



Oct. 2 – 15, 2014

Shadow Lake students are 'keeping it green'

[Subscribe](#) to our email list



Cara Lisy, left, empties a compost bucket as Phoebe Chien looks on. In background, fellow Green Team member Alex Lanphear organizes other buckets that the trio of fifth-graders used while collecting breakfast recycling at Shadow Lake Elementary on a recent morning.

U.S. Department of Education selects Shadow Lake as Green Ribbon school

“Alright, let’s go dumpster diving,” fifth-grader Cara Lisy exclaimed to her fellow Green Team members during a recent morning recycling collection at Shadow Lake Elementary School.

The breakfast recycling program was dreamed up by last year’s Green Team students. It involves going from building to building at Shadow Lake to collect and sort trash, recycling, compost and liquids after breakfast, which some students eat in their classrooms just before school.

On that recent morning recycling collection, Cara — along with fellow Green Team members Phoebe Chien

and Alex Lanphear — saved two unopened juice cartons, an apple and a muffin from being wasted. They also emptied numerous juices and milks into a bucket, dumping those liquids down the drain instead of adding that volume to the trash. Cartons and paper goods were recycled, food composted and very few items ended up in the garbage. Each day, a different set of Green Team members makes the rounds.

Because of its numerous environmental programs, Shadow Lake Elementary School was selected last spring as one of 48 national winners of the 2014 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School award. It was the only public elementary school in Washington state to win last year.

“We have been working with sustainability at Shadow Lake for years,” said teacher Liz White, who leads the Green Team along with fellow teacher Sue Chase. “There was already a culture here of celebrating the environment, even before we started teaching here.”

As a whole, Shadow Lake has reduced its energy use by 24 percent in the last five years. The site has been designated as a National Wildlife Federation Schoolyard Habitat since 2005. A few of its other sustainability efforts include a Waste-free Wednesday lunch program, a school worm-farm and creating garden art out of non-recyclable materials to save them from the landfill.

The Green Team has its fingers in many of the sustainability efforts at the school, from the breakfast and lunch recycling programs to the collection and sorting of all the daily recycling in each classroom, and more. Between 75 and 100 students will be involved in Green Team efforts throughout the year, White estimated. A core group of students from her class and Chase’s class work together at the end of each school day to empty all of the recycling bins throughout Shadow Lake, freeing up time the custodians would otherwise spend doing that job.

Since the students introduced the breakfast recycling program, a change is already apparent, Chase said.

“The custodians have mentioned to us that it is already noticeable,” she said. For example, fewer trash bags have needed replacing, and there is less food and liquid waste in the classroom trash cans throughout the school.

Shadow Lake Green Team members also help out with litter patrol on the school grounds; “Terracycling” of items such as Capri Sun pouches and Lunchable containers; and, finding new uses for items that are still good, such as making the large cardboard boxes used to ship tag board into tri-fold presentation boards. Any parent who has ever purchased one of these boards for a science fair project or other presentation knows that they are pricey.

Asked what he enjoys most about Green Team, fifth-grader Isaak Swain said, “I like how we are saving the environment every day. We are kind of like superheroes in a way. I also like how we can do all of this every day. I know that we are doing something very helpful to the world and I’m very grateful for that.”

Other initiatives connected to the environment at the school include the gardens, composting and zero hour classes that celebrate the environment.

“Shadow Lake has been a school dedicated to nature and providing outdoor learning spaces for many, many years,” Principal Chris Everett said. “With this added focus of sustainability and protecting the environment, this only further supports our efforts and commitment to the stewardship of Shadow Lake and the practice of skills that will foster future conscientious citizens of society.”

Shadow Lake’s efforts have also been recognized by the King County Green Schools program and Washington state Green Schools for recycling and waste reduction. Three other Tahoma schools have won Green Ribbon awards in the past: Glacier Park Elementary School, Tahoma Junior High School and Tahoma Senior High School.

Student voices: [To read what some Green Team students have to say about their efforts, click here.](#)

[To learn more about the Green Ribbon program, click here.](#)

Board calls for applicants to financial oversight committee

The Tahoma School Board is accepting applications for three volunteer positions that will be part of an eight-person financial oversight committee to review construction and remodeling spending funded by the 2013 construction bond measure.



The board is asking for three parents of Tahoma students to be part of the committee, joining representatives from community organizations, including the Greater Maple Valley Area Council, Greater Maple Valley-Black Diamond Chamber of Commerce, Maple Valley Rotary, City of Maple Valley and the PTA. Applicants are asked to submit a letter to the school board that addresses these questions:

- Are you a resident of the Tahoma School District?
- Do you have financial or construction experience or credentials? If yes, please provide details.
- Please explain why you want to be part of this committee and what strengths you would bring (150-word limit).
- Are you willing to commit to evening meetings that could last one to three hours; four to six times per year until construction projects are completed?

Applicants should send their letter by email or letter to Kevin Patterson, communications director. Mail: 25720 Maple Valley-Black Diamond Road SE, Maple Valley, WA 98038. Email: kpatters@tahomasd.us

The application deadline is 4 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 23. Applications will be reviewed by the school board, which will assemble a list of finalists that will be placed in a blind draw to select the three committee members.

Volunteers needed for two additional school district committees

Parent volunteers are needed for two school district committees that will begin work in late October and early November. Please click on the link and complete a brief questionnaire if you are interested in serving on the committees:

Grade 6-8 and 9-12 model review: This committee is open to parents of students in grades 6-12. It will recommend a schedule and other components of the instructional day to help us achieve our Future Ready aspirations as we transition in Fall 2017 to the new secondary building configurations. Evening committee (4-8 p.m.) with parents, students, staff and community.

Wellness Committee: This committee is open to all parents. It will recommend district wellness policy updates to comply with state legislation. Evening committee (5-8 p.m.) with parents, students, staff and community.

High school dance team changes to year-round format

With arms linked over one another's shoulders, three long lines of dancers rehearsed moving into position and kicking in unison.

Sporting blue-and-gold tank tops, the Tahoma Bears IMPACT Dance Team members were showing their school spirit and clearly enjoying working out the kinks in the new portion of a routine they were concentrating on during a recent after-school practice.



Members of the IMPACT dance team perform during a pep assembly at the high school.

After switching to a year-round format this fall, rather than the winter season schedule they used previously, the dancers will have increased performance and competition opportunities, coach Andrea Hicks said. They participated in the Maple Valley Days Parade this summer, and are dancing at football games and other events throughout the year.

“The nice thing with having more performances is they get to do a little bit of all the styles,” said Hicks, head dance coach for the high school and Tahoma Junior High. “The kids are really excited.”

Switching from a sport with a defined season to a year-round activity brought the team more in line with how other districts were operating their dance teams, Tahoma High Athletic Director Tony Davis said.

“In the last five to seven years or so, more dance teams are starting in August – or in some cases, they select the team the previous spring and work through the summer,” Davis said. “We found ourselves in a situation where our kids were at a competitive disadvantage.”

Like other districts, Tahoma is required to try to balance opportunities for male and female athletes, and this change for the dance team is partially balanced by adding an additional C team for girls’ soccer, Davis said.

Prior to the change, Davis met with Hicks and the girls who planned to dance on this year’s team, to talk with them about what a year-round schedule would mean.

“It was really cool to listen to the young ladies at that meeting, because they want to be competitive,” he said. “It’s a pretty special season. They are making history.”

The team had its first performance of the school year during a pep assembly, dancing a preview of their competition hip hop routine.

Captain Kaleigh Hollingsworth, 16, said they got a great response from fellow students who hadn’t seen them perform before.

Hollingsworth, who joined last year as a sophomore, said she particularly enjoys the friendships she has made on the team. She said she thinks the biggest challenge this year will be maintaining energy and motivation because it is a big commitment.

The dancers practice three times per week for two-and-a-half to three hours per session. IMPACT, which stands

for “Integrity, motivation, patience, accountability, confidence and trust,” is a no-cut sport, and the team will be competing in hip hop, pom and dance.

“I am thrilled and excited for this long-awaited change,” said Kim Walley, president of the dance team’s booster club. “I have already seen huge changes to bring us more current and competitive this year.”

The team’s first competition of the year will be Nov. 8 at Lake Washington.

[For more information about the team, or to check out their performance and competition schedule, click here.](#)

Snacks, school food sales affected by regulation changes

The snack selection at the Tahoma High School student store looks a little different this year, after new guidelines about the foods sold in schools were put in place this July.

Hot lunches (and breakfasts) served in district cafeterias are also affected, but the changes – handed down by the U.S. Department of Agriculture – should not be too noticeable to students, administrators say. Some PTA fundraisers, such as popcorn and ice cream sales, are also affected by the new guidelines.

A committee for the school board was tasked with deciding how to meet the requirements and also with determining “allowable exceptions” to the guidelines. Those exceptions will allow the student store at the high school to host one event per month serving food that doesn’t fit the guidelines. And, PTA groups will be allowed two exceptions per month, which means that if they previously sold popcorn or ice cream every week, they will now be able to do so twice per month.

The school board also asked the committee to consider the ways foods are used as rewards throughout the district, said committee chair Amy Torrens, assistant director of Teaching and Learning for the district. The committee included students, parents, PTA members, school board members, Nutrition Services staff and district administrators.

“At the elementary level, kids still really enjoy a lot of non-food rewards,” Torrens said, such as stickers, pencils, bracelets or small toys. So, principals are being asked to consider those options as well as monitoring school events that serve food during school hours.

“I think this is a shift that’s happening in our society anyway,” she said. The committee worked to emphasize

that sometimes connections can be made through food-related events, and that sometimes foods help celebrate special events; but, that some kind of balance should be sought so that students are not constantly being given treats.

Other USDA changes include:

- A new requirement to serve one-half cup of fruit or vegetables with breakfast.
- Less sodium, which will mean buying canned foods without added salt, as well as decreasing salt used during cooking.
- Smaller, one-serving size beverages, such as 100-percent fruit juice.

Tahoma cafeterias are offering chocolate milk again this year, after the school board last year approved resuming that choice. The kitchens are also serving all fresh-made bread this year, rather than frozen items, said Mary Nowak, Food Services supervisor.

[For an article about new Food Services supervisor Mary Nowak, click here.](#)

COMING UP in Bear Country

THURSDAY, Oct. 2

Glacier Park Elementary School open house, 5:30-7 p.m.

Tahoma High School PTA Cinderella project, during lunch and after school, Oct. 2-3, mat room.

“Recruiting Realities” program by Jack Renkens, 7 p.m., THS lecture hall.

FRIDAY, Oct. 3

Tahoma High School varsity football vs. Kentwood, 7 p.m., Maxwell Field.

TUESDAY, Oct. 7

Tahoma High School open house, 6-9 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, Oct. 8



Districtwide earthquake drill, 9:30 a.m., each school site.

THURSDAY, Oct. 9

Run, Walk, Read, 1 p.m., Tahoma Junior High.

FRIDAY, Oct. 10

Run, Rock, Read, 8:30 a.m., Tahoma Middle School.

MONDAY, Oct. 13

Tahoma High School Homecoming week, Oct. 13-17.

FRIDAY, Oct. 17

Tahoma High School Homecoming varsity football vs. Kentlake, 7 p.m., Maxwell Field.

SATURDAY, Oct. 18

Tahoma High School Homecoming dance, 8-11 p.m.

AND MORE

[Find links to these and more happenings on the district EVENTS CALENDAR.](#)

What's for lunch?

[Click here to check out the district's lunch menus.](#)



Tahoma Matters is a twice-monthly e-newsletter designed to share districtwide news, kudos and events. We encourage feedback. This is a service of the Tahoma School District.

Share this email:



Manage your preferences | **Opt out** using **TrueRemove™**

Got this as a forward? **Sign up** to receive our future emails.

View this email **online**.

25720 Maple Valley-Black Diamond Road SE
Maple Valley, WA | 98038 US

This email was sent to .

To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

