

Student #1
Period 3
3/25/09

Summary of Project: Goals and Purposes

My Senior Project is to work with the North East Seattle Sustainability group and learn how I as an individual can help the environment by living more sustain ably, and learn how to motivate my friends and peers to take this initiative as well. I will be attending NE Sustainability meetings and learning how I can help them organize events that will attract the youth. I hope to motivate more people my age to come to the meetings.

Student #1

Period 3

3/25/09

Journal Reflection #1

I plan on attending the Northeast Seattle Sustainability meetings as often as I can and working with co-founder Susan Gregory as my mentor. She will help me find ways I can contribute to the group. I plan on finding an event I can help the group put together, and organize youth involvement in the event. Or I hope to create an event myself that is youth oriented and will spread awareness of the group. I am going to go to our school's Earth Service Core meetings and tell them about the group, give them the information, and try to get them to come to the sustainability meetings. My hope is that if we increase the group membership with the youth we can put our heads together and find ways to continue expanding and teaching more and more people about living sustainably. I also plan on going to these meetings and community events so I can learn how I can personally become more sustainable, and do my part to clean up. I plan on helping my family grow our new vegetable garden in our front yard, and learning how to maintain it so someday I can have one of my own. It is important that we start finding new ways to live and get food that is less damaging to the planet.

So far the biggest challenges I face are, being able to attend every meeting, as some of them take place during the school day, and finding a possible event to take part in and help organize. One success is, because my mom is also one of the co-founders of the group I can always find out when there is another meeting or opportunity for participation. I am also very eager to learn how I can be more sustainable as an individual.

Student #1
Period 3
4/13/09

Journal Reflection #2

So far for my project I have gone to numerous North East Seattle Sustainability meetings, worked for many hours on our new vegetable garden in our front yard, and have organized a youth movie night for the sustainability group.

I have missed one or two meetings unfortunately, but I already feel I have learned quite a lot from the ones I have been able to attend. I find that I stop to think now about how what I do will affect the environment, and if my choice is the most sustainable option. Before I go somewhere, I think about looking into other ways of getting there besides driving that would be more efficient, and have less of an impact on the environment. I have greatly decreased how much fast food I eat, as I have learned how much energy and resources fast food production requires. The biggest change I have made is how much less I buy of everything in general. I realized how unnecessary all the stuff we buy is. Now when I am tempted to buy something, I stop to think about if I really actually need it, and if I am really going to use this thing more than once. I used to be very tempted to buy new t-shirts almost every time I had money or went into a store. Then I saw how all those t-shirts I was buying were just piling up in my room after I grew out of them, and I learned how much energy is used to make one cotton t-shirt. Since I began this project I have not bought a single new t-shirt in months. That is one piece of my personal success.

I helped my parents and the sustainability group work party in tearing up my front lawn and beginning the process of putting in a vegetable garden. I tore up the grass, cut

up cardboard to be laid down under the soil and leaves, and spread fertilizers and nutrients to help improve the soil quality. The best part about this was getting the neighbors interested and engaged, which was our goal. We want to motivate others to do the same. Many of our neighbors stopped by, curious to know what we were doing, some even insisted they help. Since we have begun planting the first vegetables, we have had some of our neighbors decide they would like to have a garden as well eventually. A family up the street now wants to buy chickens, so the neighborhood can have fresh eggs that we can all share. This has been inspiring to be a part of, and I hope this continues to spread through the neighborhoods.

I sat down with some members of the Sustainable NE Seattle Group and planned a youth movie night. One of my main goals is to influence my generation to take an interest in this cause, and become more active. There are not enough people my age doing what they can to live more sustainable. The Sustainability Group shows a video every Tuesday regarding various pressing environmental, and economic issues. The public is welcome at these meetings, and the group depends on its members to spread the word by inviting friends and neighbors. The purpose of the movies is to show us ways we can solve these environmental issues, and give everyone a chance to discuss the film when it is over. I am going to promote a youth movie night, and lead a discussion afterwards. I have chosen three short films to show, and plan on talking to one or two of my peers about helping me spread the word and hang flyers for the movie night around school. I am going to film the discussion at the movie night, and use the video for my Exhibition Night presentation.

Student #1
Period 3
4/14/09

Journal Reflection #3

I have picked three videos to show at the video night, and have begun working on the flyers. The flyers are going to say, "What Would Youth Do?" and give a brief description on what is going on that night. The challenge is to make the night sound interesting so people will want to come, while not giving away what we are going to watch. If I give the names of the videos, kids may just go look them up on the Internet and watch them, and not bother to come to the meeting. I have talked to one of my friends who has been coming to the meetings and is an active member in Earth Service Corps. He has agreed to help me hand out flyers and spread the word about the movie night. The three movies I chose are short films about our societies obsession with "stuff", and how we can move away from the mindset of wanting to buy everything. I chose the films based on their length as well as how straight forward and interesting they are. I did not want to show a long, boring, depressing film, as we have seen so many times before in school. Teenagers have short attention spans, and do not like to have facts just thrown at them. I think these three films will produce a very interesting discussion. The Sustainability Group members have been very helpful in this planning process, and they are very excited to get the opportunity to reach the youth. I really hope the night goes well. I will be very disappointed if we do not get a good turn out, so I need to make sure I get the word out soon, and make it sound like a fun event. The whole point of my project is to promote youth involvement and this movie night is a perfect chance to start getting my peers to live more sustain ably.

I have not been able to work in the garden as much as I would like due to the rain, and my busy schedule. I helped plant the grape vine about one week ago, and that was the last time I was able to work out in the garden.

Student #1
Period 3
4/15/09

Journal Reflection #4

Because the youth movie night has not occurred yet, and I have not finished my project, I am going to speculate about how I think the outcome of the project will turn out.

I think there will be a decent amount of students at the movie night/meeting on April 28th. I think the students, and members who come will have a very interesting discussion about the films, especially since they most likely have never seen them before. I think this night will be successful in motivating my peers to begin attending the meetings on a regular basis, especially members of the Earth Service Corp. I am really hoping we get people to come that do not necessarily believe any changes need to be made, or do not know anything about sustainability. There are many students I am hoping to see there, that I know buy more than they need, and drive cars more than they have to, and have not recognized how they are individually affecting the planet. I want them to come so we can show them there actually is something happening, and just how much their “stuff” is piling up. These are the kind of people we need to reach the most, and I believe that these videos will help do that.

At the movie night I am going to have the discussion filmed, as the other coordinators and I ask the group questions, and moderate. I am going to edit the video, and use it in my Exhibition Night presentation.

Even though I have not completed my project yet, I feel a huge sense of personal accomplishment. I have completely changed how I think and live in regards to being

more sustainable. I plan on growing my own vegetable garden someday, so I will not have to buy as much food from the store that consumes so much energy and resources. I have become a supporter of buying locally and growing your own food. I no longer feel I need a car, especially if I am going to be living in the city. There are plenty of ways to get around that do not require driving a car. I have known these things for years, but before I began attending the North East Sustainability Meetings, I had not really practiced those ideas. These meetings influenced me to make a change, and showed me how I can help others do the same. We are not all going to jump on board with this new way of living as willingly as others, but we all must realize how necessary it is. I feel I can do my part to make my community a better place. I am eager to start helping my neighbors and family friends to put in their vegetable gardens soon, and continue to motivate people to take action in their communities.

I learned about the value of citizenship through service in a variety of ways. This project showed me how I could feel more as if I was actually working for something worthwhile in my community. I felt like a better citizen while I was working for the community, or volunteering. This experience made me feel like I had really accomplished something through my service and showed me how we all have a job as citizens, and we all matter. Every volunteer and helping hand is useful, and if we want anything to change we have to work for it, and take action. It is our obligation as citizens of our community, to help out, and this project helped me to feel like I was more of a citizen than ever.

