



Talkin' Trash

Spring 2007

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Energy Conservation in the Classroom

Looking for a way to get students and their families get involved in conservation? The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity invites Illinois students to learn about energy conservation and efficiency, as well as how to encourage their families to use energy-saving behaviors and technologies at home. The DCEO has created an Energy Conservation Contract (ECC), a one-month project that is correlated to the Illinois State Learning Standards for 4th – 12th grades. Teachers can download the 16-page “Energy Conservation Contract” at www.illinoisbiz.biz/NR/rdonlyres/9BA4CA94-20F7-4E20-A822-2B786DB1324E/0/NEEDguide.pdf.

The Illinois Energy website www.illinoisenergy.org offers more information.

Celebrate Earth Day the Contest Way!

\$100 Reward for Best (Re)Runway Fashion

Fashion designs from thrift store finds can be yours if you participate in the 2nd annual sustainable fashion show. Create trendy runway-worthy fashions for pennies, utilizing the sustainable practices of recycling and reusing. Visit your local thrift shop, or scout out the neighborhood garage sale to find a pre-worn piece of clothing. Redesign the garment or create an entirely new piece from the pre-used fabric. You never know where your creativity will lead – you might find the perfect material for an elegant evening gown from a pair of old drapes! Let your imagination take you to the runway!

All creations must be able to be worn. Outfits will be modeled at our annual Fashion Show, which will be held in conjunction with the Sustainable Living & Wellness Expo held on April 13-14 at the Illinois Wesleyan Shirk Center. Deadline for entry is March 23rd. For more information, contact the Ecology Action Center (309) 454-3169, or visit www.ecologyactioncenter.org.

“Rhymes and Art” Contest for K-5th Grade Students

Students can get in touch with their inner artist by entering the “Rhymes and Art Together Again” contest! The students will write an original poem about the Earth, Recycling, Saving Energy, or Conservation, and then place the poem on an 8x10 piece of paper that they have painted with watercolor or tempera paint. Poems can be free verse, limerick, rhyming, etc. NOTE: Teachers, you may print the poem for the students from a computer, if you wish.

ALL poems will be on display at the Sustainable Living & Wellness Expo, held at the IWU Shirk Center on April 13 & 14. On Saturday there will be a free Kids Carnival with prizes from 11:00 am – 2:30 pm. Prizes for the “Rhymes and Art Together Again!” contest will be announced at 1:00 pm.

Ecology Action Center

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11-6 p.m. Mon.-Thurs.
11-5 p.m. Fri.



Sustainable Schools

Schools are
Seeing
Green

Green schools'
financial bene-
fits outweigh
production costs
20 to 1.

Opportunities
for Teachers

The awards
luncheon will be
held at the
Governor's
Mansion in May
2007!

The Future is Green

Capital E, a consulting firm that specializes in clean energy technical assistance, has released *Greening America's Schools*, a rigorous national study that focused on 30 green schools in 10 states between 2001 and 2006. It found that green schools:

- save 1/3rd more on energy and water costs than conventional schools
- cost 1%-2% more to build than conventional schools, but are "extremely cost-effective, with total financial benefits outweighing the costs 20 to 1"
- annually save \$100,000
- enjoy improved standardized test scores of 3 to 4 percentage points
- maintain a 5%-15% reduction in absenteeism

This study was sponsored by American Federation of Teachers, American Institute of Architects, American Lung Association, Federation of American Scientists, and the US Green Building Council.

To download *Greening America's Schools*, log on to www.cap-e.com/ewebeditpro/items/O59F9819.pdf

Sustainable Teachers: Excellence in Sustainability Awards

The Illinois Sustainable Education Project (ISTEP), sponsored by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), provides educational resources about energy efficiency, renewable energy, waste reduction, and recycling.

ISTEP recognizes K-12 students, teachers, and non-formal educational groups for their efforts and achievements in waste reduction, energy efficiency, and other areas of sustainability through the Excellence in Sustainability Awards program. ISTEP is looking for sustainability projects that have the greatest impact and long lasting results, addressing at least one topic from both of the following categories: energy, and waste reduction.

Judging Criteria – Projects will be judged on the following criteria:

- goals established and activities used to accomplish these goals
- impact/benefits/gains from implementation of these activities
- student leadership and involvement
- number of students or public reached
- partnerships formed (with other classes, within the community, with parents, student groups)
- neatness of application package
- use of ISTEP resources or other educational material
- amount of energy saved or waste reduced

Application and required documentation must be postmarked on or before April 3, 2007. For more information on guidelines, eligibility, and to access the application, visit the Illinois Energy website at www.illinoisenergy.org.



Activities Page

National Environmental Education Week April 15-22

National Environmental Education Week will bring environmental awareness and a fresh perspective to your classroom. Here are some fun ways for teachers and students to participate in EE Week:

- Plant and maintain a garden or tree.
- Develop resource boxes that highlight local issues.
- Develop a butterfly garden for elementary school children; create lessons around the butterflies' development.
- Create a rainforest in your classroom.
- Develop botanical guides to local flora and fauna, and share throughout your school.
- Visit your local zoo, aquarium, museum, or nature center.
- Bring in a guest speaker – the Ecology Action Center would be more than happy to send someone to your classroom to talk about environmental topics and do activities with the students!

For more ideas, visit: http://www.eeweek.org/get_involved.htm#school

Bottle Brigade Program

There are millions of soda bottles every day which end up in garbage cans and landfills across America. As an eco-friendly innovator, TerraCycle packages its organic plant food, which is all-natural, all-organic, 'goof-proof' liquid plant food made from waste ("liquefied worm poop") and packaged in waste (reused soda bottles) collected from schools and recycling centers from every corner of the country. TerraCycle processes organic garbage destined for landfills through a revolutionary process developed by the company's founders. TerraCycle is able to convert all this into organic liquid plant food in only three weeks.



TerraCycle's Bottle Brigade program allows almost any organization to save 20 oz. plastic soda bottles from getting thrown away. The program unfortunately cannot use water bottles (which tend to be a bit weaker even if they look the same) or other uniquely sized bottles such as the "wide mouth" on Gatorade bottles, etc.

To get your students involved, collect the bottles in your classroom, and then bring them to the Ecology Action Center to be packaged and sent to TerraCycle. If you would like, the EAC can send someone out to explain how the TerraCycle products work, what the bottles are used for, etc. For more information, contact the Ecology Action Center. You can also visit the TerraCycle website at www.terracycle.net.

Celebrate
National
Environmental
Education
Week

National EE
Week 2006 was
the single largest
organized
environmental
education event
in U.S. history.

Bottle Students'
Energy

To date, the
Bottle Brigade
has rescued over
1.2 million bottles
from ending up in
landfills!

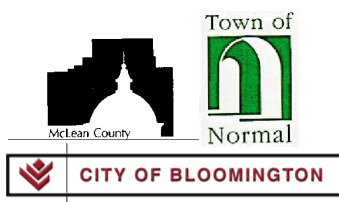
Recycle the Ecology Action Center Newsletter by passing it on to someone else after you have read it.



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Opportunities for Teachers

Save the Date!

2007 Illinois Sustainable Living & Wellness Expo

Illinois Wesleyan University Campus
Bloomington, IL
April 13-14, 2007

Come experience:

- 100+ exhibitors, children's activities, and demonstrations!
- A variety of workshops on various environmentally friendly topics!
- See the displayed works of the students that participate in the Earth Day Contests!
...and more!

Visit www.islwe.org!

See What's Inside!

- Help students fulfill their runway dreams with a Fashion Show unlike any other!
- Help inspire the next Rembrandt or the next Shel Silverstein! Read more about our Poetry-Art Contest! (Grades K-5)
- Award Opportunities for Sustainable Teaching!
- Environmental Education Week works for you!
- Bottle Students' Energy!