



Thinking Globally, Acting Locally:  
Making a Difference Through  
Environmental Stewardship

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## London District Catholic School Board Celebrates the Achievements of Eco-Teams

The Eco-Teams at London District Catholic School Board (LDCSB) have reason to be proud of their many accomplishments over the past year, and are thankful for the support of the academic community.

Eco-Teams provide leadership for environmental initiatives at LDCSB schools. Made up of students, staff, school custodians, and community members and/or parents who volunteer their time, these groups help promote a range of environmentally-friendly programs in schools. These efforts include 'garbage-less lunches', recycling and composting, creating and maintaining natural gardens, no-idling campaigns, and other activities that encourage conservation.

Established in the 2006-07 school year, Eco-Teams were created as an offshoot of the Board's Better Schools<sup>™</sup> energy-management and school-renewal program with partner

Ameresco Canada. The idea was to encourage members of the school community, from students and teachers to members of the Building Services department, to join forces and share in the LDCSB's commitment to reduce energy consumption. Through Better Schools the Board has improved the learning environment, successfully trimmed operating costs and reduced its environmental footprint.

The students have put into practice what they learned from Marc Kielburger, guest speaker at last year's kick-off event for the Better Schools and Eco-Team initiatives: "We can do no great things but small things with great love." These words have inspired the students to participate in many conservation-focused activities – large and small – both in their communities and beyond.

The LDCSB's strong environmental focus works in tandem with the mandated curriculum and supports the Board's

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"Everyone left energized and ready  
to make a difference in our world."

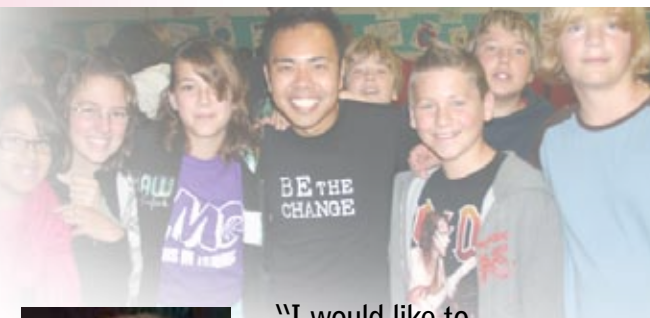
-- Principal Ken Borris,  
*St. Michael's Catholic School,  
Woodstock*



dedication to providing students with a quality Catholic education. The goal of the Board is to encourage the school community to care for Creation through 'green' acts as part of its overall mission of fostering responsible, caring members of the Church and society. This newsletter is a celebration of what some of our schools' Eco-Teams have accomplished over the past calendar year.

### Caring for Creation: A Celebration of Reaching Out to the Community

To celebrate the fruits of their environmental work, school Eco-Teams shared their success stories and presentations with 1,500 LDCSB students at the *Embracing the Earth, Caring for Creation* events on October 15 and 16. The events were held at St. Sebastian, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Anne, St. Michael's, Woodstock and St. George Catholic Schools. Their projects ranged in scope from school-based recycling programs to international endeavours designed to improve the lives of people in developing countries. The common threads connecting their accomplishments are teamwork, the desire to reduce humanity's eco-footprint, and a concerted effort to give back to the community in ways that bind students with their faith.



"I would like to congratulate the students and staff of London District Catholic School Board for their commitment, dedication and participation in creating a culture of sustainability."

-- Mario Iusi, President, Ameresco Canada

In their speech, "Me to We: Go Global – Acting Locally to Effect Global Change," motivational youth speakers Matt Tod and Long Le of 'Me To We' touched on several key topics relating to conservation and sweatshops using child labour. Through a multi-media interactive presentation and personal experiences, Tod and Le inspired today's youth to view challenges as opportunities, and to turn their passion into action for various causes, "watering small actions to grow a garden of difference."

They contrasted the issue of water waste in Canada with the problem of lack of access to clean water afflicting one billion



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"Thank you to the students, and in particular the Eco-Teams. You have made a difference in your school and that difference will mean a better world for every one of us."

— Wilma de Rond,  
Director of Education, LDCSB



LDCSB speakers at the St. Sebastian's event talk about the board-wide efforts to protect the planet

*Wilma de Rond, Director of Education, Barbara Nathoo, Principal, Valentian Perez, Student MC, John Koniuk, Manager of Capital Projects*

people in the developing world, urging students to help out with clean-water projects through *Free the Children* in Kenya, China and other countries overseas. Other guest speakers from the Board included Wilma de Rond, Director of Education, John Koniuk, Manager of Capital Projects and Mario Iusi, President of Ameresco Canada, who also participated in the event.



## St. Sebastian's Eco-Team Highlights Eco Week Accomplishments

As part of Catholic Education Week and Eco Week, the students of St. Sebastian, along with teachers, parents and school council, participated in many activities highlighting the theme of Stewardship of the Earth. Principal Barbara Nathoo said: "The speakers presented a global perspective to our students... It was a great experience for all!"



*Barbara Nathoo, Principal, St. Sebastian Catholic School*

- The Green Thumbs Club learned how to plant and care for flowers in the school's front garden;
- Student Parliament and teacher Mrs. Devine-Cookson organized a community garbage clean-up with Parent Council, students and Principal Barbara Nathoo;
- Student Parliament gathered intermediate and Grade 3 students to build a life-size sculpture of a cross made of about 300 discarded plastic water bottles;
- Parent volunteers and students built a large house on the stage in the gym using recycled boxes;
- Teachers and students participated in a poster contest to raise awareness of everyone's role in protecting the environment.

**"A cool thing I learned from the presentation is that Gift + Issue = A CHANGE and I think that is such a cool idea that I want to somehow try it out because no matter how small you are, you CAN make a difference! And I hope that we do."**

*-- Julia S., a Grade 5 student, St. Anne*



## Notre Dame Students Enjoy Working in the Garden All Year Long

The students at Notre Dame proudly showed off their green thumb – earned through the many hours they spent tending to the garden at their school throughout the year.

- Students rake, clean, weed and mulch the garden, learning invaluable conservation lessons and enhancing their math lessons at the same time;
- Students maintain memorial plaques in the Butterfly Garden and hold annual ceremonies to honour students and teachers who have passed on;
- Grade 5 students Antonio Bosjnak and Tristan Cotter direct younger students in the school's recycling program, including the weekly 'litter-less lunches';
- These two leaders have recently spearheaded a survey to measure the school's ecological footprint;
- Students separate used pop cans to help raise funds for the *Cops for Cancer* Research Initiative that runs until June 2009.

## St. Patrick, Lucan Students Twin Charity Work with Environmental Responsibility

The Eco-Team at St. Patrick, Lucan School takes pride in its environmental and charitable activities, which underscore the students' double commitment to protecting the planet and helping others.

- Students saved used pop cans to raise money for the Lucan Boy Scouts; the tabs were donated to help purchase a stroller for a Woodstock-area youth suffering from cerebral palsy and autism;
- School Council funded new compost bins and small compost pails and bags for each classroom, with the compost designated for the school's flower beds next year;
- Students participated in an Earth Week decorating contest using recycled materials; both a schoolyard and a local cemetery clean-up were part of the week's festivities;
- Throughout the year, prizes were awarded to the class with the least waste during the weekly 'litter-less lunches'.





## St. George School Initiates New Projects both at Home and Abroad

Over the past year, St. George School has been involved in a range of school- and community-based conservation programs, as well as an important international partnership, to help make the world a better place.

- To save paper, the school's monthly newsletter is now posted online, and morning announcements are printed on used paper from the recycling bin;
- St. George held a school-area and neighbourhood clean-up during Earth Week in April 2008;
- Students hosted a hot dog lunch to raise money for the Animal Rescue Foundation;
- The school launched a 'Greening our Playground' project in conjunction with ReForest London; students planted trees and shrubs and brought in new benches to begin creating a new Outdoor Classroom;
- St. George students have adopted a village in Sierra Leone, raising \$3,300 so far toward providing a clean, safe water supply for the villagers.

## St. Pius X Environmental Club Chooses Special Environmental Missions

The students of St. Pius X Environmental Club took a unique approach to selecting 'green' projects for the year. They first researched local and environmental organizations, then selected the ones for which they wanted to raise both awareness and money.

- Students raised \$111 to help the Upper Thames Conservation Authority with tree-planting efforts;
- They also raised \$105 to adopt a Florida Panther (in keeping with their team name, the Panthers);
- Students made environmental presentations at monthly assemblies, and created bulletin-board displays;
- They participated in school-area clean-ups in the spring and fall;
- Classrooms compete for the monthly Golden Can Award, which is presented to the class that does the best job of recycling during a given month.

**"It's wonderful to see the enthusiasm and dedication of our students as they work every day to care for the planet. Being part of an Eco-Team not only benefits all Creation, but also builds character and creates responsible citizens, helping us to fulfill our mission at St. George School."**

— Principal Ginette Marrinan,  
*St. George School*





## Simple things we can do to help the planet:

### Recycle, Reduce, Reuse, and Refuse — we can vote with our purchases!

Use a cloth bag instead of plastic while shopping. That would save 6 bags per week, 24 bags per month, and 288 bags per year. That's 22,176 bags in an average lifetime.

Sir Arthur Carty's Eco-Team add music to the Caring for Creation event

Other Catholic Schools that have actively participated in the event, recycling programs, yard clean-ups and other environmental endeavours over the past year are St. Rita, St. Anne, Sir Arthur Carty, St. Catherine of Siena and St. Michael's. All took part in the recent events, and the students proudly demonstrated their commitment to making a difference.

We are planning another *Embracing the Earth, Caring for Creation* event in 2009. Stay tuned.

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For more information about the London District Catholic School Board, please call John Boles, Manager of Communications, at (519) 663-2088 ext. 40015. Or visit us online at [www.ldcsb.on.ca](http://www.ldcsb.on.ca).

Wilma de Rond  
Director of Education

John Ferris  
Chair of the Board



LONDON DISTRICT  
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BOARD

