

*“Give a little bit.”* – Supertramp

At Conard High School (CHS) we, the environmental activists, truly embody the spirit of this 70’s rock tune. We believe that if each person *gives just a little bit*, we can achieve the impossible together. Like the “great philosophers” of Supertramp, we believe that if we all show the environment a little bit of love, it will give a little bit of its love back to us.

Therefore, our “Green Team” strives tirelessly to make Conard a more ecologically friendly school every day. We do this mostly by raising awareness and concern for the environment in our hallways and classrooms. But we also challenge ourselves with projects throughout the year to change Conard’s *modus operandi* to make us a more eco-friendly school. We have already made many changes to CHS, but we hope to participate in even more projects with the aid of the “Live Green-Win Green” Grant.

The Conard Green Team works week after week to do whatever we can to raise environmental awareness. Throughout the years, we have put up countless posters and announcements reminding everyone to turn off lights, power down computers, and recycle (e.g., using the back side of waste paper). For example, one of our posters included a parody of America the Beautiful from the comedian George Carlin. “Oh Beautiful for smoggy skies, insecticided grain. For strip-mined mountain's majesty above the asphalt plain! America, America, man sheds his waste on thee, and hides the pines with billboard signs, from sea to oily sea.” We believe that by giving a little time to create some catchy posters, hopefully our classmates will stop and think about how small personal decisions can greatly affect the environment and help save money.

In addition to school advertising, we are also active members of the recycling community in West Hartford. It is a practice of ours to help the custodial staff empty and re-sort recycling bins after school. We do feel responsible to maintain this practice given the efforts of our Green Team predecessors who started a school wide recycling effort only three years ago. This plan includes collecting and sorting all office paper, plastic and glass bottles, and aluminum cans generated within the school. This effort not only cuts down on the amount of solid waste generated within in the school but also saves the district valuable dollars that would have to be spent on waste management. In addition to that, many of us have volunteered our personal time to assist in the collecting and recycling of household hazardous waste items.

Last year, one of our premier projects was to reduce Conard's carbon footprint via electrical savings. We participated in a district wide challenge to see which school could reduce their electricity bill the most. Conard alone was able to save a total of \$28,000, a 10% reduction of kilowatt hours. Our initiative was to promote energy saving habits that the students, faculty, and staff could use both at school and home. This year we are striving for an additional 5 percent decrease. We are happy to report that all our schools in the district saved a combined total of \$131,000! That's what happens when you "give a little bit".

One of the current goals that we hope to achieve with this contest is to save even more energy by installing motion sensors throughout the school. We believe that this small, but vital step is another way that we can effect cultural change at the building level by seeing lights turned off. Now many hallway lights are on during class time and illuminate the hallways for no reason. In addition, afterschool when the hallways are

nearly deserted, we notice that the hundreds of bulbs are in use, using energy and wasting money.

An additional goal is to cut back on wasted water in the student bathrooms. Presently, we have many high flow faucets that are outdated and leak. A simple swap to low flow faucets is a proactive way to save water. Moreover, paper towels are a HUGE waste of resources. If replaced, the environmental toll (i.e., deforestation and bleaching chemicals) that surrounds paper production would be eliminated. One might think we are considering conventional hand dryers however our research has shown that they are not very effective or efficient either. We suggest a switch to something similar to the *Dyson Airblade*®. This device not only eliminates the need for paper towels, but it is a technological bargain given its energy efficiency (1,400 vs. 2,400 watts) and antimicrobial properties.

One of our most exciting projects, currently in the early stages of planning, is the design and construction of a prototype building that will demonstrate and educate the public about renewable energy. This structure can serve as a modular home that will be heated with a geo-thermal radiator system and then be powered by photovoltaic solar panels and a wind turbine. This green structure, which will be located on our campus, can then be included in the curriculum of the technology, math, and science departments. This building will give students, faculty and local citizens the opportunity to explore renewable energy in action, while enhancing our curriculum about the technology, environmental benefits and cost savings of investing in this technology. Although this is a large and expensive project to tackle we feel that sharing a percentage of this grant

would help get this project rolling and have a tremendous impact throughout the community.

Succinctly, our plans are well-defined and shovel-ready. With the help of the Live Green--Win Green Grant, the Conard Green Team would be able to achieve its goals. By installing eco-friendly water faucets and high-tech hand dryers students would see we are serious about conservation. Light sensors would turn off unnecessary lights and save electricity which translates into future savings to fund other needed projects, such as our green energy building.