Center for Climate Protection Youth Scholarship

Project summary

Our project was primarily putting on “Green Week” through our school, Windsor High School, with the help of eco2 school and Amy Jolly. Green Week was designed to stimulate environmentally friendly attitudes and to show people that our community, alone, can save tons of CO2 if we sustain certain behaviors. We wanted to show students that we have the power to turn the odds in Mother Nature’s favor, that the change is in our hands. Green Week showcased a different event or activity on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday the week of March 12-16, however many, many hours went into planning prior to the week. Monday we borrowed the blender bike from eco2school and had students join us in blending a smoothie to promote both sustainable eating and alternative methods of transportation; in this case: biking. On Tuesday we put on “cocoa for carpool” to reward students for carpooling and to show our school that you can save the planet even if you don’t live within walking distance to the school and on Wednesday we did “Walk and Roll to School” to show our peers how fun walking to school can be if you bring some friends. Finally, we ended our week by promoting reusable water bottles and asking students to turn their cars off when parked on Friday. That week, of what we could measure, we saved a gratifying amount of 852 pounds of CO2. We hope Green Week stimulated within our peers a compassion for the world we live in and an urge to continues to act on those feelings, because the number we saw after that week can multiply exponentially with simple actions such as the ones we initiated during Green Week.
Our project’s climate solution was gathering the people of our scholastic community together to engage in environmentally friendly acts like walking to school, carpooling to school using reusable water bottles, and environmentally sustainable eating. Hoping to encourage the continuation of these behaviors we showed and explained to the participants the impact of their actions. We put a focus on the reduction of carbon emissions because we know that there are actions each individual can take to create positive change.
#2: Who are the people you engaged and the people you impacted?

The people we engaged were our student peers and a way we directly impacted them is by giving them reusable water bottles. Again, the project, to us, was all about giving our peers the information, and in this case supplies, they need to carry on sustainable activity once the week was over. Of course the project itself was a way of reducing carbon emissions, but we wanted the actions that our peers demonstrated that week to become routine. Hopefully we were successful in providing our school community with the sense of self-efficacy they need to create positive change.

#3: How did you do it?
To carry out the projects goals, like mentioned in the outlined project, one example of what we did would be when eco2 school volunteers brought the blender bike to the WHS quad for us to utilize. This activity was really unique because people didn’t know why we had the bike out there, so people were coming up to us and asking about it. Through that we got the opportunity to connect directly with our peers and explain to them the value of biking and eating organic, sustainable produce. It was such a fun way to engage our peers.
This process has been a magnificent experience for us and our new goal is to share our findings and results with the community to relay the feeling of accomplishment. The plan is to advertise the results in the video bulletin that is promoted in the school every Monday morning. We are actively still working with the Arts core that films the weekly news stories and we are in contact with leadership so they can help us put out our message to the entire school. In addition to this, we plan on making posters to put around the school with results and to award the winners of the green week activities. Our goal as, environmental activists is to share with others the possibility of change through simple and fun activities and both of us are working on making this goal a reality.
#5: Where did you demonstrate your leadership (organizing, advocacy, etc.)?

A special part of this project was that we both had the chance to really step outside of our comfort zones for this project. We were given the opportunity to speak in public settings and give direction, which gave us a lot more confidence in our ability to discuss the environment, making us more enthusiastic and passionate. We both demonstrated ways of giving direction and guiding our volunteers which was quite difficult, but what made it hard was incredibly insightful. Having to adapt to unexpected situations as well as working with others by taking in criticism and advice, promoted our growth. We were both able to learn how to listen to each other and learn from each other, making the entire project much more effective.
Conclusion
This entire experience was driven by our passion that we have for the environment and that is why we wanted to plan an event to help the planet. We started small by creating a club on campus to promote a healthy eco friendly lifestyle, and through this we gathered a following of people who shared the same interests as we did to help protect the climate. Through this we were able to achieve our goal of putting on a Green Week, but we never expected it to have the kind of impact that it did and how much it benefitted us personally. We have walked away from this experience with a new found love and determination to help the environment and have learned a new set of skills to carry out this particular passion. We have learned how to communicate and grow as people and how to listen to each other. Communication as well as a give and take relationship has been the key to a successful project and has given both of us the confidence to follow through with more projects like this one in the future. This entire experience has been a joint effort and we learned the true value of friendship and partnership; that it is always more effective and impactful to work with someone that you care about and who shares the similar drive and passion as you do. We couldn’t have done it without each other and we know that if we had worked separately, it wouldn't have been nearly as meaningful as it was. We created a community within the scholastic world and provided a chance for people to come together and work towards a common goal. The skills--such as leadership, communication, and commitment--we developed by working together has given us the confidence to enter the real world where we will hopefully be able to move beyond the boundaries of school and begin to affect entire communities. We are both incredibly grateful for this opportunity and for the chance to help the school while carrying out our passion.

Special Consideration
This was my, Emily’s, first leadership experience, and the knowledge I gained about leadership is invaluable. I was able to take my passion for this beautiful world we call home and put it into effect. It gave me skills I will use for the rest of my life. Through this experience the values that I, Delaney, have learned about my ability to adapt and work with others better than I have been able to before. I have rediscovered my passion for the environment that became lost to me since my time working with the GSE organization and planting sustainable gardens.