

Going green

■ *A new eco-friendly program teaches Grand View students about conservation*

by Julie Sharp

For some in Manhattan Beach, "going green" is not just for leprechauns or St. Patrick's Day. It is an effort to involve the community, businesses and children to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Recycling bin additions, walking more instead of driving, using less electricity and buying less packaged food are all ingredients in the citywide, community earth-friendly recipe.

Grand View Elementary this school year adopted "Planet Pals," spurring con-

servation among the youngsters with Walk to School Wednesdays, trash-free lunches on Tuesdays, and campus recycling and compost bins.

The city of Manhattan Beach last year joined the U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection agreement to reduce global warming pollution with "Cool Cities" status: exploring reduced energy production and carbon emissions. The city has also added recycling bins along The Strand, the Metlox plaza and downtown.

The Planet Pals program at Grand View is a parent committee, supported by the

principal and school. According to Suzanne Kretschmer, parent and co-chair of the committee, the goal is to raise environmental awareness through education for children and parents.

The message seems to be getting through. Tiffany Sydney, a Grand View fifth-grader, gets it, "You are supposed to treat the earth well, like it is your friend," said Sydney. The Walk to School Wednesdays started last year and on average, 400 students walk to school each Wednesday, according to Kretschmer.

"The Trash-Free Tuesdays encourage kids to bring lunches that don't generate any trash by using reusable containers and water bottles," said Kretschmer. "So far they have reduced the amount of trash Grand View throws away at lunch from 35 large bags to 15 bags a day." She said another benefit in avoiding prepackaged food is healthier food choices.

Apple cores, orange peels and banana peels along with other compostable foods are put in a school compost bin, then used for a school garden.

Other committee goals include the elimination of plastic foam products from cafeteria supplies, reducing school paper, inkjet recycling, purchasing bike racks for the campus and ordering stainless steel water bottles for fund-raising to replace plastic water bottle usage.

One committee member suggested printing and distributing the school newsletter with only a reference to the Web site and title headings in efforts to move toward a paperless school. "Planet Pals is wonderful. It teaches the kids how to cherish and appreciate the world they live in," said Grand View parent Larry Sydney.



Planet Pal volunteers, back row from left: Onnalee MacDonald; Inga Middleton; Rhonda Steinberg, Grand View Elementary principal; Christine Roth and Mary Hayes; front row: Kim Martin, Kathy Binks, Lisa Coppedege, Shaya Kirkpatrick and Suzanne Kretschmer.

(photo courtesy of Suzanne Kretschmer)

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