



CENTER FOR EARTH LEADERSHIP

Forging citizen leadership to a sustainable future | 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

Accelerating Change Through Earth Leadership

As co-founders of the Center for Earth Leadership, we are pleased to issue our first annual report. At the same time, we celebrate a personal milestone – 15 years of full-time volunteer work together. Since Dick left his law firm in 1993, we have been privileged to work with the singular purpose of creating a path to a sustainable future for our children and the generations yet to come. Along the way, we have been uplifted by the efforts, the leadership, and the support of so many of you who will receive this report.

*“It is impossible to say what the total impact of the Roys’ work has been over the years, or how many new Sustainability Change Agents they have added to the Army, directly and indirectly – but I take heart in knowing that it must number in the thousands.” – Alan Atkisson, *The Isis Agreement* (2008)*

At the Center, we match an extraordinary opportunity with an organizational strength. The opportunity is found in the burgeoning number and increasing commitment of citizens who seek to assume a greater leadership role. The strength is our broad experience base in effecting change through the organized efforts of motivated citizens.

To capitalize on this confluence of opportunity and strength, the Center fills an essential niche:

We enlist, train, and motivate citizens who seek to be leaders in creating a sustainable region, and we provide tools and ongoing support for their work.

This focus on individual initiative is particularly important at this time. With climate change and ecological degradation underway, we know that change in local practices must be accelerated at all levels – the individual, the organization, the community. More progressive public policies may be on the horizon, but they will take time to implement, and their efficacy will need to be demonstrated. In the meantime, essential change from the grassroots up can be accelerated right now.

To put a face on our work, in this report you will meet a few of the many change agents and initiatives supported by the Center: **Dimitra** greening the Portland Greek Festival, **Sue** leading a sustainability initiative at work, **Sonja** spawning innovation within her housing community, **John** transforming a church yard into a rain garden, **Lily** and **Jill**, two parent-agents in our **eco-school project**, and our team of **mental health professionals** helping parents navigate choppy waters created by the commercialization of childhood.

As you read these illustrative stories, we hope you will envision a growing league of committed citizens fanning out across the region as proactive agents of change. This is the power of “earth leadership” that we promote and support at the Center.



Jeanne and Dick Roy with their Green Giant 2008 Award for 15 years of service.

Jeanne and Dick Roy, Co-Founders

The Cornerstone – Our Agent of Change Program

The Agent of Change Program begins with our six-session course, “How to Be an Agent of Change in Your Circle of Influence.” As a requisite for the course, each participant selects a personal circle of influence – school, workplace, center of faith, neighborhood, professional group, etc. During the course, the participant develops a plan to raise eco-consciousness and introduce sustainable practices, and takes steps of early implementation, in consultation with other members of the class.

Through 2008, 19 classes of about 15 participants each have been trained. With trained agents working on numerous fronts, the impact is felt throughout the greater Portland area.

Greek festival goes green. In early 2008, **Dimitra** enrolled in the Center’s Agent of Change course and chose the Greek Orthodox Church in Northeast Portland as her circle of influence. To promote ecological practices in the church, she noted three opportunities: (1) to green the office and administrative areas, (2) to eliminate disposables at the weekly coffee hour, and finally (3) to reduce waste at the annual three-day Portland Greek Festival – one of the largest annual events in Portland with tens of thousands of people flowing through to sample Greek food, wine, and culture. In October, Dimitra organized a team of 12 volunteers, each sporting a green bandana. Together they monitored 26 recycling containers for plastic bottles and aluminum cans, plus 19 containers for wine bottles and other glass.

Below, from left to right: At the Portland Greek Festival, Dimitra has solid waste in hand; Sonja hauls load in community bike trailer; students bring food scraps to pigs.

Pushing the envelope at work. As chair of the sustainability team at David Evans & Associates (DEA), **Sue** is working at the leading edge of sustainable office practices. Two of many examples define the DEA edge. First, composting food waste in any office setting is always a very sensitive issue. What about pests, odor, and the office atmosphere generally? To open this controversial door, the team proposed a two-month pilot project. In each kitchen, a big, green compost bin replaced one of the trash cans. When the new bins arrived, employees were invited to an orientation. After one year, employees are uplifted to have composting at work.

Second, DEA already offered free TriMet bus passes, but the team wished to push the envelope further to reduce hydrocarbon commuting. It proposed the Commute Trip Reduction Program. Today, employees who walk or bike to work receive a bonus of \$6.00 a day and those who take the bus or carpool receive half that amount. Employees are guaranteed a ride if an emergency requires their presence away from the office.

Neighbors unite! In the Agent of Change course, **Sonja** was empowered to push for more sustainable practices in her Cascadia co-housing community. After a brainstorming session at a homeowners’ meeting, she wrote a series of 32 proposals and distributed them as a survey form to the 26 households. Because so many of the proposals received positive votes, Sonja identified champions to move them along.

Two examples illustrate progress. First, Sonja’s community moved quickly to purchase a bike trailer, which can be used for errands. A bike expert in the community helped develop a map of local bike routes, and several former non-bikers are now using it. Sec-





Converting churchyard to rain garden

ond, the number of vegetable gardens in the community has doubled. In Sonja's yard, edible greens in the front yard and raised beds in the side and back yards serve as a visual reminder that nutritious food can be grown in a small space.

Empowering kids. As a teacher at Everygreen Middle School, **Lily** found no recycling system in place. To put kid-power to work, she formed a green team of students, which grew to 35 by the end of the year. After obtaining recycling bins from Washington County, the green team demonstrated to other students and staff how to sort recyclables. Every Friday the team emptied recycling bins from classrooms, pulled out plastics that the hauler would not take, and placed other materials in the recycling dumpster. Lily transported the non-curbside plastics to a depot. During locker clean-out day, the team sorted through discards to salvage recyclables and reusables. Lined paper pads, pencils, and binders were donated to teachers for use in the fall.

Meanwhile, at Skyline Elementary School, **Jill** and her green team were busy salvaging food waste from the cafeteria. As a result of their outreach to nearby farmers, Skyline has provided feed for some very happy hogs, sheep, and chickens.

Recruiting volunteers. To introduce change in his church, **John** proposed a rain garden – a technique for capturing rain and letting it gradually infiltrate into the soil. Church members responded enthusiastically, and John had no trouble recruiting volunteers. In a series of Saturday work parties, church members and community volunteers began disconnecting downspouts, building a bioswale with river rock channels, replacing existing concrete with pervious concrete blocks, and correcting a flooding problem in the basement. Over 50 families supported the project by buying personalized concrete blocks for the patio.

Specialized Programs Promote Change

Assessing Your Ecological Footprint. Enrollment in this advanced training has now totaled about 120. Participants take the Ecological Footprint quiz online and learn from local experts how to reduce their personal footprint in the areas of transportation, food, home energy, consumer goods, toxic chemicals, and water.

Earth Leadership Training. This small-group seminar, completed over a two-month period, is offered to professional groups where the earth leadership potential has not been realized. During the fall of 2008, targeted groups included lawyers and engineers.

Home Eco-Parties. Jeanne Roy developed the Home Eco-Party as a fun way to explore personal lifestyle with a group of friends. Eight trained Center volunteers facilitate these two-hour “parties.”

Presentations. Center presentations, offered to interested groups, include “Toward Zero Waste,” “Dimensions of Sustainability,” and “Commercialization of Childhood.” The Center also transfers know-how through workshops, webinars, and other forums.

Tools for the change agent. Agents of change need information to be effective in their work. To satisfy that need, the Center creates packages on information, in hard copy and electronic format, including the following:

- *Ten Stresses on the Planet*, a primer on global warming, oceans, fresh water, topsoil, air pollution, biodiversity, invasive species, land conversion, toxic chemicals, and the ozone hole. A second primer, *Energy and Carbon*, will be published in 2009.
- **Six law office sustainability tools** for the office that seeks to adopt more sustainable practices. These tools, recognized nationally as the most advanced available, can be downloaded from the Center Web site.
- *Eco-Tips*, with a new one published each month, for use by organizations in their internal communications to members and employees. Topics have included energy audits, standby power, bottled water, and plastic bags.
- **Manual on organizing for local change** that serves as a resource for all Center programs. When published, it should be a useful resource guide for all Center participants.

Center Projects

Center projects develop earth leadership within targeted disciplines and professions.



OREGON LAWYERS
FOR A
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Oregon Lawyers for a Sustainable Future (OLSF).

To foster leadership within the legal profession, the Center formed OLSF with task force groups focused on five initiatives: (1) educate lawyers about sustainability and ecological principles; (2) promote sustainable office practices with the aid of six OLSF tools, including a model sustainable law office policy and a checklist for sustainable practices; (3) draft Oregon laws and regulations to promote sustainability; (4) conduct a statewide study on the interface between the practice of law and sustainability; and (5) create the *Sustainable Lawyer Handbook*.

The OLSF tools have prompted Portland law firms to adopt new practices, like issuing universal bus passes to all personnel, eliminating bottled water and

disposables such as paper cups, and installing compost systems to handle food waste. And impact of the tools has been felt outside of Oregon. Both the Massachusetts and California bar associations have developed eco-pledges for law firms that were inspired by OLSF.

Psychology for a Sustainable Future (PSF). The Center created PSF to deepen the nexus between mental health, consumer culture, and the ecological crisis. As a first step, the Center sponsored a kick-off conference in 2007 at Lewis & Clark College, "Psychology-Ecology-Sustainability," which spawned several ongoing initiatives. One Center team of mental health professionals developed a timely PowerPoint presentation, "The Commercialization of Childhood: Understanding the Impact and Softening the Blow," for groups of parents and interested adults. Another team of professionals is planning a second major conference for June 2009.

Engineers for a Sustainable Future. Inspired by OLSF, a group of engineers asked the Center to provide guidance in the formation of a comparable organization of engineers. As a first step, 12 engineers are enrolled in the Center's Earth Leadership Seminar.

Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper

2008 Annual Report

www.earthleaders.org
info@earthleaders.org
(503) 227-2315
Portland, OR 97204
Suite 400
319 SW Washington



Nonprofit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Portland, OR
Permit # 1421