



# CENTER FOR EARTH LEADERSHIP

Forging citizen leadership to a sustainable future | **THREE-YEAR REPORT, 2010**

## Earth Leadership—When Citizens Lead the Way

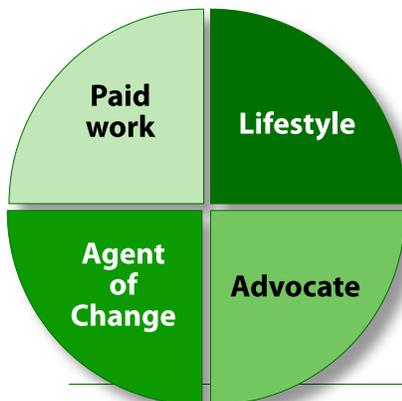
In creating the Center for Earth Leadership in 2007, we coined the term “earth leadership”—the intentional efforts by motivated citizens to create a sustainable culture. To communicate its meaning, we defined four quadrants knowing that each could provide an outlet for the energy and creativity of an intentional person.

**PAID WORK.** Some choose paid work to promote sustainability. When Steve and Mish Radke created Abundant Harvest Farm, they did so to promote sustainable, local agricultural products. Thomas Doherty, a Portland psychologist, is developing the field of ecopsychology as editor of the on-line journal, *EcoPsychology*. Architects have many opportunities in their paid work to suggest sustainable materials and practices.

**LIFESTYLE.** Reducing our personal impact on the earth is a journey without end. Two Center programs, our Moving to Zero Waste PowerPoint presentation and our Home Eco-Party Program, produce quite sophisticated questions from the audience, such as, “Which has a greater global warming impact—driving a car or eating meat?” The Center also publishes monthly eco-tips for business green teams.

**AGENT OF CHANGE.** Within a circle of influence, such as a school or workplace, the agent of change is the instigator of initiatives to introduce sustainable practices and raise eco-awareness. Examples are taking the lead to install a composting system at work or organizing a chemical-free yard campaign within the neighborhood.

### The Four Quadrants of Earth Leadership



Vesna with students in Eco-Schools Without Borders. See page 3.

**ADVOCATE.** As an advocate, the citizen seeks to effect change that is under the control of others. Examples are drafting legislation and lobbying in Salem for its passage or organizing a protest to keep a big-box store out of farmland.

During our first three years, we have

- promoted earth leadership through extensive training on the role of the citizen agent of change,
- created an Agent of Change Network to provide ongoing education and support and an Eco-School Network to support efforts of parents working in schools,
- targeted groups with unrealized potential through projects such as Oregon Lawyers for a Sustainable Future,
- promoted a low-impact lifestyle, and
- developed a framework for advocacy training.

In today’s economic and political climate, the likelihood of bold public policy to promote sustainability is remote. On the other hand, we have immense opportunities to make a meaningful difference and, in doing so, inspire those in other regions of our country. At the Center, we provide Oregon citizens with training, hope, and ongoing support for their leadership in creating a sustainable culture.

– Jeanne and Dick Roy

## Activate Agents of Change

To engage citizens, we developed and continually adapt an interactive course “How to Be an Agent of Change in Your Circle of Influence.” Beyond teaching a tested framework and communicating know-how, this course reinforces a two-fold self-perception as an ongoing way of life:

1. *I am an agent of change, and*
2. *I can be most effective working in a circle of influence such as my neighborhood, school, or workplace.*

During the course, each participant develops a plan to effect change in a circle and takes first steps to put the plan in place. The projects reflect the creativity of participants.

**Janet Johnson** had been involved with stream restoration, but not in her own neighborhood. During our Agent of Change course, she envisioned neighbors bonding through work to restore a salmon run in Crystal Springs Creek, which runs through the neighborhood. As a first step, she invited neighbors to a potluck to share her vision and recruit a restoration team. Several neighbors signed up to monitor steelhead in the creek and were delighted when the anadromous critters were actually spotted. Janet then formed **Friends of Crystal Springs** and created a PowerPoint presentation about the creek’s history, ecology, and restoration projects, which was shown to ecology classes at **Cleveland High School**. Last spring when Friends embarked on a restoration project, some of the students pitched in.

As participants complete the Agent course, they join our ongoing Agent of Change Network to receive support, inspiration, and continuing education. At a recent Network gathering, City Repair founder Mark Lakeman described how to create community gathering places.

### Agents by the numbers:

- 568** Portland citizens have enrolled in Agent of Change course.
- 470** have promoted an initiative within their circle.
- 97** citizens in Eugene and Ohio have taken the Agent of Change course.

The stories below illustrate how three agents are working with neighbors in their communities.

**Ladybug infestation.** **JJ Lee Kwai** used her neighborhood’s “National Night Out” party at the park to promote her vision of non-toxic yards and gardens safe for children and animals. She initiated a kid and pet parade and set up a booth to disperse ladybug signs and information on natural gardening.

**Washing away disposables.** **Lonnie Port** had a vision for the Woodstock Community Center. No more disposable plates, cups, and table cloths for parties held there. Through a grant, Lonnie was able to obtain a new dishwasher and sixty place settings of flatware, ceramic plates, bowls, and mugs plus three dozen glasses. Community members wash the items after each event.

**Trash talking.** Unhappy that recyclables weren’t getting into the proper containers at Terra Vista Apartments, **Leslie Ross** brought together the property manager and representatives of Waste Management and Portland Sustainable Development Office. She not only secured separate blue carts for comingled recyclables and glass, but now uses a green cart for organics (food, yard debris, and contaminated paper). The new recycling location in the garage is a great gathering place for bonding and talking trash.



## Rally Parents at School

Some of our most enthusiastic Agents have been parents who seek to introduce sustainable practices and raise eco-awareness at school. Because of the enthusiasm, in 2009 at the instance of Skyline parent **Jill Inahara**, we created the Portland Eco-School Network, which now includes parents from 32 schools.

Our parent-agents, working in cooperation with the principal, teachers, and other parents, incorporate ecological health into the life of children at school. Initiatives include organizing student green teams; eliminating disposable trays and utensils from the cafeteria; composting food waste; and taking various steps to conserve energy.

At Laurelhurst, Agent **Meg Hagan** formed a parent/teacher green team that planted an edible garden, using grant money and plenty of volunteer help. A spring work party to prepare the garden drew around 80 people. Sixth graders gave tours to all the kids in the school and planted a vegetable with each younger student. In less than a year, lettuce was being used in school lunches.

At Bridlemile, **Kalei Augustine** took the lead in forming a junior green team—30 students in grades K-5 who meet once a month for 1-1/2 hours after school. Activities, discussions, and guest speakers focus on one of four themes: recycling, gardening, health and wellness, and conservation.

**Christy Kuzienschky's** green team at **Sunstone Montessori** has tackled an important issue—chemical cleaning agents. Using its special recipe to prepare a green cleaning solution, the team created cleaner kits for each teacher. When bottles run dry, the kids prepare a new supply. The students are in charge of mixing a soap/water solution to fill foam dispensers in the restroom, which cut down on soap usage.

### Eco-Schools by the numbers:

**80** parents and teachers have been trained.

**32** schools are now in the Center's Eco-School Network.

**100s** of children are involved.

**Eco-School Leadership Retreat.** As a major organizational step, in October 2010 we organized our first overnight planning retreat for 13 leaders of the Eco-School Network. In addition to being trained on leadership and how to introduce change, the group adopted a sharply focused strategy for 2011—organizing student green teams in elementary schools throughout the greater Portland area. As a green team takes steps to reduce waste, toxics, and the use of energy and water, the children come to understand how caregiver for the earth is an exciting role to play.

**Eco-Schools Without Borders.** In early 2010, **Jane Harold**, a teacher at **James John Elementary School**, came to an Eco-School informational meeting and posed a challenge. How might the Network become a vibrant resource for Title I schools (where 75% of the children qualify for subsidized meals)? To explore the challenge, the Network formed an ad hoc team that developed an initiative now called Eco-Schools Without Borders.

In a pilot program at **James John** this fall, seasoned Agent **Vesna Kostur** is assisting Jane with the student green team. Children from grades three to five are engaged in activities to reduce energy and promote waste reduction and recycling. If the pilot project works well, it will be expanded to other schools.

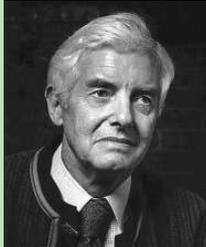


Left page (from left):  
Cleveland students  
digging for fish;  
JJ and Sunny in  
pesticide-free yard;  
Leslie gives Halloween  
meal to the composter

Right page:  
No more disposables  
for Lonnie; Eco-School  
leadership retreat

## Continuing the Legacy

When **Rachel Carson** published *Silent Spring* in 1962, she took two bold steps that inspired the awakening public. First, she demonstrated through scientific inquiry that toxics in the air and water harm and destroy biotic life. Second, in challenging the chemical industry, and being subjected to organized efforts to discredit her book, she demonstrated the immense power of one determined individual.



**David Brower**, the Executive Director of the Sierra Club from 1952 to 1969, also inspired a generation of environmental activism, in his case to preserve areas of the natural world from commercial exploitation. He, too, had to confront determined commercial interests. Together Carson and Brower left a legacy that we build on today.

Although inspired by charismatic leaders of the past, we realize that the days of the prominent leader are over. Creating a sustainable future will require the efforts of all of us without looking to either elevated leaders or enlightened public policy to provide the way.

At the Center we encourage earth leadership—strategic efforts by citizens in all walks of life to create a sustainable future from the ground up. Without our members and donors, this work would not be possible. *Thank you!*

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*Center staff at work (from left): Emily, Jeanne, Kelly, Dick*

# Sharpen Lifestyle Choices

Building on a lifetime of experience, co-founder Jeanne Roy has created four Center programs to encourage lifestyle practices that reduce impact on the earth. According to Jeanne, “As concerned citizens take steps along the path to zero waste, they remain intensely interested in how to take the next incremental step. Their difficult questions keep me on my toes.”

**ZERO WASTE PRESENTATIONS.** With heightened interest in sustainable practices at work, the Center program team asked, “Why not use the workplace as a site for educating employees on personal lifestyle practices?”

In developing its noontime PowerPoint presentation, “Moving to Zero Waste,” the Center has created a nonjudgmental format that employees see as a workplace benefit. Beginning with low hanging fruit, the audience is ultimately introduced to advanced practices, such as not purchasing any disposables.

Education at these presentations is a two-way street. For example, we have learned that the oversized blue containers provided by the City of Portland seem to invite residents to discard plastic items that cannot be accepted by the recycler. That complicates the sorting process at the material recovery station and increases contaminants in materials shipped to industries.

**HOME ECO-PARTIES.** Hosting an eco-party is as simple as 1-2-3. First, you line up about ten friends to attend a two-hour party in your home. Second, you send them each a three-page checklist as a means to obtain a baseline for practices in their home. Finally, when they arrive for a party led by a trained Center volunteer, you provide the refreshments.

Ted Ames, who has hosted two eco-parties, says, “If there were more eco-parties, we’d be more sustainable.” He, for one, has definitely made changes. His home is now the neighborhood collection point for those difficult plastics that can’t be placed in curbside carts. From time to time, he transports a load to Far West Fibers. After he began composting yard debris and food, his household switched to once-a-month garbage service. Another eco-party host, Resa Thomason-Schacky, added a personal touch to her party. She created an all-purpose cleaner of vinegar water and vegetable-based detergent and gave a sample to every guest.

## Lifestyle by the numbers:

- 31 Zero Waste presentations
- 500 Home Eco-Parties (since 1995 inception)
- 80 organizations on Eco-Tip distribution list
- 41 Eco-Tips and fact sheets on Web site

**ECO-TIPS.** As a periodic reminder, the Center publishes a monthly eco-tip. The eco-tips are sent to green team leaders in workplaces and other organizations for redistribution, and then placed on our Web site.

One of the more popular eco-tip titles is “Kitty Litter and Dog Poop,” which deals with pet waste. In Multnomah County alone, 360,000 cats produce about 11,000 tons of litter that must be processed in some fashion. The tip describes products, such as Good Mews (recycled paper pellets), and practices for handling waste without sending it to the landfill.



**FACT SHEETS.** Fact sheets cover lifestyle issues in greater detail. They are published from time to time, posted on our Web site, and distributed at certain events. Each provides background and specific steps for adopting a new practice. One example is “Maintaining a Chemically Free Yard.” In this fact sheet, the reader learns, “Homeowners pour nearly 70 million pounds of pesticides on urban lawns each year. . . That’s three times more per acre than what’s applied by US farmers.”



Cleaning the new way— non-toxic products

# Mobilize Legal Profession

Oregon Lawyers for a Sustainable Future (OLSF), a project of the Center, has moved the Oregon legal profession into a national leadership role in the sustainability arena. For his work through OLSF, Center co-founder Dick Roy will receive the inaugural President's Sustainability Award from the Oregon State Bar on December 2, 2010.

In creating OLSF, the Center was pursuing one of its stated strategies—targeting a group in which earth leadership is underdeveloped. Two significant hurdles stood in the way.

First, the Oregon State Bar saw no appropriate role for it to play in promoting sustainability. Finally in late 2009 at the urging of OLSF, the hurdle came down as the Bar adopted a very strong sustainability bylaw and created a new Sustainable Future Section (SFS), the first in the nation. Today SFS publishes a quarterly newsletter, organizes educational seminars, and presents annual sustainable leadership awards to lawyers and law offices. Sustainability is being woven into the fabric of the Oregon State Bar.

The second hurdle is ever present. In contrast to the field of architecture, where sustainable design is a growing area of practice, there is no recognized practice of “sustainability law.”

To expand possibilities for lawyers to contribute, OLSF developed a useful framework (below).

## SEVEN LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT:

**1. Legal profession generally.** Example: Contribute to pioneering work now underway to expand the meaning of justice to encompass the rights and opportunities of future generations. (Traditionally, the legal profession has been the guardian of justice, but only as it relates to humans living today.)



Robin Morris Collin (right), Willamette Law School, receives 2010 SFS Sustainable Leadership Award

## How the Center engaged the legal profession:

- Developed complete toolkit for the sustainable law office
- Created informal sustainability network of 40 law firms
- Trained lawyers from 43 firms in two-month earth leadership seminar
- Educated 950 lawyers and law office personnel on sustainability and zero waste

- 2. Lawyer in the practice of law.** Example: Develop screens for assessing legislation, regulations, and treaties through the lens of sustainability.
- 3. Lawyer as business advisor.** Example: Become an expert on sustainability and ecological degradation to better understand the needs of clients pursuing sustainable business practices.
- 4. Lawyer as user of natural resources in the practice of law.** Example: Draft a law office sustainability policy and implement sustainable office practices such as replacing bottled water with tap water.
- 5. Lawyer using legal skills in a non-lawyer role.** Example: Work with a nonprofit to develop guidelines for a green certification program.
- 6. Lawyer as financial advisor.** Example: Become an expert on sustainable investing to differentiate between (a) authentic efforts to invest in a manner to protect the earth and (b) “green washing” by mutual funds and investment advisors.
- 7. Lawyer as role model for peers.** Become a role model for peers by taking steps to free up time for sustainability work such as (a) reducing the paid work schedule, (b) reducing time spent on other professional activities, (c) taking a sabbatical, or

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*Oregon is ahead of the pack when it comes to examining the legal profession and its role as stewards of the environment and protecting the rights of future generations. Much of this is due to the herculean efforts of Dick Roy and the Center for Earth Leadership.*

– JENNIFER BERG, LAWYER, OAKLAND, CA

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# Looking Ahead



**DON'T MISS HELENA NORBERG-HODGE.** The Center will sponsor a visit to Portland on January 22 and 23 by Helena Norberg-Hodge, author of *Ancient Futures: Learning from Ladakh* and international champion of localization—a possible antidote to exponential

growth required to support the global economy. During her visit, she will show her new documentary, the *Economics of Happiness*. For details, visit the Center Web site, [www.earthleaders.org](http://www.earthleaders.org).

**2011 LEGISLATURE.** Although the Center is not deeply involved in legislation, Oregon Lawyers for Sustainable Future will reintroduce a bill in the 2011 legislature aimed at corporate governance. If enacted, the bill would explicitly allow directors of a corporation to consider “social, environmental, and ethical factors” in their decision-making process. This would dispel the myth that directors have a fiduciary duty to shareholders to maximize profits.

**HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.** The downturn in the economy, turmoil in the political realm, and diminished likelihood that progressive public policy (like climate change legislation) will be enacted, can be discouraging. Yet we have much to invoke a strong sense of hope. The culture of the Portland area is deeply steeped in sustainability—from the way we commute, to the way we eat, to how we build and remodel, to the way we generate our energy. One of the byproducts of thinking deeply about sustainability is there is no way to un-ring the bell.

A bright spot on the horizon is a new generation of leaders with sustainability on their minds. For example, in the recent election many highly qualified young adults chose to run for the Oregon State Legislature, and most of them were elected. Although they must deal with immediate financial problems and human needs, they are positioned to provide visionary leadership for our future.

All of this gives us a strong sense of hope and a reinforced awareness that hopelessness is not an acceptable alternative.

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## 2010 Three-Year Report

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