating an outdoor learning space, using native plants.

### **Gatewood Elementary School and PTA, Seattle**

A PTA-initiated effort to remove invasive plants on the playground slopes involved eight work parties of parents, students, teachers and community members using non-pesticide techniques, including 58 goats hired to munch away. Over 1,000 volunteer hours resulted in the removal of 160 cubic yards of plant material to a composting facility. The school will be the first officially designated Pesticide Free Grounds in the school district.

### **Glacier Park Elementary, Maple Valley**

Principal Emilie Hard, custodian Connie Jo Erickson and teacher Shanda Sciacqua, along with an after school student Green Team, spearheaded the effort to improve the school's conservation practices. They started a milk carton recycling program last spring and this winter began a cafeteria food scrap composting program. They also began to educate the community about greenhouse gas emissions and alternative forms of transportation.

### **Gregory Heights Elementary, Burien**

A truly collaborative effort among students, parents, the PTSA, teachers, office and support staff and the principal resulted in a comprehensive recycling program with widespread participation. The PTSA purchased new recycling bins, students decorated bulletin boards with recycling information, student leaders and lunch assistants guided students on proper recycling, and a recycling ethic now pervades the entire the school.

### **Medina Elementary Green Team, Medina**

The student Green Team, led by teacher Kristi Stroyan, created an environmental video that challenges viewers to "Make One Change." It will soon be available to the entire school district. The Green Team also cares for plants and animal habitat in the school garden, and sponsors Green Days when students bring a no-waste lunch, pick up litter, and bike or walk to school.

### **Snoqualmie Elementary, Snoqualmie**

This school has created a culture of environmental stewardship where conservation is a daily practice and a natural part of the school curriculum, inspiring other schools in the district to do the same. Through its recycling program, which includes food scrap composting and milk carton recycling, the school has increased its recycling rate from 31 to 60 percent. On Waste Free Wednesdays, garbage volumes are reduced by 80 percent.

### **The Overlake School, Redmond**

Having identified environmental sustainability as a priority, the school raised over \$92,000 in support of this cause. The school established recycling and composting programs, is addressing the outcome of a hazardous waste audit of the campus, modified lighting practices and purchasing decisions to conserve resources, and initiated numerous student projects that contribute to greater awareness and action for the environment.

### **The following Earth Hero at School winners participate in the King County Green Schools Program, which helps schools and school districts initiate or expand conservation practices.**

- Deborah Edwards, Eagle Rock Multi-Age School, Duvall - Riverview School District
- Tasha Kirby and Sue McNamara, Discovery Elementary, Sammamish - Issaquah School District
- Michael Martin, Terminal Park Elementary, Auburn - Auburn School District
- Erin Spiess, Chief Kanim Middle School, Fall City - Snoqualmie Valley School District
- Judi Benjamin, Kings Schools, Shoreline
- Audubon Elementary School, Redmond - Lake Washington School District
- Crestwood Elementary, Covington - Kent School District
- Glacier Park Elementary, Maple Valley - Tahoma School District
- Medina Elementary Green Team, Medina - Bellevue School District
- Snoqualmie Elementary, Snoqualmie - Snoqualmie Valley School District
- The Overlake School, Redmond

For more information about the King County Green Schools Program, contact **Dale Alekel** at [dale.alekel@kingcounty.gov](mailto:dale.alekel@kingcounty.gov) or **206-296-8457**.

