



Needham school families provide an energy boost to 10% Challenge results with successful spring campaign



Three and a half million pounds of carbon dioxide and counting. Encouraged by the Green Needham Collaborative and spurred on by local schools, Needham residents are going on an energy diet. Over 450 households have joined Green Needham's online 10% Energy Challenge by submitting personal plans to reduce energy use. Implementing these pledges will not only save dollars on energy bills but also cut emissions of carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas contributing to global warming.

After an Earth Day kick-off, 10% Energy Challenge campaigns were mounted at Broadmeadow, Eliot, Mitchell, Newman, Pollard and St. Joseph's Elementary. Directed to the Green Needham website, participants used a simple on-line checklist that suggested many ways to cut their energy use by at least 10%. The program also calculated the pounds of carbon dioxide avoided by each action chosen.

"The school campaigns more than doubled the number of participants in the 10% Challenge," said Michael Greis, co-chair of the Green Needham Collaborative. "Our kids are change agents, and the energy and creativity they demonstrate encourages the adults in their lives to respond."

The highest participation rate was achieved by St. Joseph Elementary in an effort spearheaded by parent Ellen Rooney. Fully a quarter of its families took part, submitting eighty-three energy-reducing plans. "Saint Joe's School was thrilled to be part of the 10% School Challenge," said Principal Paul Kelly. "Our goal is not only to raise environmental awareness but also to initiate practical steps towards being a greener school and families. Our efforts are really starting to make an impact as we all strive to serve 'the greater good'."

Green Needham will be awarding certificates of recognition to all the participating schools. Additionally, one family at each school has won a \$50 gift certificate to a local restaurant, compliments of PTC Corp., a Needham-based software company.

"This campaign reflected our values of working together as a community and contributing as citizens in more than one way" observed Needham Public Schools Superintendent Dan Gutekanst, "because it also supported our efforts to reduce energy use in the schools themselves."

Since the 10% Challenge campaign kicked off in January, several local community organizations and houses of worship have also earned recognition from Green Needham Collaborative. First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church and the Needham League of Women Voters each succeeded in getting more than 30% of their members to pledge to reduce energy use. The staffs of the Needham Health Department and the Needham Science Center had 100% participation.

"This is an ongoing project," said Greis. "We're hoping that many more community organizations will be taking part. Our next target is to get 10% of all Needham households to take the 10% Energy Challenge."

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