Hawk Goes Green

Encouraging Environmental Citizenship in Primary & Junior Students
The Journey

• Profile of a Village – Ross R. MacKay Public School
• Why we got started
• What we did, its impact
• What we learned
• Where to-from here
Ross R. MacKay – Torn between EQAO and Citizenship
Jeff Crawford has been the Principal for 2 years.
As teachers, parents and community members –

What is our responsibility to shape the environmental tenet of our schools? (beyond the curriculum)

Stream of Dreams Project where we learned about the local watershed through The Credit Valley Conservation Area
The real purpose of education...

- “The true purpose of education is to produce citizens.”

(Good Citizenship: The Purpose of Education, Eleanor Roosevelt)

Citizens educate their community about issues – in this case, the school waste audit.
Today, our real need for citizens …

• Declining civil engagement - “democratic deficit”

• Are we preparing the next generation for their role as citizens in a restorative society?
  – connecting individual, community and global goals
  – Creating dialogue and debate on the conditions of political and civic life and the natural world
  – participating to improve the quality of political and civic life and the natural world
  – respecting the rights of others (including the natural world)
  – defending one's own rights and the rights of others against those who would abuse them
Group of Environment Club Students do a spring clean up on the school yard.
The most effective form of learning in citizenship education is:

- **active**: emphasises learning by doing;
- **interactive**: uses discussion and debate;
- **relevant**: focuses on real-life issues facing young people and society;
- **critical**: encourages young people to think for themselves;
- **collaborative**: employs group work and co-operative learning;
- **participative**: gives young people a say in their own learning.
Why do a Greening Project?

• Teachers able to deliver a broad range of subjects outdoors
• Student Learning was enhanced
• Teachers had renewed enthusiasm for teaching and were using a wide variety of innovative instructional strategies
• Students demonstrated more positive social behaviour
• Diversity of play spaces suited a wider array of students
• Promoted social inclusion of all people
• Safer and healthier spaces
• Promoted environmental awareness and stewardship
Benefits to Ross R. MacKay

• Play
  – Passive Play
  – Creative Play

• Learning
  – Systems Thinking Skills
  – Critical Thinking Skills
  – Action Learning
  – Context for Learning: reading, writing, math, science, art, social studies and project management.
  – Character Development

• Safety/Health/Security
  – Shade, windbreaks

• School and Community Spirit & Pride
  – Parent and Community Involvement
The Parent Connection

Nancy Mills has two sons in the school and works full time.
Evergreen Process

- Committee
- Ask the students/Ask the teachers
  - What is it you do now?
  - What would you like to do?
- Choose the best elements
- Gain Feedback
The Starting Point

Citizen’s Take Action to Make their World a Better Place –
*Student’s plant their mini butterfly garden.*
The Feedback

Do Now
- Large list of sports
- Pretend
- Insect hunt
- Play in the mud
- Telling stories
- Playing manhunt
- Talking

Like to do
- Play in wilderness area
- Tepee Play Park
- Lizard Museum
- Bush Maze
- Reading
- Oasis/Garden
- Imagination place

Citizens Voice Their Opinions and Seek Mutually Beneficial Outcomes with Others
The plan includes:
• a new grassland with TeePees, a butterfly garden with seating, more trees with seating, new sand play with trees, crayola forest, outdoor classroom

Zachary talks about the greening project.
Relationship – Greening and Learning

• Unstructured free play brings cognitive, social and health benefits to children.

• Environment as the integrating context for learning:
  – Better performance on reading, writing, math, science & social studies
  – Reduced discipline & classroom management problems
  – Increased engagement & enthusiasm for learning
  – Greater pride & ownership.

• Natural settings provide psychological benefits (ADD, ADHD)

• Natural play areas encourage creative play, inventiveness and language skills.
Our First Planting Day – Oct. 2008

Citizens Work Together on a Shared Vision – Over 40 students, community and staff came out to plant.
Citizens….

Help Others & Nature

Learn about Native Plants

Connect to their Heritage

Participate in Community
Learning for Sustainability

Action Learning

Futures Thinking

Systems Thinking

Critical Thinking
Effecting Citizenship for Sustainability

- Greening project could grow into a eco or sustainability strategy (club and annual initiatives)
- Climate change is a challenge these kids will face, how can we prepare them?

- Action Learning.
  - Examples:
    - recycling,
    - energy conservation initiatives,
    - community battery drives,
    - Idle Free Zone campaigns,
    - ecological footprint,
    - global water use,
    - renewable energy demonstrations
    - annual Eco-Fairs (Earth Day)
    - Sustainability Showcase with other schools.
Example: Richmond School District

- **Student Involvement**
  - Student Sustainability Action Teams
  - Student Sustainability Network
  - Sustainability Action Team (staff coordinating body)

- **Initiatives**
  - Eco-Fest Conference
  - Sustainability Showcase (for Teachers)
  - Green Gala
  - One Tonne Challenge
  - Idle Free Campaign
  - School Greening
  - Recycling & Waste Reduction
  - Green Grants

- **Board Sustainability Secretariat**
- **Facility Energy Conservation & Waste Minimization Initiatives**
- **Curriculum Connections – New Environmental Education Curr.**
- **http://http://public.sd38.bc.ca/sdweb/envstew/**
The Educational Pyramid: Whole System ESD Vision

Courtesy of David Leeder, SEDA York University
Why Sustainability in Education?

“The sustainability focus has brought substance, import and enthusiasm to our leadership initiatives because it gives students something to be leading about.

If you add a moral purpose to all that youthful energy and intention, you get something really profound.”

Bruce Beairsto, Superintendent of Schools, Richmond School District
Earth Buddies
Environment Club
Earth Day Assembly

Systems Thinking by the Wombat
http://global-mindshift.org

Citizens Teach Others
Save the Boreal Birds Letters

May 13, 2008

Kathryn A. Cooper
Leader
Ross R. MacKay Environment Club
Hillburgh, ON

Dear Kathryn and the Ross R. MacKay Environment Club,

On behalf of Ontario Nature and the Save Our Boreal Birds campaign partner, I’d like to thank you for your interest and support of the campaign to conserve the boreal forest.

I’ve enjoyed your letters and artwork, as have the staff at Ontario Nature. We’ll be sending these letters on to Prime Minister Harper so that he knows you want him to conserve the boreal forest. I’d also like to put your letters on the Ontario Nature website to show that the next generation is asking that the boreal forest be conserved long into the future.

Thank you once again for your support. By working together we’ll be able to protect the environment.

Sincerely,

Jon Baker
Boreal Outreach Coord
The Tree Detective Game
My Environmental Ed Lesson

- Overall Expectation: tree identification
- Process: Inquiry - (Illustration, Research, Share Learning)

Citizens Understand Others and Develop a Bond with Them
Butterfly Garden Design

• Research
• Design
• Report
• Do

By Melissa, Cassi, Destiny and Jen

Melissa talks about the butterfly garden.
Other Activities

- The Great Frog Challenge
  - Courtesy of Environment Canada (www.frogwatch.ca)

- Seed planting & transplanting

Citizens take the time to Learn And Grow
2008/2009

- Strategy based on Ecological Footprint
- Specific focus on: water, food, waste, consumption, energy, species protection, transportation
- [http://of2.iearn.org/youthcalculator.html](http://of2.iearn.org/youthcalculator.html)
- Compares to footprint of children/schools in other countries.

Citizens connect individual, community and global goals.
2008/2009

- Footprint
- Stream of Dreams
- Bug Hunt
- Waste Audit
- Tracking Animals
- Wilderness Walk
- Vermiculture Set up

Citizens learn to appreciate and enjoy where they live.
The Waste Audit

- Board Mandated Waste Audit
- Tie to Environment Club
- Tie to Curriculum
- Tie to Facilities

Nick talks about the boomerang Lunch program.
Citizens study their problems and take action to resolve them.
Forever Learning

David Sobel and Ecophobia
Ecophobia

• Sobel suggests:
  “We can cure the maise of ecophobia with ecophelia – supporting the childrens’ biological tendency to bond with the natural world”.

ESD

- Child Centred
- Developmentally appropriate
  - Early Childhood (4 to 7 years)
  - Elementary Years (8 to 11)
  - Early Adolescence (12 to 15 years)
Early Childhood
(4 to 7)

- Immersion
- Solitude
- Interaction
- Story telling

- Don’t save a species – become one!
Elementary Years
(8-11 yrs)

• Exploring the nearby world and knowing your place is a primary objective for bonding with the earth at this stage.
• Expanding scope of place: home, school, neighbourhood, community, region etc.
• Exploration takes precedence.
Early Adolescence
(12 to 15)

- Social Action
- “No Tragedies before fourth grade”.

Numerous High Schools Students Helped Out on Our Planting Day in October
Stages are Cumulative

• Empathy, exploration and social action come together and build on one another.

“The more slowly trees grow at first, the sounder they are at the core, and I think the same is true of human beings.” (Thoreau)
Nurturing Environmental Citizenship

- Leader/Mentor Leadership Role
- Nuturing Nature a Club Theme
- Earth Week opportunity to reintegrate
  - Community
  - Teachers
  - Club
- Community Planting in May

All these children are citizens – the environmental focus gives them a place and a reason to practice these skills.
Citizens appreciate the people in front of them...

As well as those far away.