

Question of the Month: Environmental Initiatives in the SCDSB

What are SCDSB schools doing to help our environment?

Green Teams

All SCDSB schools are encouraged to have an active Green Team, comprised of a teacher, administrator, custodian and students. Green Teams look after school recycling programs and implement other environmental projects such as energy conservation initiatives, waste-free lunches, and schoolyard greening.



Mundy's Bay Public School's Green Team

Energy Conservation

The SCDSB is focusing on conserving energy in every facet of the Board's operations and design strategy. For example, Mundy's Bay

Public School, a new elementary school in Midland, has been designed to utilize natural daylight, thereby reducing dependency on lights. Mundy's Bay also uses geothermal heating. A cistern collects rain water from the roof to be used for the washroom's toilets. The school is expected to use approximately half as much energy as a school of comparable size.

In addition, the SCDSB is committed to upgrading schools to increase insulation, replace boiler systems, and install Building Automation Systems, which help to ensure schools are heated and ventilated evenly.

Waste Reduction

The SCDSB minimizes waste by promoting the 3 Rs (Reduce – Reuse – Recycle). The first two "Rs", Reduce and Reuse, are encouraged through the use of GOOS (Good On One Side) paper, photocopying on double sided whenever possible, sending newsletters home with youngest/only children, and the promotion of waste-free – or "litterless" – lunches. Waste-free lunches mean that students bring their lunch in reusable containers (a cloth or plastic reusable lunch bag, containers for all of their food, and a drink in a reusable container). These positive actions not only reduce the



Marchmont Public School Earth Day 2006 celebration

amount of waste generated in school and at home, but also promote healthy eating.

Many schools have backyard composters or in-class vermicomposters (worms) to demonstrate for students the natural cycle of how food gets broken down. This is also a great way to divert more waste from the landfill.

Schoolyard Greening

Many SCDSB schools are working to improve their school ground by creating butterfly gardens, shade areas and outdoor classrooms. Parents interested in beginning a schoolyard greening project at a SCDSB school may contact Kayla Secord (ksecord@scdsb.on.ca), Environmental Systems Coordinator, or Rick Mutuchky (rmutuchky@scdsb.on.ca), Central Maintenance Supervisor.

Zerofootprint Schools in the SCDSB

Zerofootprint, in partnership with the Simcoe County District School Board, is harnessing the power of the Internet to disseminate environmental curricula to teachers and students. This Zerofootprint Schools pilot project engages students and provides them with the tools to measure and manage their carbon footprints, both individually and aggregated by class, school and school board. Students are learning about the environmental impact of their lifestyles and schools, the importance of conservation, and what they can do in their own lives to help create positive environmental change in their communities.

Zerofootprint's online Carbon calculator software serves as a portal to environmental content. It is hoped this project will become a model for a future provincial rollout. View the related links at: <http://zerofootprint.net/youth/simcoe> (Youth Calculator – Grades 1-8) and http://zerofootprint.net/calculators/simcoe_pcm (Personal Carbon Manager –intermediate and secondary students).

Let's Go Green! newsletter

The SCDSB's *Let's Go Green!* newsletter, showcasing our schools' great environmental initiatives, can be viewed at: <http://scdsb.on.ca/programs-services/environmental-incentives/newsletter/>.

Ministry Initiatives

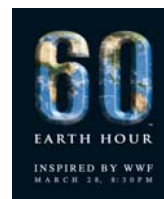
The Ministry of Education recently issued a media release entitled "*Making Education Greener*" (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/nr/09.02/nr0226.html>). This release stated that, starting in the fall of 2009, Ontario schools will begin implementing a new policy framework on environmental education. The new framework includes:

- Embedding environmental education in all curriculum
- Offering Specialist High Skills Majors related to the environment at over 25 schools in Ontario
- Offering new courses in environmental science
- Working with Ontario EcoSchools to help teachers plan environmentally focused classroom programs and schools reduce their environmental impact.

By teaching children about the importance of environmental stewardship from an early age, schools are helping to position students for success in the green economy of the future.

What is Earth Hour?

Earth Hour 2009 is coming up on Saturday, March 28, at 8:30 PM. People around the world will be turning their lights off for one hour to show that it is possible to take action on climate change. SCDSB schools and facilities are



being encouraged to participate in the Earth Hour initiative by turning off all lights for one hour starting at 1:30 PM on Friday, March 27. For more information, visit www.earthhour.org.

How can parents get involved with SCDSB environmental initiatives?

Parents are welcome to contact their child's school if they are interested in becoming involved with the school's Green Team. Also, many SCDSB schools are supported by clubs and parent groups fundraising to purchase trees to plant for shade and to create outdoor learning environments for children. Contact your local SCDSB school to find out how you can get involved.

Who do I contact for further information?

If you have questions about SCDSB's environmental initiatives, please contact Kayla Secord, SCDSB's Environmental Systems Coordinator, at 705-734-6363, ext. 11388 or ksecord@scdsb.on.ca.

Links

We invite you to visit www.scdsb.on.ca often for news, facts, school information, Board highlights and hundreds of other pages about Simcoe County's public education system.

Our internet surfing this month leads to the following environmental resources for parents:

Environment Canada's Website http://www.weatheroffice.gc.ca/canada_e.html

Environment Canada's website is a gateway to environmental issues such as sustainable development, climate change, clean air, water, weather and nature.

Zerofootprint <http://www.zerofootprint.net/we-help/kids>

Zerofootprint Kids is an online application that encourages and empowers the kids in your school to take action on climate change. The web-based calculator and secure social networking application enables kids, teachers and parents to measure, track and manage their carbon footprints, and to collaborate with one another to achieve environmental goals.

The SEEDS (Society, Environment and Energy Development Studies) Foundation www.seedsfoundation.ca

This not-for-profit organization provides objective curriculum-fit energy and environmental education resources to Canadian teachers and students.

Ontario EcoSchools www.ontarioecoschools.org

Ontario EcoSchools is an environmental education program for grades 1-12 that helps students develop ecological literacy while engaged in practices to become environmentally responsible citizens. It also helps schools and school boards improve their operations to reduce their environmental impacts.

Next Issue

If you have any ideas or suggestions for the next issue of *Bringing School Home*, please e-mail webadmin@scdsb.on.ca with the subject line "Ideas for Parent eBulletin". We welcome your input!

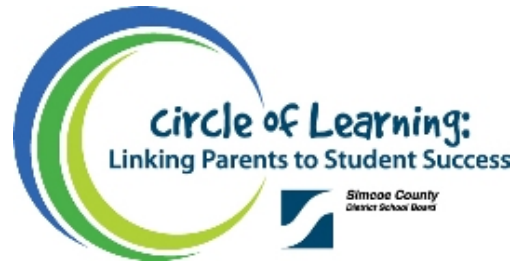
Quote of the Month

"Let every individual and institution now think and act as a responsible trustee of Earth, seeking choices in ecology, economics and ethics that will provide a sustainable future, eliminate pollution, poverty and violence, awaken the wonder of life and foster peaceful progress in the human adventure."

~ John McConnell, founder of International Earth Day

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars for this first annual **Circle of Learning Conference: Linking Parents to Student Success**. Organized by the Simcoe County District School Board's Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), the conference will take place on **Saturday, April 18** from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM at the SCDSB Education Centre (1170 Hwy 26, Midhurst).



A variety of workshops and guest speakers will be presented to support parent involvement in education. More information will be available in the coming weeks at <http://scdsb.on.ca/parents-corner/circle-of-learning-conference-2009/>.

About the SCDSB

The Simcoe County District School Board is deeply committed to ensuring all learners have the opportunity to realize their dreams within a vibrant and successful public education system. We are very proud of our 50,000 students who are learning and achieving in our 107 schools and seven adult learning centres throughout our urban and rural communities. Working with school communities, our dedicated and skilled staff members provide quality programs to help students develop lifelong learning skills in safe, caring environments. Our schools are located in the Huronia and Georgian Bay regions of south-central Ontario.