

# Building a Successful Green Team : A Heart - Centered Approach

By Melissa Kerry

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# Building a Successful Green Team

## Intro

This is intended to be a companion guide to those very necessary and useful analytical and technical Green Team manuals available on line and in your local book stores.

## What is a Green Team?

Any group of teachers, students, parents, and/or school community members that works together to lessen the negative environmental impact of their school.

The Green Teams are independent initiatives within each school. We recommend that you get your school's Recycling Coordinator involved. (See page 12 for RC description)

### **#1 Reason to create a Green Team (GT)**

Oregon Green School that had Green Teams are more successful at getting the job done!

## **Why a Green Team?**

It's fun and effective! Individuals make most decisions that affect the environment in a school, so this is where you have a big opportunity to make a difference. As you might have heard before, "You may not have control, but you have influence!" A Green Team can reduce paper use, increase recycling, and promote energy conservation, and more, making a huge difference within a school or classroom. Raising environmental awareness is about creating social change.

- Great news! 15% is critical mass for social change.

Once you get going, it is a great way to meet other environmentally minded people. Forming a Green Team also adds to the overall stability and sustainability of the projects implemented. As teachers, students, and parents shift around, and schools cycle through summer break, the formation of the team is one way to ensure the momentum and longevity of a project.

Everyone will benefit from brainstorming and troubleshooting, sharing responsibility and accountability, pooling expertise and resources, exchanging ideas, and celebrating success together.

## **Attributes of a Successful Green Team**

- ✓ Core members attend regular meetings and stay connected.
- ✓ Team includes stakeholders and/or representation from different departments, and is endorsed by the principal/director.
- ✓ A mission statement exists to help direct the goals and projects of the group.
- ✓ Members network with other local GT to share info, resources, and inspiration.
- ✓ Members are willing to ask questions and seek answers.

- ✓ Projects are chosen by identifying the lowest hanging fruit and emphasis is on building large successes on the momentum of small ones.
- ✓ Leading and coordinating the GT is shared between several dedicated champions.
- ✓ Team keeps their momentum moving forward by recognizing when to pivot if a project has hit a wall.
- ✓ Members are well informed and recognize all the different dimensions to the issue they are addressing and diplomatically create alliances with the institution and people they are trying to work with.
- ✓ Team checks in with their mission statement regularly to make sure their efforts are serving what they set out to accomplish.

## Growing your Green Team

### 12 Ways of Finding Out “Who Wants to Play”

Here are some suggestions for gathering a group together taking action on environmental cause. Don't forget to let your principal know what you are up to.

**1) Contact your Recycling Coordinator (RC).** If you are not the school's RC, make contact with him/her and invite them to participate. Your RC might already be moving on a project or know of others who want to be involved. There might even be an existing group that you could join forces with. What is the Wellness Committee up to? Sustainability touches all aspects of living and requires a coalition mentality.

**2) Post a notice in your common areas** such as break room, bathrooms, conference rooms, administrative offices, or reception areas. Ask the appropriate administrative staff for permission to do so. **Plan an event or meeting.** People are much more inclined to turn up if you have an event or meeting planned. Keep in mind the time in which you want to meet and make sure you choose a convenient time for people. An hour is just about right, respect people's time by staying on schedule. It's not a bad strategy to entice people by offering refreshments and snacks.

**3) Add the Green Team formation and updates to the staff and PTA agendas.** If you have regular staff, PTA, or student council meetings, you could add the formation of a green team to the agenda. Create a sign up sheet to get people's contact information. You can also ask these groups to allow you to make updates.

**4) Ask your principal to endorse an email to teachers and parents.** A suggestion coming from the senior-most people in your area can carry a lot of weight. Or seek permission to email teachers/parents prior to doing so.

**5) Put a blip in the school or PTA newsletter.**

**6) Make an announcement** at major school events such as school assemblies, sports events, performances, or during the daily announcements over the PA.

**7) Ask members to bring a friend to the meetings.**

**8) Ask your AmeriCorps** for any names of people from your school that are interested.

**9) Invite your custodian and cafeteria staff.** Or at least involve them in the conversation.

**10) Look to your neighborhood community.** Attend a Neighborhood Association meeting and canvass for volunteers and support. There are plenty of hidden jewels out there. Or try utilizing an internet based social networking tool like <http://www.brightneighbor.com/> [www.brightneighbor.com](http://www.brightneighbor.com). Bright Neighbor allows you to get to know your local community, exchange goods and services, share common interests, and ride share.

**11) Start talking to people!** Anyone! Everyone! This is a great reason to initiate some friendly conversation. Why not build your GT and community at the same time? Share what you're up to and see what happens. You will be surprised how many people are ready to juice into your vision. Often people will want to make a positive difference and don't know how. Besides, you never know who you are talking to or when you might stumble across the missing piece you have been looking for.

**12) Likewise, make space for miracles.** Pause when you feel overwhelmed or when you feel like everything is an uphill battle. Try stopping and sit in your heart. Reconnect with why you are doing what you're doing. Ask yourself to identify your heart's needs, and check in to make sure that your list of tasks and goals is actually bringing you closer to meeting those needs. Are you staying nourishing while healing the world's woes? Perhaps it is time your team throws a party to remember sustainability is ultimately about all the opportunities to improve our quality of life. If we catch ourselves working so hard towards the goal that it becomes all work and no play, it is time to pause.

## **Maintaining Your Green Team**

### **Taking Care of Your Volunteers**

Provide all the logistical information far in advance and send out an email reminder when an important date is close. When volunteers show up to help on a project be prepared and organize to use their time wisely and make sure you show them the appreciation they deserve. Try to have a variety of tasks they can choose from and time slots when possible so that you can offer the most enjoyable and convenient match. Consider following up with thank you cards or tokens of recognition. Know their names, feed them, and take their pictures when ever possible. Provide family friendly opportunities. Ask them for feedback. Don't burn out your volunteers by pressuring them to over commit. Do not apply pressure to sign up, but do hold them accountable when they do.

### **Overcoming Feeling Overwhelmed**

Feeling overwhelmed is toxic to the projects your GT takes on. The result is a tense, uptight, and overly critical mind. In this condition it is hard to "see the way" and eventually leads to burnout.

Start by identifying that you are feeling overwhelmed. Statements like "I'm not ready yet", "I am overloaded", "I can't commit right now", or "The problem is so big I don't feel like I can make a difference" are a good indication to take a pause. There are other kinds of

overwhelmed statements that place blame on someone or something else such as “The bureaucracy is impossible to work with”, or “John Doe is standing in my way,” and so on. However, this example will remedy the “I” focused statements.

There is a simple meditation practice you can use to help create space and clarity when you are feeling overwhelmed. The premise for the practice assumes that every emotion comes from love. That is right –feeling angry, frustrated, sad, overloaded, and every emotion in between comes from a loving place inside you! If you didn’t love your school, you wouldn’t be striving so hard to green it or feel so frustrated when things don’t change fast enough.

**The practice starts** by taking a quiet moment (5-10 minutes or longer), close your eyes, and seat your awareness in your heart. Take some time to breath into the space in the heart. In many traditions, repeatedly sounding a warm and cathartic “ahhhh” mentally to yourself or out loud can help initiate this process. \*

After a few minutes, recall your feelings of overwhelm and allow them to exist. Don’t try to push them away or try to change them. Greet these feelings like they are good friends that have come to share insight and wisdom with you. If you start to feel anxious during this process, return to breathing into the heart.

Don’t analyze anything. Be open to surprises. Just sit and notice how your emotions and thoughts begin to shift and soften in relationship to that which was disturbing you. In this clear state you can start to work through the “problem” with much more ease and efficiency. Any decision you make to move forward will be more effectiveness.

*\* Parts adopted from the “[Remembrance Challenge](#)”. For more information on overcoming feeling overwhelmed and creating sustainable livelihoods – visit [www.heartofbusiness.com](http://www.heartofbusiness.com).*

### **A closer look at overcoming feeling overwhelmed...**

For instance, when filling out an OGSA application, sometimes a group who has many programs established will feel like “they are not ready yet” and they develop resistance to filling out the application. It is not uncommon for that same group to feel like they haven’t gotten anywhere despite all their efforts when in reality they have succeeded in laying the foundation for subsequent action plans.

As you can imagine, this is toxic to the group’s attitude. They become sluggish over time. Most likely, the team will peter out because it won’t be as attractive to join for new members. It is much more inviting and exciting to members when they feel like they are a part of a winning team. Teams that thrive seek out opportunities to be recognized, such as becoming an Oregon Green School, linking with local media sources, or seeking out small grants. This is an instance where modesty will get you no where.

To better understand the inner dynamics of this situation, the GT’s needs can be identified as desperately wanting to be 100% green so anything short of this doesn’t feel good enough. This is beautiful and shows how much the GT cares! However, the inability to feel and recognize small successes will exhaust the group. An old Chinese proverb refers to it as “chasing the dragon’s tail”. When we tell ourselves that “we are not ready yet”, “we are not enough”, or

“we are not there yet” then we are setting ourselves up in a loop that will cost the group a lot of energy.

**Trying the practice mentioned in the section above can lead to discovering what is underneath your feelings of being overwhelmed.** Ever felt like your head was spinning and you can't feel the ground under your feet, and your not sure how to land? Or that the problem is so big that what can you really do about it? What about suddenly finding yourself with too much to do? Could it be because you have not taken the time to give yourself the recognition you deserve? Could this be because you feel like you aren't doing enough? Chances are you are doing enough and can't do it alone. So how many people do you think are going to want to join a high-strung and borderline burned-out team? How long are you going to continue operating in a state of being overwhelmed?

**When we are in a place of feeling overwhelmed and when we are tense we are naturally more critical and uptight.** It is so valuable to the group's psyche to back off from being too critical of your of anyone else's effort. Remember, **truth without compassion is hostility.** Mentally, appreciation and gratitude stimulates the brain and our energetic body in the opposite way that anger and frustration impact us. Everyone is dealing with the challenges of navigating change in the same bureaucratic system in a culture that is just starting to wake up, and so often we see our differences instead of what connects us. We have been shown to see conflict instead of opportunities to grow and evolve. Too often we loose touch with the human condition and we forget we share the same basic needs. If we believe for a moment that we have to fight each other for the change we want to see, then fighting is the change we foster. In media this shows up in articles that describe sustainability efforts in the context that there are two sides fighting each other.

Ram Das, a world leader in spirituality and old beatnik, gave a lecture in New York in 2002 and put it like this:

“When we look through the world with our ego eyes, we see other egos.” Then he put his sunglasses on, cocked his head a bit, and said in the coolest way possible, “But when we put our *soul* shades on, we see other souls.”

Are your “soul shades” lost? Sitting in your heart can help you find them.

When you stop to acknowledge your efforts your attitude is going to soften as your mind relaxes into the moment. Rather than “chasing the dragon's tail”, the psyche has a place to stop and rest. **When we are relaxed, our highest potential is revealed.** When we are relaxed life seems to flow and miracles seem to happen more often. Suddenly long standing questions may find answers. **At very least, stopping to sit in your heart will rejuvenate your entire mental and emotional system and will add more clarity and effectiveness to everything you do.**

*How we go about sustainability is as important as what we do.*

**This work is endless; you can remedy feeling overwhelmed by having compassion and stopping to smell the roses. Then pick a few and sprinkle them around you while you dance in celebration of your efforts. Try to stay connected to your heart and it will be contagious. Your heart knows that sustainability is a way to improve the quality of life in an all encompassing way. This energy will certainly attract new members wanting to play.**

## **Tips on Conducting GT Meetings**

### **First Meeting**

- 1) Briefly introduce sustainability. See <http://sustainableschools.org/discover/discover.htm>
- 2) Introduction of members: Gather emails. Consider making reusable tent name tags made from thick card stock that sits on the table in front of the member with name and affiliation (department/position/relationship).
- 3) Decide on meeting dates for the next two months: The suggested frequency is 2 times a month to get going and then once a month thereafter.
- 4) Set up communications: Decide on method you'll use to distribute meeting agendas, minutes and project updates, who should be in the distribution list(s), and who will check the GT email account once one is completed. It may be confusing for every email correspondence to be sent out to the entire list, so the 'champion' or main coordinating force might want to periodically send out updates instead. A good majority of teams take advantage of online forums such as google groups.
- 5) Brainstorm: Generate ideas. Find out what people are interested in doing. Use this list later for drafting mission statement and setting goals.

### **Second Meeting**

- 1) Create your mission statement and goals for the year.

#### **Example of the PPS's administrative GT**

“The Green Team’s mission is to implement projects that conserve resources and/or energy in the BESC, and create awareness about changes people can make here and at home to do the same.”

You can refer to your mission to framework your goals and evaluate the effectiveness of your efforts. It is a statement of your GT’s intention and will help you stay on track and manifest your vision.

- 2) Choose a project and break it down into action pieces.
- 3) Utilize members’ skill set when deciding who takes on what action pieces.

### **Third Meeting and thereafter**

- 1) Begin the process of checking emails that are coming in from the group email account and discuss the questions and suggestions. This may reveal low hanging fruit and small action pieces that the GT can take on. It is a valuable tool for involving a larger community of people

who are not attending the meetings, but would like to participate. It is a great mechanism for feedback so that the GT can adapt and respond to the school's interest and needs. More people will become interested in joining the GT when they feel listened to and that progress that is made.

2) Check in with the action pieces from the previous meeting.

3) Discuss how you want to document the process and capture the green goodness.

### **“Death by Meeting”**

You can drain the life out of a vibrant group in a number of common ways. Too many meetings or not enough face to face time, poorly planned agendas, inability to fold volunteers in, understanding the reality of the time they can dedicate, lack of regular and dependable communication, and too serious or cynical of an outlook can exhaust and frustrate the team.

**By its nature, sustainability is about building community.** Healthy team meeting will have time for personal check ins or opportunities to bond and get to know each other in deeper ways to facilitate a sense of connection to others in the group. Few can resist being drawn to attend meeting regularly when they feel like they belong to something they enjoy. As bonds form and fondness flourishes, so does accountability and stewardship for the GT projects. Taking lunch together, arranging a potluck, or having donuts can help create some momentum.

More info can be found in “Death by Meeting” by Patrick Lencioni

## Choosing Projects

### Projects to Begin With

The golden rule still applies! Remember the pyramid!



The best way for your Green Team to blossom is to pick an initial project that everyone can stand behind. Pick the lowest hanging fruit. Remember no task is too small to make an impact. If you get overwhelmed easily, start with one area at a time. The easiest thing to start with is to make sure you cover your basics such as:

- 1) **Reduce consumptions and avoid waste:** Are there ways to reduce the resources your school consumes? Is there a “No thank you table” in the cafeteria? If you can’t get rid of Styrofoam® trays, can you encourage a “waste free lunch” campaign or ask each kid to bring in a reusable napkin or water bottle? Is there a collection box for paper that has only been printed on one side?
- 2) **Basic Energy Conservation:** Is your school shutting off the lights after you leave a room? Are the computer monitors being shut off when they are not being used? Conduct your own audit to how you may conserve energy. You can request energy use information from your school district to identify where you are and track the savings.
- 3) **Basic Recycling:** Is your school recycling 100% that it can? If you don’t know, the first place to start is to schedule or conduct a waste audit. Once you identify what items are ending up in the trash that could be recycled, then you can create a plan. Start with paper and plastic/bottles then look into other items such as ink cartridges, crayons, etc.
- 4) **Or do something fun!** Plan an event in your school or coordinate a service learning project (see Jane Goodall’s Roots & Shoots program <http://www.rootsandshoots.org/> for more info) for America Recycles Day in November or Earth Day in April. (see <http://www.planetpatriot.net/holidays.html> for a list of holidays).

### **What makes up the school environment?**

When looking for low hanging fruit include the classrooms, cafeteria, office, staff lounge, after school programs and events, sports events, and custodial practices.

#### **Thank you custodian!**

For instance, a school discovered that the lights were left on for 4 hours while the evening custodian made his rounds. It became obvious that it would be much more energy efficient to request that he work by turning one hallway bank of lights on one classroom on at a time. That is almost a 1/3 reduction in electrical use.

### **Identify the Projects that are Low Hanging Fruit**

Low hanging fruit are behavior changed conservation initiatives that are typically zero budget and cover many of the basic projects mentioned above. They are also the projects that seem to be ripe for the picking because they are aligned with favorable circumstantial conditions. You may also find the lowest hanging fruit when you can piggy back to another initiative, event, or something ingrained in the school culture. Likewise, look for opportunities when administration changes or policy shifts are in the air. A low hanging fruit may reveal itself through a naturally accruing strategic partnership with the team and its affiliations. A group may also come together because they are individually passionate about the same cause at the same time.

Choosing the lowest hanging fruit means that sometimes you have to be prepared to drop a project (or temporarily put it to the side) and pick up another when a project has hit a wall despite your efforts. Keep your teams momentum by not getting hung up on a project that is not going anywhere. In the beginning there are so many low hanging fruits that there are many opportunities to succeed. These successes will help your GT gain the support to accomplish those projects that were put to the side earlier.

### **Creative Financing for Projects**

Assuming that money represents a way to get the resources we need, then perhaps creative financing could mean that we find ways to get the resources we need in ways that may or may not include cash. Opening our minds up to the possibilities is another way to create space for miracles. Can you think of creative ways to get what your GT needs?

Remember, money isn't the only thing that has value. Human ingenuity and creativity is valuable. Don't under estimate the power of social capital. Amazing things have been done on zero budgets by thinking outside the box. It has been said that "Money is not what we need to fix the environmental crisis. We are not going to be able to buy our way out of this. Creating more "stuff" is not the answer. We are going to are going to need people power to fix it. "

Likewise, creative financing may also come from cultivating strategic alliance with organizations that you share a common goal or interest. For example, both Pacific General Electric and Portland Public Schools have a common goal to conserve energy and a common

need to generate positive PR. For the last 4 years PGE has sponsored the PPS's Energy Challenge by offering a night in the sky box in PGE Park for the grand prize winners!

Money doesn't necessarily have to be the deciding factor. If it wasn't for one student in the PPS district raising a stink about Polystyrene® in our cafeterias we wouldn't have started our permanent-ware tray program. She declared, "I will not let money be a deciding factor!" PPS found a grant to buy permanent ware trays for 12 schools as a pilot program. Since there is not money to pay the extra staff time for washing, volunteers have come together to wash the trays. Some schools that are not yet ready to pursue a green project of this size have started waste free lunch campaigns or switched to permanent silverware and napkin and straw dispensers.

### **Behavior Change Based Projects**

You may not have much control or influence over your facilities. Start with the behavioral changes and start with yourself! "Be the change you want to see" and help others cross over. In the hierarchy of sustainability, conservation is the first step. Once you have picked the low hanging fruit, proven a case for sustainability, and built the critical mass, then it's time to tackle the larger more long-term projects such as updating facilities with the latest technology, energy saving retrofits, or adopting sustainable purchasing policies. Hopefully, while your GT is working hard from the bottom up, the top down is also shifting and the two will join efforts.

Learn how to effectively encourage people to adopt sustainable behavior by visiting [www.cbsm.com](http://www.cbsm.com), an excellent website about community based social marketing.

### **Evolution of a Project**

*(See Handout - Evolution: Project List... page 16-17)*

Let small successes be the foundation and momentum that leads into larger successes. Once you have covered your basics and have gotten your feet wet, now it's time to look into those projects that may be a bit more involved or may take longer to see results. Next you may want to look at the activities in your department or building and see where your greatest impact is on the environment.

Working with the system and understanding the limitations of the bureaucracy is critically important to projects' success. GTs that are pushy and insistent are met with greater resistance from the district. Eloquently pushy, or pushy with patience will gain your GT more support. Include district leaders in your ideas early so they can open doors, provide support, and offer critical information. Be careful not to turn your greatest resource and ally in the district into an enemy by mistakenly assuming it's "you" against "them".

As projects become more complex you may or may not want to break off into subgroups or committees.

Once you have established a new environmental program, it is a good idea to have one (or more) leaders responsible for that program. This is a great way to get people more actively involved. Their duties could involve educating colleagues and students about the program, being the contact for questions, liaising with other key player, researching a topic, etc.

Ideally your GT projects would go from ways of *saving* money to *generating value* some how.

## Setting up infrastructure

Working the elementary schools and establishing conservation practice and habit early is always ideal. However, by modifying the existing infrastructure you will find your middle and high schoolers can benefit from this model too.

### Recycling Coordinator (RC)

Having an RC at your school is a great start. However, once you get going you will soon discover that there is too much for one person to do and the scope of sustainability extends beyond recycling and incorporates energy, land use, transportation, food, and water.

Portland Public Schools' RCs are responsible for at least disseminating the recycling procedures to the school staff and students. Some take more on like supervising students actually collecting the recycling, spearheading other sustainability efforts, coordinating some of the PPS programs in their schools, assembling adult GTs, running waste reduction or conservation campaigns and more!

### Adult Green Team

The adult GT will most likely start as a group of parents, but can also be started internally by motivated staff members. Ideally these two groups would join forces with the PTA, and invite the neighborhood community by going through the neighborhood association. The adult GT will evolve into working with the student GT with principal support. Remember, the point is to connect with the students and change their behavior.

#### A case example: Portland Public School's Fernwood

Fernwood School created two bioswales on campus. One was created by adults (contractors) and the other was created by students. The bioswale the students made is maintained and stewarded by students as they take great pride in the kid created green goodness. As for the other, they have little connection to it and it shows.

### Classroom Green Leaders

- ✓ Ask your teachers to create a Green Leader position in each classroom. Think along the lines of calendar keeper or a line leader. What responsibilities would help you facilitate a greener classroom? If your recycling needs a bit of monitoring, or a sign made, or it taken out on Tuesdays, this person is the one!
- ✓ Your classroom Green Leader can be a rotating position. Make it a privilege. Decide on frequency of turn over and this is the frequency for the whole school to ease coordinating later efforts. The individual teacher can decide how this student is chosen. Create a master copy of the classrooms and student's names and post a copy in the teacher's lounge.
- ✓ Begin with one task and build from there over time.
- ✓ Make sure there is the necessary education for the student to perform the job. Make it meaningful to the student in ways that will inspire the same behavior at home.

### **Student Green Team**

Green leaders can come together and form the student GT. The adult and student GT can eventually find meaningful ways of working with each other.

### **Principal**

Having your principal's support will always strengthen your attempts to solicit the support of the staff for classroom GT.

### **Custodian**

Keeping your custodian informed, including your custodian's feedback in decision making, and asking for their support will also strengthen your efforts.

#### **Creating green infrastructure: Portland Public School's Laurelhurst**

At the beginning of the year Laurelhurst formed their first adult GT. Prior to that, the RC had been active for many years and very experienced working with the district on greening her school. She became a tremendous resource as a mentor. The principal supported her effort, but wanted to be hands off because her plate was full. The GT wanted to get a better read for the teachers' level of support so they sent out a half slip of paper that list of 6-10 green initiatives and ask each teacher to check which ones they were interested in participating in. This kind of approach was effective because the tone was inquisitive and not pushy. This provided a valuable foundation. It not only began the conversation and opened up communication, but it also gave them a good idea what direction to go.

One of the initiatives they took on was the Energy Challenge. Given the task of reducing electrical use by between 6 – 10% in 3 months via behavior change, the Laurelhurst adult GT hit the ground running! Their first task was to have every room audited. Once the GT educated themselves, they taught the 6<sup>th</sup> graders. The 6<sup>th</sup> graders went in to all classrooms, helped the younger students perform the audit, and gave a short presentation on energy consumption (10-15 minutes total).

The next strategy was to ask teachers to elect a representative that turned off the lights, unplugged things, powered down computer monitors and towers, etc. An additional "Power Patrol" was created out of interested 6<sup>th</sup> graders that would act as a second wave of energy conservation reminders to encourage further or sustained conservation efforts with the school.

## Publicizing Your Efforts

- ✓ Join other regional networking opportunities, workshops, conferences, and informational forums.
- ✓ Reach out to your school's or administrative communication department, local publications, blogs, or written editorial. They are always looking for good stories.
- ✓ Consider creating a documentary of a project and share it with others.
- ✓ Utilize word of mouth advertising.
- ✓ Revisit the section of "Growing your GT" and think of ways you can use those same channels to promote your efforts.

## Keeping Track of Your Progress

It's a good idea to start out by assessing what impact you'll have on your school or class before implementing a program. Establish a goal, create benchmarks, and then keep track of the progress. If you can, convert it to dollar savings. Are there ways to track, quantify, and capture the resources you saved?

There are several approaches to setting goals. Have your team discuss and agree on an approach. Some people prefer to set goals that are small and obtainable. New goals are made after the previous goal is accomplished. For others, it is best to set ideal goals that give a clear direction for the steps to accomplish it.

### **Setting Goals**

To change this world we really are going to need a paradigm shift. Why not set a goal to recycle 100% of as many commodity streams as you can? Don't short change the possibilities. Who is to say that it is not possible? Doesn't zero waste sound much more attractive than a 10% waste reduction? I know what 100% means, do you?

Effective goals are clear and benchmarks are obvious to evaluate. Keep it tangible. Why make a goal for 10% reduction in waste when you can eliminate one of your school's two dumpsters?

The first phase of capturing data can be very simple. It is like telling a story. As your pilot projects grow, it is likely that your tracking and evaluating systems will grow in their sophistication. An excellent guide for building a business case for sustainability is "STEP BY STEP GUIDE SUSTAIN PLAN" by Marsha Willard and Darcy Hitchcock. See ISSP (International Society of Sustainability Professionals) @ <http://sustainabilityprofessionals.org/>.

## Reflecting after the first year: Setting up for longevity

### Wrapping up

- 1) Create a list of all the green improvements you made big and small.
- 2) Use the list to check in with your mission statement and goals.
- 3) Create a calendar for the upcoming school year. Be sure to include the dates of school events, other events or annual campaigns you want to participate in, GT meetings, etc.
- 4) Throw a party!
- 5) Put it all in a legacy binder.
  - ✓ Include the list and calendar you just made. Provide a copy of your mission statement.
  - ✓ Document as much of the process as you can.
  - ✓ Quantify as much as possible.
  - ✓ Provide clear contact information and resource links.
  - ✓ Provide an online copy or a condensed version. Find a safe, accessible, and central location to store the main copy.
  - ✓ Providing pictures will bring it to life and make it a much more enjoyable task.

**Contact: Melissa Kerry, PPS, Energy Conservation Coordinator [mkerry@pps.k12.or.us](mailto:mkerry@pps.k12.or.us),  
(w) 503. 916. 2000 x 74276, (c) 785. 331. 8003, <http://facilities.pps.k12.or.us/docs/pg/10522>**

## **Building a Successful Green Team**

By Melissa Kerry

### **Evolution: Project List**

#### **Scale 1 –3 (From newbie to been around the block)**

##### **Reuse**

- 1) Double sided copies
- 1) Half sheeted paper
- 1) Scrap paper bins/oops box
- 1) No Thank You table in cafeteria
- 1) Encourage reusable drinking bottles/ 2) Selling reusable drinking bottles
- 1) Office supplies such as manila (Pony) envelopes
- 2) Use of email for school communication such as newsletters

##### **Basic Energy Conservation**

- 1) Education
- 1) Reminders: stickers/light switch covers
- 1) Power Patrol
- 1) Energy Audits
- 1) Power Strips
- 1) Timers
- 2) Settings: Copiers/Computers
- 2) Custodian Practices
- 2) Power Down Day
- 2) Energy Challenge
- 2) Delamping

##### **Recycling**

- 1) Education
- 1) Paper
- 1) Plastic and cans
- 2) Batteries
- 2) Ink Cartridges
- 2) Art supplies
- 2) Books
- 2) Clothes
- 2) Misc office supplies: Manila folders
- 2) Milk cartons \* if it's an option
- 3) Composting

##### **Cafeteria**

- 3) Milk Dispensers

- 3) Permanent Ware Tray Program
- 3) Permanent silver ware drive

### **Transportation**

- 1) Non Idling Campaign
- 2) Safe Routes 2 School

### **Waste Reduction**

- 1) Waste audit(s)
- 1) Waste Free Lunch
- 1) Fork It Over
- 2) Classroom Worm Bins
- 3) Lunch Compost

### **Restoration/Beautification**

- 1) Litter pick up
- 2) Mural with environmental theme
- 2) Recycled art fair
- 2) Planting trees

### **Public Events**

- 2) Sustainability/Green Fair
- 2) Earth Art Symposium: Collection of arts and expertise

### **Facility Upgrades**

- 3) Bioswale Construction (plan for maintenance)
- 3) School Garden
- 3) School Greenhouse
- 3) Living Machine
- 3) Rain Barrel
- 3) Solar Demonstration/Educational Piece
- 3) Solar for electric
- 3) Green Roof
- 3) Cob Stone structure
- 3) Raising: Chickens