

Northeast Ohio students lead the way with environmental projects -- Environment by Michael Scott

Friday, April 11, 2008

It shouldn't be any surprise that idealistic students are so often at the forefront of the environmental movement -- and the key to sustaining it.

Some of that ecology-minded brightness was on display Thursday at the Trinity Conference Center on Euclid Avenue in Cleveland as 109 students from eight schools displayed their research projects as part of the Earth Day Coalition's 12th annual Student Environmental Congress.

Teams presented findings on clean air issues and took part in interactive games.

"These teens are the foundation of everything we do," said John McGovern, clean fuels program coordinator for the Cleveland-based coalition. "This is primarily a student-run conference, because it's their future."

The teams came from Cleveland high schools Max Hayes, Whitney Young, Garrett Morgan and the Early College Program, suburban high schools Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin, Brush and Beachwood and West Geauga Middle School.

No Child Left Inside:%%endhead%%The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes is also trying to get the word out about nature -- and get kids out into the natural world.

The center is running the local campaign in April for "Children & Nature Awareness Month" as designated by The Children & Nature Network, a national environmental education group.

For more about the campaign, go to cnaturenet.org.

Beachwood Green Dream': Meanwhile, a group of 20 marketing students at Beachwood High School is planning the Green Dream

Eco-Friendly Showcase, a fund-raiser/exhibit at that city's Community Center on Arbor Day, April 25.

Students say the event from 2 to 7 p.m. will include more than 60 green lifestyle exhibitors, including green art, organic food, speakers, a light bulb exchange and product giveaways. It's sponsored by the city, the Cleveland Foundation and Aleris International.

The event is free, but the team hopes to raise \$50,000 in donations, advertising revenue and sales to help build what it is calling "the nation's Ultimate Green Classroom."

Beachwood students and professional architects are already designing a classroom that uses sustainable practices in lighting, flooring, wall coverings, furniture, technology, heating, ventilation and cooling.

For more information about the event and the classroom plans, go to [theGreenDream .org](http://theGreenDream.org).

The Beachwood school's green work is on the cutting edge of a growing trend among schools.

The Ohio School Facilities Commission recently adopted new energy efficiency and environmentally friendly design requirements for school construction projects.

The commission has said it expects at least 250 school buildings to seek certification under the U.S. Green Building Council's rating system within the next two years.

The council itself, a nonprofit membership organization, this year doubled its funding commitment for green school building research grants to \$2 million.

So, chances are, we will see a few "green classrooms" in the near future.

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