

RCDS Going Green

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Issue 2.1, Fall 2009

Fall Events

- Oct. 7th – 9th 8th Grade Community Service Cleanups at Rye Nature Center and Edith Read Sanctuary
- Oct. 9th AP Environmental Science Field Trip to Stone Barns
- Oct. 16th – 17th Westchester Household Recycling Days @ Croton Point Park
- Oct. 17th New Canaan Hazardous Waste Disposal Day @ 394 Main Street
- Nov. 16th Auxiliary Hike @ the Mianus River Gorge

The Lower School Courtyard Garden

The Lower School is getting its very own courtyard garden! At the end of November, during times when school is not in session, Teich Garden Systems will install planting beds in the existing Lower School Courtyard area. These planting beds will be made completely of Douglass Fir.

In early March, the Lower School, with help from the experts at Teich Garden Systems, will begin planting in preparation for the spring. Teich Garden Systems will provide the Lower School with the plants necessary for the planting.

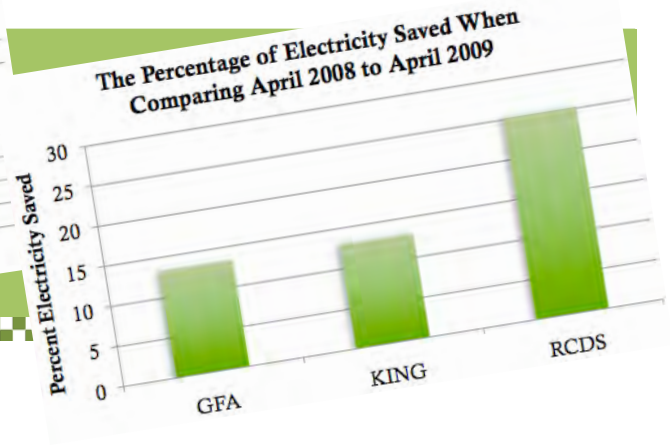
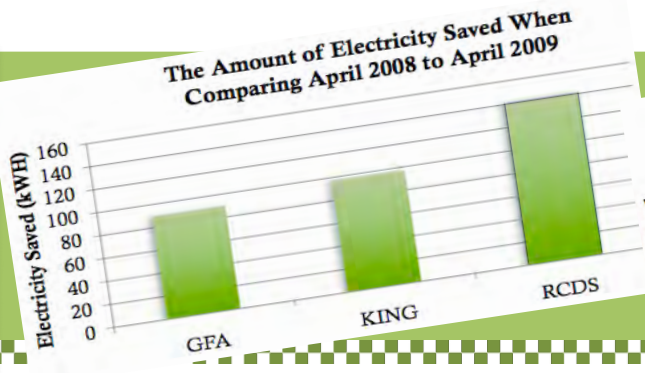
Each Lower School grade level will be responsible for equal sections of the garden.

The Lower School teachers have been hard at work to integrate the LS garden across the curriculum.



Remember to unplug!

Macbooks use a power adapter that indicates your laptop's charging status. When the light turns green, your laptop is fully charged. It is important to unplug the charger at this time, not only to save energy, but also to improve the life of your laptop's battery.



Rye Country Day Wins Green Cup Challenge!

Contributing author: Alex Friedman

In friendly competition with GFA and King, RCDS participated in the Green Cup Challenge for the second year in a row throughout the month of April. The challenge, which originated at boarding schools such as Exeter and Lawrenceville, has spread throughout many schools in the Northeast and has helped these schools lower their energy bills.

There are many goals of the Green Cup Challenge, but the primary goal is to emphasize the

importance of conserving resources and reducing electricity use on campus. Ways this can be accomplished include turning off the lights in unused classrooms, unplugging chargers when devices are fully charged or not in use, opening the window shades to let more ambient light in, and remembering to turn off and unplug unused electronics at the end of the day.

For the month of April, each of the schools measured their

electricity usage in kilowatt-hours. These numbers were then compared to those of the previous year's use. Finally, the total reduction and percent reduction were calculated. The graphs above display the data provided below, which compares electricity usage reduction from April 2008 and April 2009.

The data shows that while GFA and King were neck and neck in reducing their energy use by approximately 13%, RCDS reduced

RCDS reduced its energy use by almost double!

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Congratulations go out to all schools for their efforts, and we look forward to the challenge again this year!

Thanks go out to all those involved who provided gentle reminders to everyone. In particular, we would like to thank the Lower School student

advocates, the members of the Middle School Green Team, and the Upper School Environmental Club. We could not have had the same success without them!

| School | Total Energy Reduction (kWh) | Energy Reduction (%) |
|--------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| RCDS | 33,516 | 24.99 |
| GFA | 13,680 | 13.10 |
| King | 15,677 | 12.83 |



The Veggie Garden at 11 Grandview

Contributing Author: Brian Glazewski

In a growing effort to contribute to the “green movement,” the RCDS community planted their very own vegetable garden! During the annual senior June term, a small group of graduating RCDS students began to build an all-organic garden right across from the Pinkham Building.

The RCDS organic garden had a diverse selection of delicious veggies, ranging from pumpkins to oregano, and almost everything in-between! The dimensions of the garden were 16 x 16 feet with four raised beds whose dimensions are each 4 x 4 feet. Because RCDS is going organic, we used all-natural fertilizers that have absolutely no harmful effects on the environment. Also, the town of Rye was kind enough to donate BP soil to be used as topsoil for the garden. The vegetable garden was protected by underground chicken wire so unfriendly visitors could not get in. There was also high fencing put in so that deer and other larger animals would be kept out.



When asked about their labor, the garden crew said it was tough work, but they all knew it would pay off in the end. They were excited and enthused about this new and exciting project that took place on RCDS grounds. The veggie garden is not only great for the environment, but also a lot of fun. We hope to plant again at the end of this school year!





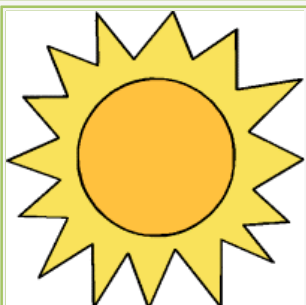
Quick Tips for Parents

1. Reduce wattage by switching to CFL bulbs.
2. Have your home air sealed.
3. Purchase a programmable thermostat.
4. Provide annual maintenance for your larger appliances.



Quick Tips for Kids

1. Turn off lights!
2. Don't use electronic devices excessively.
3. Use reusable water bottles.
4. Recycle!



Judith Martin: Environmental Expert

Contributing Author: Rachel Blumer

Environmental Expert, Judith Martin created a green home business called Green Home Consulting and came to speak at RCDS multiple times. She is part of the RCDS Environmental Committee and works with many homeowners to make their homes environmentally friendly.

RB: What kinds of challenges have you faced with trying to get people to “go green”?

JM: One of the biggest challenges is that people don't really understand what it means to go “green,” and they need to be educated as to what the most effective steps are that they could take. In addition, people think it's going to be very expensive for them to go “green,” so they tend not to want to do it. Third, people think that it means that they are going to have to use a very contemporary style of home or something like that. They don't think that they're going to be able to have the style that they want to have because they are going “green,” and that's not true either. They can go green in any style. I think that those are the biggest challenges.

RB: What are a few easy tips you can give people who are trying to be “greener”?

JM: I would say in terms of things that are easy to do that are relatively low cost, use programmable thermostats, and have your home air sealed, which is to have someone professionally go through your home and close off the places where it is leaking the most air. Some other things people can do would be to reduce wattages and to annually maintain your equipment.

RB: What are some things that kids can do?

JM: Well, number one would be to encourage their parents to incorporate green techniques, like getting programmable thermostats. Turning out the lights is important. Always use reusable water bottles, recycle, that kind of thing.

RB: How cost effective is being “green”? Is it expensive?

JM: Most steps that we recommend for people to be “green” are extremely cost effective because there is usually a tremendous savings in operating cost to be gained from incorporating a green feature. For instance, if you incorporate high performance insulation into your home, that would usually pay for itself within two or three years, and after that, you would just have savings. Some things are more expensive than others, but generally we recommend to clients that they don't take on things that have more than a ten or twelve year payback period. Even the more expensive things to do, like putting in solar heat panels, are generally expected to pay back within ten or twelve years.

RB: What are some money-saving tips for going “green”?

JM: The most important one that people can do is to put in high performance insulation. Some other good things to do are including *passive* solar and daylighting designs and reducing solar gain and wind impact.

RB: What are some “green” things to look for when buying a house?

JM: Look for high performance insulation, particularly in the attic and in the basement. Other green things that you could look for would be EnergyStar appliances, tankless hot water heaters, and the use of environmentally friendly finishing products, like what are called low VOC paints, which are paints that have low volatile organic compounds.

(Continued on page 6...)



AP Environmental Science Students Visit Stone Barns

On a rainy October 9, fifty-four AP Environmental Science students and three teachers visited Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture, an 80-acre farm working sustainable farm dedicated to community-based farming in Pocantico Hills, NY.

The students were given the opportunity to learn about sustainable agriculture firsthand and build connections between the farm and the table by participating in a two-hour farm tour. During the tour, guides discussed the use of green houses, composting, animal husbandry of pigs, turkeys, sheep, chickens for meat and egg laying hens, while giving students the opportunity to get involved by harvesting sweet potatoes. Students were then asked to write a reflection about the trip. Here are some of their reflections.

What I found most striking was how carefully the entire system was set up; from the sheep chosen for often producing twin instead of single offspring to the greenhouse with a computer system automatically controlling the interior climate to the highly efficient recycling of waste into compost, Stone Barns demonstrates that it is possible to sustain a mutualistic relationship with our environment. Stone Barns is the ideal model of sustainability.

-Hadley Chu

There were many things at Stone Barns that I found interesting. I thought the pigs were really cool. I never knew that pigs could be up to 600 pounds and I thought it was really impressive how much research they did on pigs before breeding them. I really liked how humanely the animals at Stone Barns were treated; even though the purpose of a farm is to harvest food, the farm has come up with a great system to let the animals live a real life. I thought the trip was great because I never would have known about a place like Stone Barns before. I would definitely love to go back and eat at the restaurant. It was really hands on and interactive. It was a nice change in pace from a regular school day.

- Laura Canning

I found the way Stone Barns raised their livestock really interesting. It was interesting how they raised them to suit what their natural environments would most likely resemble. I thought the trip was a lot of fun, and it was really interesting to see a farm so close to us that produced so many varieties of crops and livestock. Too bad it rained...

-Brenton Howland

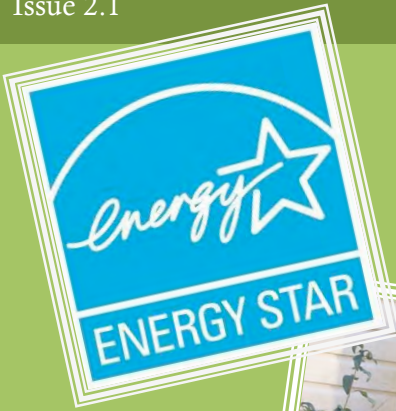


Most interesting was without a doubt just how a farm works and what needs to happen for consumers to get their food.

-Jason Rogers

I really appreciated how they didn't gloss over some of the "dirty work" the farm does. In the sense of, if you want to eat chicken, you have to kill a chicken. I think too often we just go to the store and buy chicken with out a second thought as to where it comes from, how it was raised, killed, etc. I was also impressed by the passion most of the employees had for what they were doing. It was clearly more than a job to them.

- Jeff Bates



RB: How are you helping RCDS be “greener”?

JM: I have been a participant on the Environmental Committee and have given a speech to parents and a tour of a home for parents to show them how to make their homes “greener”. I have advised the building committee that is working on the new addition to the Pinkham Building on the “green” elements of that project, and I’m working on the possibility of installing solar panels for the school.

RB: What things did you focus on when you went to speak at RCDS?

JM: I focused on things that people could do even if they weren’t going to do any work on their homes that are very cost effective, such as the high performance installation and the air sealing and high performance lighting such as LED lighting or CFLs. I also encourage people to think about incorporating “green” features when they are doing a major renovation project or building a new home.

What will be in future issues of RCDS Going Green?

- ❖ Sustainable Community Service Endeavors
- ❖ Local invasive species in your backyard
- ❖ An update on the progress of the Lower School Courtyard Garden
- ❖ Great reads that focus around environmental and sustainable practices. All books are located in the Klingenstein Library and available for you to borrow. Stop by and check them out! Reviews to follow...