

To: Board of Education  
From: Sally Pryor  
Date: May 10, 2010  
Re: Update on Green Team Committee Accomplishments

**Background**

The Green Team Committee was convened officially on October 30, 2008 as authorized by the Board to coordinate environmental sustainability efforts at our schools and on the District level. The committee works to identify ways to enhance and build upon environmentally friendly initiatives already in place, and to develop and coordinate the accomplishment of specific goals throughout the District. Members include parent and District 64 staff representatives from all schools and offices, community representatives, and building and District administrators. I have served as chairman.

The entire group met seven times during the 2009-10 school year. Three subcommittees were formed this year and also met as needed around three major goal areas: recycling; community awareness and school support; and, special projects.

**Recycling Activities**

The committee made great strides this year in its efforts to establish recycling in all school lunchrooms, following the District's transition to new waste haul vendors: Groot Industries, Inc. for our Niles buildings and Lakeshore Waste Services LLC for the Park Ridge buildings. These vendors incorporate single stream recycling in their services. The District was able to purchase large, red barrels to clearly help students separate recyclables from food waste. The committee provided guidance on the steps needed to publicize the availability of recycling at all schools, encourage compliance, and educate students and staff on the new procedures for recycling at all District 64 schools. A recycling "do's and don'ts" tip sheet was developed and widely publicized to give standard instructions to students and parents.

In conjunction with this effort, the committee also encouraged and sponsored multiple "waste-free" lunches at the schools. A helpful tip sheet describing how to pack a waste free lunch also was prepared and distributed to parents. School committees further supported the effort through publicity, measuring the waste on a "typical" day vs. a waste free day, and similar activities to engage students.

In addition, the committee met with a representative of the Abitibi paper retriever program, which places the distinctive green and yellow paper recycling bins outdoors at schools. Five schools now participate in this fund-raising program. A list of local places to conveniently recycle a wide variety of items, such as CFL bulbs, eyeglasses and ink cartridges, was researched and distributed to families. Classroom recycling efforts also expanded and the District has purchased appropriate bins for use in the schools. Most of the schools also applied for and received \$200 recycling grants from the Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County (SWANCC).

### **Communications Efforts**

An extremely important component of our efforts this year was to share information about projects being undertaken at each location to encourage “buy in” and increase participation. Sharing successes and concerns allowed schools to learn from each other and help problem-solve as a group, which is one of the strengths of forming a District-level committee. In addition, the Green Team has conducted an extensive outreach effort; representatives from the community awareness subcommittee made presentations at each PTO/ A meeting and distributed materials to parents via the school newsletters.

The Green Team’s page on the District 64 Web site also was enhanced. In addition to publicizing current projects, this year teacher resource materials were added. These monthly tip sheets help incorporate Green Team topics. Each one-page guide includes a short list of facts, several suggested discussion ideas and Web sites for more information. In the future, we hope to add a “bulletin board” area where ideas being implemented in each of the schools can be shared.

Finally, three representatives from the Park Ridge Recreation and Park District met with the committee to present information on its green initiatives and to discuss ways the two organizations can work together to involve the community in supporting green efforts.

### **Annual Special Projects**

In addition to working to achieve these overall goals, the committee also regularly sponsors special projects to nurture a “greener” culture in our District.

Several projects were conducted in both 2009 and 2010:

- Cell phone recycling – January – Working in coordination with the non-profit Cell Phones for Soldiers organization, used cell phones were collected at all District 64 schools during the month of January.
- Healthy Living Month – April – schools planned activities in support of Neat to Use Your Feet Week, TV Turn-off Week, and Earth Day. In addition, committee members staffed a special table at the Park District’s Earth Day celebration at Maine Park. The Green Team’s booth featured information about the shoe recycling project, along with hands-on activities to show how something useful can be made from what would usually be thrown away.
- Athletic shoe recycling – April / May – All District 64 locations participated in this project sponsored by SWANCC as part of Nike’s Reuse-a-Shoe program. More than 1,500 pairs of shoes have been collected for recycling through this project.

The committee also has sponsored successful awareness and fund-raising projects in the spring each year:

- 2009 reusable grocery cart shopping bag – Students were invited to design a logo to promote recycling in District 64. The Green Team selected 21 finalists, which then were displayed at all the schools giving students and teachers an opportunity to vote on their favorite design. In all, more than 2,600 votes were cast. The winning design was the planet earth encircled by the phrases “Please Save Me! Think Green!” contributed by a Roosevelt School grade 4 student. The design was featured in white on the green nylon bags.

- 2010 “Buy a Tee, Plant a Tree” T-shirts – A green tree logo was imprinted on a natural cotton T-shirt to focus on “greening” our schools by planting trees to coincide with Arbor Day. Funds were used to help purchase trees for all schools; Lurvey Landscape Supply and Garden Center and the Chad Finney Landscaping Group, Inc., also contributed trees and planting services, respectively, as reported to the Board at the April 26 meeting.

A sampling of additional activities sponsored by some of the school committees is described on Attachment 1.

### **Looking Ahead**

The Green Team continues to set a brisk pace and has already accomplished a great deal in just two years of operation. At the May meeting, each subcommittee identified goals to guide its work in the coming year. These goals will be prioritized and action plans developed at the first meeting in 2010-11.

I thank all the members of the committee for their enthusiasm and eagerness to help promote environmental awareness and green practices throughout District 64, and know that their work will continue full speed ahead under the leadership of the new chairman, Director of Buildings & Grounds Roy Jensen.

**Park Ridge-Niles School District 64  
2009-10 Green Team Committee**

**School Activities – Partial List**

**Jefferson School**

Jefferson extended day kindergartners learned how to reduce, reuse, and recycle from Leslie Handler from SWANCC. The kindergartners have been recycling materials at lunch and have had several waste-free lunch days. We also have a re-use bin for paper scraps for art projects throughout the year. For the first time, Jefferson summer campers will each receive their own reusable water bottle to reduce the use of disposable drink containers.

**Field School**

The focus this year was on increasing student participation. Two student Green Teams were formed: the fourth grade “VIP” (Very Important Planet) and the fifth grade “1 Planet, 33 Hearts” teams; each team was comprised of about 30 students. The teams were an instrumental part of all our projects this year. The students on each team successfully worked together to plan their own activities as well as to support the District initiatives.

The year began with the implementation of mixed recycling in the lunchrooms. Student volunteers worked to educate other students by making posters of recyclable items and standing near the garbage and recycling cans offering advice. Both student green teams worked to publicize our four Waste Free Lunch Days. Parent and teacher volunteers supported these days by passing out raffle tickets to those students who participated. Our SWANCC grant was used to purchase prizes for these raffles. The raffle prizes were items that could be used to help kids pack a waste free lunch every day.

In addition, both teams worked to make posters and announcements for projects, such as Cell Phones for Soldiers and the Nike Reuse a Shoe Drive. The fourth grade VIP team also wrote letters to senators, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Natural Resources sharing their concerns and ideas on how to protect our planet. These students also wrote poems that they shared at the Tree Planting Ceremony on May 4. The fifth grade 1 Planet, 33 Hearts team made “treasures from trash” by reusing garbage for crafts. Furthermore, these students worked in groups to prepare presentations for other students during the week of Earth Day. Every classroom in the school had a visit from a group of students who presented either a skit, game or movie educating students about some aspect of environmental awareness.

**Lincoln Middle School**

The school continued moving forward on its efforts to promote waste-free lunches this year. Our sixth graders once again ran the school’s white paper recycling program. One team of eighth graders also sold close to 700 compact fluorescent light bulbs to cut down on greenhouse gas emissions as well as earn money for Haiti earthquake relief.

**Roosevelt School**

Roosevelt School has experienced many successes this year in its effort to “Go Green.” This was the first year Roosevelt School launched a mixed recycling program. Each

classroom was equipped with mixed recycling bins, in addition to the paper collection bins, which are emptied weekly by students. The teachers and staff were on board, too, and with our combined efforts, the entire school has cut down on a great deal of waste. The students and faculty have become more educated about the importance of mixed recycling and are working together to make sure plastics, glass, and aluminum are reused, rather than tossed in the trash.

In addition to the green District-wide programs, Roosevelt launched a school-wide magazine drive. With the help of a few Roosevelt parents, old magazines and junk mail were collected in classrooms for recycling. Classrooms with most bags filled were recognized for their great achievement.

Finally, Roosevelt Green Team members decided to use the school's behavior incentive program to encourage "green" efforts. Roosevelt's school rules are the Four Bee's: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Caring, and Be Safe. Students who took part in "green" behaviors, such as walking to school, packing a waste-free lunch, or reusing materials, were given a green "Bee." Students hung their special green bees on a tree in front of our school office to showcase students' environmentally responsible efforts. The celebration concluded with a raffle, where winning bees were given rewards.

### **Washington School**

Washington started out the year by creating a Student Green Committee, a student idea-driven club to help support green initiatives. This student team was instrumental in making recycling at lunch successful by educating their fellow students on what can and cannot be recycled. Waste during lunch was cut by 33% through the efforts of all students in support of Waste Free Lunch during the month of April. Washington also supported the Maine Park Earth Day by placing collection bins designed by the Student Green Committee to organizations, including Red Door Animal Shelter (old blankets and towels), Kids Enjoy Exercise Now (sports equipment), Shoes for Soles (gently used shoes), and children's books for a local Head Start program. TV Turn-Off week was busy with Monday night Recycle Bingo, Tuesday Yoga, Wednesday rollerblading/roller skating night, Thursday forest and reading garden clean up, and Friday make a plate night activities for students and their families.