



LANGLEY ASSOCIATION
FOR COMMUNITY LIVING

GO GREEN COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER EDITION 1: APRIL 2010

EARTHDAY IS APRIL 22, 2010

The Langley Association for Community Living initiated the **Go Green Committee** in December of 2007. The purpose of the committee was to identify and implement **Go Green** practices within our organization. The committee has had active membership and includes self advocates who are passionate about creating change in regards to environmental issues.

We soon discovered that there were many changes that could be made in the workplace but we had to decide what impact we could have within the scope of our abilities, time and cost. As a result, it was decided that we would develop an annual environmental plan. This plan is now organizational policy.

One of the priorities of the committee is the annual celebration of Earth Day, which is on April 22 of each year. We celebrated last year by encouraging the participation of the people we serve and employees to pick up litter in their surroundings and then we celebrated with an outdoor lunch. This year we are planning to make **Go Green** “care bags” that contain donated items and lots of helpful environmental information that we will give to our neighbours and local businesses.

We also wanted to create this newsletter to share with all of you the progress we have made in the last few years. We wanted to share with you the LACL **Go Green** Report Card.

Go Green Report Card

When LACL’s **Go Green** Committee began it’s work, we realized that small steps were better than giant leaps which can be overwhelming and ultimately off-putting. Our aim was to help educate those that we support, staff and the committee as to what we could do. Many of the staff at LACL have found that they are beginning to adopt some of these practices at home!

Before we share with you the **Go Green** initiatives that our residential and day program clients and staff have introduced, LACL’s **Go Green** Committee would like to tell you about a **Go Green** initiative of one of our day programs, “Explorations”.

Explorations had been working hard to collect coffee grinds and compost material of their own and local businesses near their day program site. All of this material would be transported (on foot) to the nearby Community Garden. The container and mode of transport for the container was always in danger of spilling and didn’t have a “professional” look. Explorations approached LEPS (see below for more information regarding LEPS) for help to solve their problem. LEPS negotiated with the Township of Langley on behalf of Explorations, working on the premise that with a more appropriate mode of transport would allow Explorations to expand their operation and encourage other businesses and community members to join in. And so the “Community Compost Cart” as it became known was given to Explorations (see the picture below!) through the Township of Langley.



Go Green initiatives introduced by our residences and day programs:

- Switched to energy saving light bulbs as old ones wear out.
- Turning out lights and electric equipment when not in use

- Light switches in the laundry room and bathrooms set on motion detectors
- Water tank set to a lower temperature
- Purchase of energy efficient appliances
- Paper towels made with recycled paper
- Recycling pop cans, bottles, newspapers and all items that can be recycled through local blue box/blue bag programs.
- Recycling batteries, printer ink cartridges
- Using “free detergents” (free from dyes)
- Using vinegar to clean the linoleum
- Hydrogen peroxide to clean most surfaces
- Cloth bags for grocery shopping
- Walking where possible instead of taking a vehicle
- Ceased to allow vehicle to idle
- Using and saving scrap paper, wood, plastic etc in craft projects rather than purchasing new items
- Used teabags and coffee grinds mixed with dirt in large plants to compost

Our Head Office has also introduced **Go Green** initiatives:

- Signs on light switches to remind people to turn off their office and meeting room lights
- Heating/Air conditioning turned down every night
- Computers turned off at night where possible
- Appliances unplugged on a Friday night
- Double siding documentation
- Saving documentation as much as possible electronically instead of using paper
- Reducing our carbon footprint by reducing the amount of orders to stationery outlets etc, therefore saving fuel with regard to transporting these items
- Purchase of more environmentally friendly products
- Recycling all non-confidential paperwork
- For large amounts of shredding, we use a company to shred documentation and recycles all shredded paperwork
- Recycling of all retired electronic equipment including computers, monitors and printers

There are still many things that we can do and continue to investigate. As we said at the beginning, small steps!

Our grateful thanks to the following for their help by supplying information and/or items to include in our Earth Day care bags:

- L.E.P.S (Langley Environmental Partners Society). Visit L.E.P.S. at www.leps.bc.ca
- Agriculture and Agrifood Canada – Seed packages
- Metro Vancouver – Composting and enviro friendly cleaner recipe pamphlets
- Township of Langley – “Share Your Ideas” cards, “Idling Gets You Nowhere” cards and “Poetry Magnets”
- Kwantlen College Horticulture Program – Led us to the acquisition of the seed packages and also is providing 150 tree seedlings.

A little bit more about Kwantlen:

The School of Horticulture at Kwantlen provides a number of programs for those wanting to learn about all aspects of the original green industry! Whether you want to learn about plan propagation for your home garden, or how to grow tomatoes for a career, Kwantlen’s programs are varied and available: part time short specialized citations, full time two year diplomas in either Greenhouse/Nursery Production, Landscape or Turf Management. And coming on stream in 2011 will be three new Bachelor degree programs.

LACL’s **Go Green** Committee is currently investigating “David Suzuki At Work” – a work “toolkit” for tips, ideas, suggestions etc, etc to make your work place greener!

For more information and/or to sign up and download the toolkit, go to:

<http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Ambassadors/Work/>

Do you have any tips/initiatives/suggestions that you are implementing in your home or workplace? Please email us at mainlacl@shaw.ca. Please **make sure** you put **GO GREEN INITIATIVES** in the subject box to ensure your email gets to the right place! Thank you and LACL’s **Go Green** Committee looks forward to hearing from you.