



8/30/2016

A Sustainability Education Program:

For the preservation of life on Earth



Developed by Jody Holmes

AND THE CONNECTING COMMUNITIES ASSOCIATION

WWW.CONNECT-COMMUNITIES.ORG

778-638-0151

INFO@CONNECT-COMMUNITIES.ORG



Table of Contents

Sustainability Education Program Overview.....	2-3
Core Learning Objectives.....	3-4
Mental Clarity	3
Appreciation for Life	3
Self-respect	3
Pursuit of Sustainable Happiness.....	3
Eternal Motivation	3-4
Community Responsibility	4
Environmental Stewardship.....	4
Presentation descriptions.....	4-8
Electricity Generation and Conservation.....	4
Sustainable Agriculture.....	5
Greenhouses and Gardens.....	5
Introduction to Biodiversity	5
Ecological Principles.....	5
Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services.....	6
The Importance of Nature	6
Sustainable Living.....	6-7
Industrial Ecology.....	7
Introduction to Spirituality and Enlightenment.....	7
Industrialization	7-8
Peak Oil.....	8
Tiny Houses	8
Letters of support.....	9

Error! Bookmark not defined.



Sustainability Education Program Overview

The Sustainability Education Program (SEP) is the primary education and outreach tool of the Connecting Communities Association (CCA). The CCA has been developed to increase awareness about environmental issues and educate youth and the public about the importance of sustainable development. The program covers a wide variety of topics that will help students gain a clear understanding of why the environment is so important for the human species. Students will gain a genuine appreciation for the natural world which supports all the living organisms on planet Earth. Once the students learn to respect and appreciate nature they will be inspired to preserve the natural systems that enable life to exist. The program is designed to teach students how they can contribute to creating a sustainable future, and empowers them to do so by showing them examples of sustainable development initiatives that are happening in their community.

The Sustainability Education Program is being developed by Jody Holmes, the Founder and President of the Connecting Communities Association, and reviewed by the other members of the CCA. Presentations will be delivered by Jody Holmes and assisted by other volunteers when possible. Jody Holmes has a university education in environmental studies as well as significant work experience in the fields of environmental restoration and environmental education. Jody's broad knowledge base regarding environmental issues and his passion for sustainability enables him to explain environmental issues with clarity and enthusiasm. Jody is eager to educate younger generations about the importance of sustainability and to inspire them to become stewards of our precious planet.

The CCA is excited to be developing a Sustainability Education Program during a time when a new curriculum is being implemented into the BC public school system. The CCA is very happy to see that the new curriculum has incorporated some aspects that are focused on sustainability and we believe that our Sustainability Education Program aligns very well with the goals outlined by the BC Ministry of Education. The SEP is well suited to improve the scientific literacy of students by presenting to them the beauty and importance of the natural world, by inspiring them to continuously learn about local and global environmental issues, and by encouraging them to question things they are unsure of. The SEP will increase student's understanding of science and technology, it will improve their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and it will help them understand how science and technology influences social and environmental systems.

The CCA is eager to work with teachers and students in Northern BC to ensure that sustainable development is a priority for our province from now on. We feel our SEP will provide teachers with high quality presentations that will support them in their essential work to educate their students about the importance of sustainability. We believe that sustainability education is essential to inspire younger generations to become environmental stewards. And we are proud to offer a supporting role in the education of youth who will become the next generation that



will continue working on the critical task of building a green economy in BC and the rest of Canada.

The presentations offered will be educational and interactive. Generally, the presentations will be suitable for a 45-minute period, but they can be tailored to fit into any time slot. We believe it is important to keep students interested and engaged in every presentation so we will be incorporating activities into every session. If there are any questions regarding our program or specific presentations, we are happy to answer them over the phone or by email.

Core Learning Objectives

Mental clarity – It is essential to have a clear mind in order to reach your full potential. Anything that distracts you or clouds your conscience will hinder your abilities to achieve your goals. It is important to understand what is happening in the world and in your local environment in order to make well-informed and ethical choices in your life. It is necessary to eliminate the negative thoughts that distract you and focus on the present moment. Being ultra aware of the present moment will allow you learn at maximum efficiency and contribute to the best of your ability to everything you set your mind to.

Appreciation of Life – It is essential to understand that life itself is worth living for. We all must appreciate the basic necessities of life, which are air, water, and food. We should put our best efforts towards maintaining clean air and water, and nutritious food so we can have healthy lives. We must realize that many people consider the necessities mentioned above as luxuries because many people in the world do not have access to clean water and air, and nutritious food. If we can start to appreciate the necessities and give them the respect they deserve, then material things become less important.

Self-respect – It is essential to have self-respect. If you care about yourself and understand that you need to take care of yourself, you will be better prepared to take care of others and the natural world. The only person that needs to accept who you are is yourself. If you live your life to gain acceptance from, or please others, you are not being true to who you are, or who you want to be.

Pursuit of Sustainable Happiness – It is essential for everyone to pursue enjoyable lives. But it is also necessary for everyone to understand the impacts that their lives have on other people and the natural world. It is important for everyone to be aware of the consequences of their actions and to take responsibility for them. I want to encourage people to strive to find a balance in their lives that provides them with a sufficient level of happiness but does not contribute to unsustainable degradation to the ecosystems we depend on. (Cut Your Carbon program)

Eternal Motivation – It is essential for everyone to discover their own purpose in life in order for them to contribute to their best ability. When you find out what your reason for living is, your



Connecting Communities Association



life will suddenly and eternally have profound meaning. You will come to realize that whatever happens in life, you will be driven to stay on your path and continue your work. You will build your life to suit your purpose, rather than building a life that has no purpose. You will go to bed each night satisfied with what you have done, and you will wake up every morning excited to continue on your journey. This is eternal motivation. The more people who can discover their eternal motivation for contributing to positive social change, the better the world will become.

Community Responsibility – It is essential for every citizen to realize that they are an important part of their community. The citizens of any community are the ones who create the community that they live in. So everyone must ask themselves one simple question; What am I doing to contribute to creating the kind of community that I wish to live in? If we want a safe community, what can we do to make it safer? If we want to have a clean and healthy community, what can we do to make it cleaner and healthier? Each individual has the responsibility and ability to contribute to improving their community. So it is up to every citizen to take action and work with others in order to create safe, clean, and healthy communities for everyone.

Environmental Stewardship – It is essential for all of us to understand that we depend on healthy ecosystems to survive. So if we compromise the abilities of the ecosystems we depend on to provide us with what we need to survive, we will not be able to have healthy lives. And the human species may not even be able to continue living on planet Earth if we degrade essential life-supporting ecosystems too much. We must all do our part to limit our impacts on the Earth, and take care of that which gives us life.

Presentation Descriptions

Electricity Generation and Conservation (Gr. 1-12) (PowerPoint available)

The primary goal is to educate people about renewable energy technologies that are available to generate electricity. The objective is to present different methods used to generate electricity, and compare the advantages and disadvantages of the different methods. It is critical to teach the public that fossil fuels are limited, and our societies must develop and utilize technologies that are not so dependent on fossil fuels. Eventually the people of planet Earth will have to live without fossil fuels, so we must use the remaining fossil fuels to develop a green economy that can function entirely independent of fossil fuels.

Bonus! This presentation can include a demonstration of a stationary electricity-generating bicycle! Students in grades 1-5 (due to height and weight restrictions) will be able to generate electricity themselves by pedaling the bicycle! Please ask for more information.



Sustainable Agriculture (Gr. 4-12) (PowerPoint available)

The primary goal is to explain the concept of permaculture and compare it with industrial agriculture. Traditional subsistent agriculture was very different from the industrial agriculture methods that are used today. Industrial agriculture is highly dependent on fossil fuels and large, expensive machinery, as well as massive amounts of fertilizers and pesticides. In contrast, the practice of sustainable agriculture, or permaculture, is based on growing food using organic fertilizers, biological controls, and primarily mechanical methods of weed control and harvesting. The objective of permaculture is to care for the land and to leave it as good or better than it was. Which means the methods of inter-cropping, rotation of crops, and addition of organic fertilizers actually improves the quality of the soil over time. The quantity and quality of soil are crucial factors in the consistent and sustainable production of nutritious food.

Greenhouses and Gardens (Gr. 2-12) (PowerPoint available)

The primary goal is to educate people about the benefits of producing their own food. The objective is to teach people how to build a basic greenhouse and garden beds so they can grow food on their own property. Whether you live on a property with acreage, or in a bachelor suite, anyone can grow some of their own food. And when considering the many advantages of growing some of your own food, it is easy to justify taking on the relatively simple challenge of starting to produce food for yourself. Every individual has the opportunity to invest in their personal health and well-being. Growing food is one of the easiest, most affordable, and most effective investments you can make to improve your health and overall quality of life.

Introduction to Biodiversity (Gr. K-12) (PowerPoint available)

The primary goal is to inspire students to gain an appreciation for biodiversity so they will hopefully feel compelled to get involved in conservation efforts. By presenting the fascinating world of biodiversity to students in an interactive and entertaining manner, they may experience learning about the biological world in a way they never have before. Showing them exotic species and examples of keystone species may motivate them to join in the efforts to conserve essential habitats and endangered species.

Ecological Principles (Gr. K-12) (Outdoor component recommended)

The primary goal is to explain why the industrial era, and the global economy/financial system that has developed with it, must be redesigned because it is based on the idea of achieving infinite growth in a system of finite resources. This idea does not consider even the most basic principles of ecology. The system does not take into account (ie, put a value on) natural capital. So it doesn't consider the significant 'costs' of extracting natural resources from the environment. For example, when we want to cut down trees and forests for whatever purposes, we must first understand the value of those forests as functioning ecosystems, and then assign a market value for the services they provide.



Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services (Gr. 2-12)

The primary goal is to explain the concept of ecosystem services. The natural cycles of the Earth are critical for the survival of all life on the planet. The hydrologic cycle is responsible for purifying, transporting, and replenishing the freshwater ecosystems that are absolutely essential for the survival of the human species, and most others as well. The carbon cycle is the process in which carbon is used by biological organisms during their lives and is released into the atmosphere when they die. Other important natural cycles include nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, among others. Water is purified through the evaporation process, as well as by roots, swamps, marshes, and bogs. The air we require to breathe and survive is produced by photosynthetic organisms. And food has naturally grown in abundance in many parts of the world which has allowed us to nourish our bodies and minds, and survive and thrive in natural environments. Bees and other pollinators do the enormous task of pollinating food crops which allows us to harvest vast amounts of food.

The Importance of Nature (Gr. K-12) (PowerPoint available)

The primary goal is to explain that people, especially children, need strong connections with biological things, not material things, in order to achieve true happiness. So it goes without saying that we as parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, grandmas, grandpas, mentors, coaches, educators, heroes, and leaders must help our children step back from the technological world in order to appreciate, respect, cherish, and love the natural world. It is only through positive connections that we can create strong relationships and build unbreakable bonds. We must first connect to something before we are able to care and love for that thing. Connecting provides the building blocks for love, compassion, and peace.

Why do people love their pets so much? Because they interact with them and have a connection with them. No material thing can ever replace that. And no connection to any material thing will ever compare to that. Even in a technological world where everything can be done for us, there will never be any material or machine that can even remotely compare to the connections and bonds that we form with biological things.

The earth is our Mother. Which means that ALL of us are her children. She has given us life and she will be there to support us throughout our entire lives. But we ALL MUST choose to love her and help her heal in her times of need. If we do not help her, she will not be able to support us any longer.

Sustainable Living (Gr. 4-12) (PowerPoint available)

The primary goal is to teach people about the limits of growth in a closed system with finite resources. Planet Earth can only produce a limited amount of food for all of the living species. The carrying capacity of the Earth is the amount of organisms that can live within the limits of the global ecosystem network without compromising the functioning of ecosystems. It is important for every individual to understand their environmental footprint and the



Connecting Communities Association



consequences of their actions. People need to be aware of the economic system that they are a part of, and think about issues like globalization, industrialization, and environmental degradation that may be present in their specific community. Large cities have very interconnected and complex economic systems that involve many issues. Whereas small rural communities are often very self-sufficient, where most food and many products are made locally. So traditional, small-scale communities can provide models of self-sufficient systems. Although large cities are much more complex than small communities, there is much that can be done to improve self-sufficiency. Doing things like establishing community gardens, car-pooling, reducing use of energy and resources, utilizing renewable energy technologies, and living more conservatively can greatly improve self-sufficiency and sustainability within large cities.

Industrial Ecology (Gr. 4-12)

The primary goal is to educate people about the globally significant problem of pollution, and what can be done to address it. The concept of industrial ecology will be presented, which will include an explanation of why it is an essential process to develop for any industry that generates waste and pollution. The basic concept of industrial ecology is simply to observe and understand the recycling and reusing processes that occur in natural systems, and then attempt to emulate those processes in industrial systems.

Introduction to Spirituality and Enlightenment (Gr. 4-12)

The primary goal is to present the concepts of spirituality and enlightenment to students in order for them to be able to clear their minds and realize their full potential. Spirituality is about understanding that everything in the universe is connected. Enlightenment is the point where a person gains a very clear understanding about the world they live in, and what is truly important in life. It is the point where one has eliminated negative thoughts from their mind, and focuses only on positive thoughts. It is a point where self-consciousness, selfishness, greed, and hate are replaced by self-confidence, selflessness, generosity, and love. I like to think of it as the place where one can achieve true happiness with nothing. Nothing but appreciation for the opportunity to experience life on the amazing planet Earth.

Industrialization (Gr. 4-12) (PowerPoint available)

The primary goal is to explain the rise of industrialization and the impacts that has had on humankind and planet Earth. Industrialization has provided a lot of benefits to humanity, but many of the processes that have been used have caused many negative side effects to the planet and its inhabitants. A major challenge for the global population is to figure out how our societies can continue to improve or maintain decent standards of living while transforming industrialization into something that provides benefits for people without compromising the health of people and the planet. This process must begin to increase exponentially because there has already been a significant amount of degradation of the essential ecosystems that support



life on Earth. Conservation, restoration, and preservation practices must be implemented by every individual in every country. The importance of this cannot be underestimated.

Peak Oil (Gr. 6-12)

The primary goal is to explain the concept of 'Peak Oil' to students. In the not too distant future, the production of oil will decrease, but the demand will likely increase. This process will lead to sky-rocketing oil prices and the oil supplies will go to the highest bidders. This will leave many people out of the oil economy picture. It is crucial that we use the energy we have available to immediately begin to transition to a globally green economy. Anything less will leave many people suffering in the future.

Tiny Houses (Gr. 6-12) (PowerPoint available)

The primary goal is to explain what "Tiny Houses" are and what they are all about. Tiny Houses offer an alternative lifestyle that many people are becoming interested in. There are many benefits provided by choosing to live in a Tiny House which include having a smaller personal environmental footprint, a lower than average cost of living, and more free time to enjoy life. The necessary sacrifice of choosing to live in a Tiny House is the smaller amount of interior space to live in. But by embracing a smaller interior living space people can be rewarded with more time and money so they can spend more time outside living more active and healthy lifestyles.



Letters of Support (See attachments below)



Connecting Communities Association



Matt Logan

Gr. 6/7 French Immersion Instructor

École Heather Park Elementary

MLogan@sd57.bc.ca

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter in support of Jody Holmes' Sustainability Education Program. Between April and May of 2016, Jody visited my class of grades 6 and 7 students at École Heather Park Elementary for four lessons. The topics covered were Ecological Principles, Greenhouses and Gardens, Sustainable Agriculture, and Industrialization.

As an instructor with experience at both the high school and elementary levels, I have continually tried to instill upon my students the importance of understanding the natural world in which we live. More specifically, I have encouraged my students to think critically about climate change, human impacts on the environment, and sustainable living. The Sustainability Education Program covers these and many other topics that are important in students' lives. The prevailing scientific consensus indicates that these issues will continue to be of critical importance to our students in the future as well.

Jody's grasp of a broad range of environment topics lends the Sustainability Education Program merit and I believe that the program can be a useful supplement to regular classroom instruction.

Sincerely,

Matt Logan