



NEWSLETTER

April 2009

Earth Day 2009: The Green Generation

It's more than a trend – school greening is quickly becoming the method of choice for improving both the school learning environment and the community's environmental health. Millions have found ways to express their environmental commitments through Earth Day. What can you do for Earth Day? The answer is: anything that is meaningful to you and for the environment!

The following are some of our favorite activities for celebrating Earth Day at school:

•**Zero Garbage Contest:** Remove garbage cans from all classrooms and common areas and give each student a plastic bag to collect the garbage that they produce. At the end of the day, award a prize to the student with the smallest bag, or get students to study the contents of the bags of garbage and make recommendations on how to reduce their waste.

•**“Environmental Hero” Awards:** Honor those at your school (educators, students, custodians, parents, etc.) that put

in extra effort to promote and encourage environmental responsibility with Certificates of Appreciation and an outdoor planting.

•**Earth Day Groceries Project** is a free environmental-awareness project in which students decorate paper grocery bags with messages for Earth Day. www.earthdaybags.org

For more Earth Day ideas, see page 3 and check out the “Waste-Reduction Week” on our website.

Elementary School Recycling Mini-Grant

We are currently seeking applications for mini-grants to develop or increase recycling in elementary schools within New Hanover County. Public and private schools are encouraged to apply. Priority will be given to projects that have the best chance 1) to divert the most materials, 2) to address common barriers to school recycling, and/or 3) to be replicable to other schools.

Mini-grants will include a combination of resources on an as needed basis, but might include funds for recycling bins in classrooms and/or collection of recyclables, educational materials to support recycling such as posters, stickers, tattoos and pencils, materials to quantify recyclables collection and cost/benefit ratios, and logistical support.

Schools must show broad-based support for their

recycling program as well as detailed information on collection procedures.



Funding for the mini-grants is provided by Progress Energy in addition to funds raised through the KAB of NHC: Sustainable Schools Initiative “It Starts With Me” t-shirt fundraiser and Wipe Out Wireless Waste cell phone recycling collections http://www.kab.org/site/PageServer?pagename=GAC_Sprint_WOWW

The number of schools that will be chosen will be based on the amount of funds raised and the size of the schools that apply. It is anticipated that one to three schools will receive funding. Current resources are only available for elementary schools; although funding and supplies are currently being sought to expand this program to include middle and high schools.

For more information and how to apply, please visit our website or contact Jennifer O’Keefe: 798-4404

Reduce:
Choose not to print

Waste-Free Lunch: What's It All About?

It has been estimated that on average a single school-age child generates 67 pounds of lunchtime waste per school year. Add up all the students in a classroom, or in an entire school and the numbers are quite staggering!

In a typical week, think about how many of the following items your family (or class) as a whole takes to school or work and if you can reduce these items:

- Lunches packed in plastic bags, foil, wax paper
- Prepackaged lunches
- Prepackaged single-serve lunch items
- Paper napkins
- Disposable drink boxes, pouches, cans, cartons, and bottles
- Disposable forks and spoons



Packing a waste-free lunch is simple, but does require a little more preparation than grabbing a “Lunchable”, “Un crustable”, juice box, or any other convenience product. As a class or a family, work together to come up with ways to reduce lunch waste and pack a waste-free lunch:

- A reusable lunchbox or backpack
- Lunches in reusable containers
- Drinks in a thermos or reusable container



- A cloth napkin (a washcloth makes a good napkin)
- Reusable utensils when needed

Need inspiration? Check out our favorites:

- Laptop Lunches: shop online at www.laptoplunches.com or locally at Learning Express
- Wrap n mats, reusable drink bottles, and a wide selection of lunch bags can be found at www.reusablebags.com
- Get Creative!— Reuse plastic food containers, make Jell-O and puddings and put into reusable Tupperware, let kids make their own Lunchables.
- The EPA developed a Waste-Free Lunch poster to help students learn how to reduce, reuse, and recycle items in their school lunches. To receive a free poster visit: www.epa.gov/epawaste/education/lunch.htm
- If you'd like to learn more about Waste-free lunches, visit www.wastefreelunches.org

Are you organizing a school-wide Waste-free Lunch? Contact us for letters, advice, and input at SSInitiative@aol.com

Packing a waste-free lunch not only reduces landfill waste, but it costs less too. A prepackaged lunch costs about \$4.02 a day or \$723.60 per school year compared to \$2.65 a day (\$477.00 per school year) for a waste-free lunch

April 2009: Ideas to Make Every Day Earth Day

Did you know that an idling car creates twice the emissions as a car in motion? Or that Americans consume more than 2.5 million bottles of water every hour, and only around 10% are recycled? The choices that we make everyday can save energy and improve the environment. Consider implementing some of the following ideas into your daily routine and make “Every Day Earth Day”.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat./Sun.
		1 Record your trash habits for one day/week	2 Do a classroom waste sort	3 Start or join an environmental club	4/5 REDUCE: Say no thanks to something disposable (e.g. straws, kid cups at restaurants)
6 Make a pencil holder from a tin can	7 Start a worm bin or a compost pile	8 Organize a group to pick-up litter around school	9 Donate used items to charity	10 Write about a special outdoor place and if it’s in jeopardy write to protect it!	11/12 REUSE, then RECYCLE
13 Clean your locker/desk and recycle all paper	14 Use a reusable drink bottle, instead of juice boxes or recyclable water bottles	15 Discuss how to set up a carpool for school	16 Have students write ways they can help the Earth and start a daily PA announcement using their ideas	17 Have a walk/bike to school day	18/19 Visit the Earth Day Festival at Hugh MacRae Park
20 Pack a waste-free lunch	21 Make a poster to celebrate Earth Day	22 Earth Day!	23 Don’t let your car idle if you’re going to stay put for more than a few minutes	24 Arbor Day! Plant a tree	25/26 Go on a litter walk (in your neighborhood, the beach, or anywhere litter is found).
27 Ask a store if it carries recycled content products; if not—suggest that they do	28 Switch unnecessary lights (& electronics) off and have students make signs to remind people to do it	29 Plant a simple garden: vegetables, flowers, and/or herbs	30 Make everyday Earth Day!	Try this: When you enter a room, consider if you need the lights on, or if the sunlight is sufficient	



Founded by Wilmington, NC parents, Sustainable Schools Initiative's mission is to foster green programs in North Carolina Schools. Partnering with Keep America Beautiful of New Hanover County, we are committed to helping new and established environmental committees and their efforts of starting and maintaining green programs in our local schools. It is our goal to unite school communities and give the needed tools and resources to accomplish the sustainability goals of each individual school. In doing so, we— along with everyone involved— will foster the development of generations of students becoming good stewards of the earth.

For information on Sustainable Programs in your school visit our website

Phone: 798-4404

Fax: 798-4408

E-mail: SSInitiative@aol.com

www.nhcgov.com/AgAndDpt/KAB

Proposed Budget to Eliminate Office of Environmental Education



On March 17, Governor Perdue sent her proposed budget to the State Assembly. It recommends the elimination of the Office of Environmental Education and outsourcing OEE's functions to the Department of Public Instruction, DENR's Office of Public Affairs and the State Library at the Department of Cultural Resources. The proposed budget doesn't provide detail as to how the functions would be maintained -- and integrated -- by the new agencies charged with these critical programs. Among the OEE programs that the thousands of teachers, park rangers, nature center staff, and others have come to rely on include:

The award-winning Environmental Education Certification Program, Love A Tree Program, Association of Environmental Education Centers, the annual Environmental Education Institutes, the website, which provides immediate access to information on grant information, professional development opportunities; policy initiatives including: The Nationally Accredited Environmental Education Certification, the new Environmental Education Strategic Plan for North Carolina and the state Environmental Literacy Initiative.

For information about all the services and resources NCOEE provides, please visit:

www.eenorthcarolina.org/aboutus.htm

Take the time to contact the Governor and your local legislators. Your reaction, opinion, and point of view are crucial. This item **must** be removed from the list of proposed cuts so that environmental education remains a top priority in North Carolina.

To learn more about the proposed budget, talking points and how to contact Governor Perdue and local legislators, visit: www.eenc.org/funding-for-oe.html