

# 2014/15 Conservation Champions at Seattle Public Schools



We asked schools to nominate a person or group that was working to foster a culture of conservation at their school. We received many wonderful nominations from schools throughout the District and are excited to share those nominations with you here. We hope you will find them as inspiring as we did!

Conservation Champion Awards are part of a suite of three Utility Conservation Programs: Shared Savings Awards, Green Team Support, and Conservation Champion Awards. Together, these programs aim to encourage and support the work that schools are doing to conserve energy, water, and waste. Conserving energy and water, and reducing solid waste ensures a brighter future for our students. It also results in financial savings that enable a greater investment in our core mission of excellence in education.

More information can be found online at <http://bit.ly/sps-conservation>

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## Alki Elementary School , Terry Kegel

"Terry Kegel is a kindergarten teacher at Alki. He is an inspiration to all bike riders at Alki school. He commutes by bike to Alki school (West Seattle) 3 to 4 days a week rain or shine from the U District. Also he organizes an all school bike to work day for staff, students and families during the annual Bike To Work Week. He has the staff and students meet at 2 different sites about a mile away from school and the 2 groups meet up about a block from school and have a parade to school. There are usually hundreds of bikes making their way to Alki school. Most years the Seattle mayor joins in the fun and he will do so this year. Mr. Kegel also organizes the staff to record the distance they bike to school for the month of May to inspire the students on the importance of exercise and living a healthful life. He is a great role model for all of the Alki staff and families. This is why I am nominating Terry Kegel for the Conservation Champion Award."

*Nominated by Tim Hannah*

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## APP@Lincoln, Ms. Underdahl (5th grade teacher) and students: Ben Bryant, Hammy Curtis, Cadence Cole, Cecilia Lombardi, Maggie Cahill and Amelia Hegstrom

"Our school wanted to put a compost bin in every classroom. However, several teachers were concerned about odor and fruit flies. Ms. Underdahl and her super team of composters came to the rescue! All year long, the students have volunteered as classroom compost collectors, removing compost from each classroom, the staff room, and several offices. They replace the liners in the classroom bins and haul the compost out to the collection bin."

*Nominated by Kimberly Christensen*

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## Ballard High School MEDF, Ms. Maggie Meister and her students, especially Noor Al-Dhaher and Dreshawn McGrew

"The students at the Ballard High School Medically Fragile program have shown great responsibility in making sure that their food waste is getting composted. They take the compost from their meals (which are served in the classroom) and bring it out to the compost bins. Noor Al-Dhaher is completing his last year in the transition program. He loves to hear about "garbage" and he loves to take out the "garbage". He takes the compost bin out on his lap in the wheelchair. Dreshawn McGrew, who is also completing the transition program this year, often carries the small bin out to the large container. He is working on pre-vocational skills and is doing a great job!"

*Nominated by Kimberly Christensen*

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## Daniel Bagley Elementary School, John Moore

"John has taken on the very important task of being the lead of our school's green team. He was the lead in getting compost for our building which has drastically reduced our garbage. He has trained students to support the other students in the lunchroom in their composting and recycling efforts. John also trained every classroom around composting and recycling. Every classroom at Daniel Bagley has a small compost pail that is emptied daily. John has done numerous assemblies for the students on ways to reduce trash in their lunches. John has also organized work groups to design and create natural gardens on the school grounds. John and the green team built birdhouses and hung them around the building on our trees."

*Nominated by Erika Ayer*



## Franklin High School, Earth Corps

"Earth Corp Club members do good work collecting compostable organic matter in the Commons(Lunchroom) on a weekly basis. They are actually raising the awareness of the students concerning recycling. Their club sponsor Ms. Babayan is also a Champion regarding conserving the earth's resources. She reminds staff through encouraging messages that conserving the earth's resources is something we can and should do."

*Nominated by Patricia Newton*

## Greenwood Elementary School, Jessyca Poole and Stephanie Magill



"Four years ago, Jessyca and Stephanie devised a plan to create Greenwood Elementary's first school garden. They worked with Gretchen DeDecker at SPS, local businesses, the school community, Greenwood's PTA and surrounding neighbors. With a Small Neighborhood Projects Grant and some money from the PTA's surplus from fundraising events, their dream for our elementary school garden became a reality. Today, many of the classrooms use the garden as an outdoor classroom. Parents have worked

with teachers and students to create art work from the garden, some of it featured in our Spring Auction, an after school garden club was created to further instruct students on gardening and composting, and the fruits of their labor can even be found in our own cafeteria, while surplus is donated to the Greenwood Food Bank. They've built a stronger school and neighborhood community with

their outreach, garden club and garden work groups, not to mention beautifying the front entrance of our school grounds with the beds, stunning entrance gate and shed. Digging in and getting their hands dirty, so to speak, paid off for so many!"

*Nominated by Deb Fitzpatrick*



## Hamilton International Middle School, Mike Tillman, Custodial Engineer

"This is Mike's first full school year as custodian at Hamilton International Middle School, and he is the perfect example of a Conservation Champion. He has modified the lunchtime recycling line to be efficient and easy for monitoring: one location in the lunchroom, which is also used for special events where food is served. His friendly chat with students and staff reinforces good recycling practices. The school recently took delivery of a food waste dumpster that he requested, which replaces the rolling carts that could not keep up with the daily volume of compostable lunch trays (even though they were neatly stacked, per Mike's direction.) Mike has established procedures and expectations for HIMS custodial staff so that recycling and food waste are properly disposed of during all work shifts.

Mike is always happy to help support any Green Team activity, whether with gardening tools, watering hoses, and everything to make HIMS special events as "green" as possible. Mike is a gem and we are so lucky to have his energy and knowledge at HIMS."

*Nominated by Barbara Burrill, parent co-coordinator of Green Team*

## Hazel Wolf K-8, Hazel Wolf K-8 "Plant for the Planet" Chapter



"There are about a dozen students at HWK8 who have been active since Autumn 2013 promoting conservation and awareness of climate change as well as planting trees locally (and raising \$ to plant trees in developing

countries) to counteract the effects of climate change.

Activities in which these students have participated:

- Presentations to all 3rd and 4th grade classrooms in 2013-14
- Earth Day Assembly presentation in April 2014 to entire HWK8 community (6 third graders)
- Participated in Seattle Climate Change March at Westlake Center in September 2014
- Visited with State Legislatures on Lobby Day in Olympia in February 2015
- Planted over 150 trees in the Seattle area
- Raised almost \$400 to purchase trees in developing countries
- At least 4 of the students became trainers and have helped run ambassador trainings for other kids in the Seattle area

More information about Plant for the Planet Seattle:

<http://climatechange4families.com/plant-for-the-planet-academy/>

*Nominated by Lin Murdock*



### John Rogers Elementary School, Judy Baum

"In the six years I have known Judy she has always worked to reduce our environmental footprint at John Rogers Elementary. When our first Green Team was formed Judy was a voice and a willing pair of hands to assist. Four years later she continues to spend her own time on the lunch hour advising the children in sorting their lunch leftovers into recycling, compost and garbage. She enables our upcycling collection of Juice pouches and continues to find ways to motivate us to do more each year. Perhaps the best recommendation of all is that the children at school think all that she does is cool!"

*Nominated by Colleen Weinstein (John Rogers Parent Volunteer)*

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### Laurelhurst Elementary School, Frankie Thompson, Bailey Poort, Lux Sidavi, and Savannah Newell (students)

"This year we were receiving complaints from teachers that having kids out of class for an hour and a half to help with compost wasn't acceptable, so we decided to try something new. We just set the bins out unattended until the very end of lunch, which is when the kindergarteners were finishing up anyway (the only group who truly needs help), and then just having students finish up the K group and then take out the compost. That cut the kid commitment from 90 minutes down to 15 minutes. Unbeknownst to me, these four girls took it upon themselves to sit by the bins every day and help without even being asked, making all the bins perfectly organized. They did a magnificent job. Most of the time they stayed and dumped it, but sometimes they needed to go back to class near the end, so I just needed to send a few kids down just to dump the cans. Frankie, Bailey, Lux and Savannah are true conservation champions at Laurelhurst."

*Nominated by Pat Howard*

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### Laurelhurst Elementary School, Pat Howard

"Pat has been a true champion of conservation, including starting a green team for Laurelhurst Elementary."

*Nominated by Ed Roos*

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### Lincoln Building, Keith Leifsen and Frank Dang, Custodians

"Keith and Frank have been working tirelessly to help all of the programs in our building implement more effective recycling and composting, and overall to reduce waste. They work cheerfully with our Green Team, especially around our lunchroom program. They also help our Green Team identify areas where students, parents, teachers and custodial staff could work together in order to reduce waste. They suggested a more structured locker cleanout system which allowed us to divert many items from the landfill. They also helped us identify class parties as a place where too much waste was being generated. We appreciate their institutional knowledge, their support of student programs, and their willingness to help us problem-solve."

*Nominated by Kimberly Christensen*

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### McDonald International Elementary School, Ms. Elizabeth Fleck

"Ms. Fleck has extended her reach as McDonald International's PE teacher by partnering with the Cascade Bicycle Club and leading a bicycle safety unit at McDonald with bicycles and helmets on loan from the CBC. She also reached out to the parent community and



recruited parent volunteers to help with the class lessons out on the playground. The students had a great time and learned about signaling for stopping, making turns, passing safely and more. Elizabeth Fleck is a champion in encouraging the leaders of tomorrow to make transportation choices that are safe for both the planet and its commuters.”

*Nominated by Greg Hughes*

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### McDonald International Elementary School, Joanne Querin-Sorenson



“Joanne continues to be an environmental steward and inspiration to everyone who passes through the cafeteria at McDonald International. Her goal is for everyone (staff, students, and visitors of all ages) to strive for 100% proper placement of waste in our cafeteria. Even though it's not in her contract, she creates teaching moments regarding proper waste sorting by making announcements at all four lunches and includes samples and demonstrations. She has voluntarily taken on sorting the breakfast waste, so that students aren't late for class. Every day, she places the trays we use for sorting at each table and washes the composting tools. She is proactive about finding solutions to improve our green team procedures while keeping things safe and clean for all students. We will miss her dearly when she reduces her hours next year.”

*Nominated by Tarah Helliwell*

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### McDonald International Elementary School, Tarah Helliwell

“Tarah goes above and beyond ensuring the proper things get composted. She is at school most days with her 3 year old in tow helping at lunch. She isn't just a silent volunteer either. The included photo was emailed home with a note encouraging us parents to talk to our kids about waste. She also created an easy sign up genius to encourage other parents to come in and volunteer at lunch. However, it is not just in her time at school that she endeavors to conserve. She is also a member of her local Buy Nothing group, a ground designed to share and re-gift items. She composts at home, and at potlucks and parties will provide reusable plates instead of throw away plates. When her kids were in diapers she used cloth diapers to avoid the extra waste of disposables. She really believes in conservation and helping our environment.”

*Nominated by Elizabeth Oestreich*

“In addition to volunteering in the lunchroom at least once and sometimes two or more lunches per week, Tarah Helliwell organizes the parent volunteers and makes sure the regulations for sorting compost, recycling and landfill are followed according to the City of Seattle guidelines.”

*Nominated by Misa Heater*

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### Nathan Hale High School, Ted Lockery

“Ted always sends out notices to remind people right before a school break on what to turn off and how to save energy.”

*Nominated by Jill Hudson, Principal*

### South Shore PreK-8 School, Ms. Laura Tyler

"Ms. Tyler is a champion for our school and broader community. Each week she takes our sixth graders on a walking field trip to the Urban Farm in southeast Seattle. The field trips bridge the classroom learning in her science lab to the nearby community and environment. The learning isn't isolated to the content at the Urban Farm - Ms. Tyler encourages and nurtures conservation and preservation behavior along the way - making sure that students are noticing and responding to garbage and its impact on our environment. The students show tremendous pride for being a "solution" in our community -- especially with our adjacent proximity to Lake Washington. The students also work around campus to encourage recycling, reusing and reducing with their primary school "buddies". Finally, Ms. Tyler is a champion among our staff, making sure that we are modeling our own belief on conservation - encouraging compostable materials at staff and family events, and ensuring that we are mindful of our waste and impact. Ms. Tyler is Conservation Champion at South Shore PreK-8!"

*Nominated by Laurie Morrison, Principal*

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### Stevens Elementary School, Mr. Eric Peters

"Mr. Peters has been the leader of the composting teams at Stevens. He has organized teachers and students to create a consistent system. He has hosted trainings. He even created a sorting PE game where kids run and sort the items. Mr. Peters along with Mr. Beard are bicycle advocates. They help families who are trying to create programs at Stevens. They are a resource for parents trying to promote green activities at Stevens. Mr. Peters helped arrange the waste audit and then continued to organize the composting teams. Stevens Elementary created a video from their waste audit, showing what an audit looks like and how the students are involved. You can view it at <https://vimeo.com/111475068>."

*Nominated by Michelle Mansfield*



### Washington Middle School, Penelope West and the Washington Middle School Garden Committee

"Penelope and the Garden Committee have worked all year to prepare and plan for the installation of a new learning garden. They have worked closely with staff and several community organizations to fund the initial building of the physical garden space and also develop curriculum components both for in school and after school programming. They were selected to participate in a Schools Out Washington STEM pilot program to look at best practices in youth STEM enrichment and education.

We have also done several exterior garden projects over the past year including a complete refurbishment of the interior courtyard area - including outdoor classroom seating spaces, adding potted container to portable entrances and creating tree rings around the grounds."

*Nominated by Cassandra Johnston*

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## Washington Middle School, Susan Huntley

"Susan is our volunteer coordinator for the school, yet she has taken on the task of overseeing the daily composting for the past 2+ years. Not only does she try and get students recruited to help during breakfast and lunch, more often than not, she is monitoring and doing the task herself. Susan is dedicated to making the composting program work, with little to no support and help from staff or administration. Honestly, if Susan did not do this, the whole composting program here wouldn't happen."

*Nominated by Theresa Grimm, Custodial Engineer*

"Susan is passionate about recycling and has been a steady and fervent cheerleader, educating us all."

*Nominated by Susan Follmer*

## Wedgwood Elementary School, Jenny Demitruk

"If the Wedgwood school/community could think of one exceptional, devoted parent that makes our school's conservation her top priority it would be Jenny Demitruk.

She is a conservation champion in so many ways:

1. She created detailed signs for each can in our school's lunchroom with objects attached to the signs so it's clear on what goes where. She make sure that these are posted in the cans so they are visible for students.
2. Since our janitors are not required to compost she has gathered volunteers to help students compost every day.
3. She is writing grants for funds to buy compost bins for each classroom and working with teachers to assign jobs for students to help compost every day.
4. Every school dance or event Jenny is there making sure the bins are out and labeled for students.
5. She is organizing a green team for our school.
6. At our school's auction and other school-wide events she makes sure all the items used were compostable.

Her energy and commitment has influenced so many parents at our school to step up and be aware of our school's needs to conserve."

*Nominated by Heather Pruehs*

