

Hanson goes green

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ALTERNATIVE ENERGY: Matt Dyer, Bill Thrasher, Matt Noonan, Tyler Hiatt and Logan Hiatt (clockwise from top) stand by the miniature wind turbines they assembled. All the kids attend kindergarten at Maquan.

Under the direction of Green Hanson, Earth Day 2008 was held from noon to 4 p.m. on the Town Hall lawn in Hanson. Events included a kids' recycling relay, how-to's on rain barrel installation and natural cleaning, and several dance contests headed up by DJ Mike Amado. Informational tables were offered by such groups as the Hanson Conservation Commission and the supporters of the Community Preservation Act. A screening of Dr. Seuss's "The Lorax" was held later that night.

About 20 volunteers from Green Hanson and other environmentally-minded groups helped to organize the event, and all tables were busy with activity throughout the day

Headed up by Marianne DiMascio, Green Hanson seeks to raise awareness and collaboration on a local level. With global warming in the news, many people are looking for ways to live in a more environmentally responsible manner, often referred to as "going green";

"A year and a half ago, I was new to town and eager to meet people with similar interests," said DiMascio. "I also saw a need for taking action within the town."

This is the first time the group has celebrated Earth Day.

"This is all about getting the community outdoors together on a beautiful day. People are very interested in learning how to be green," said DiMascio.

“There’s a lot of work being done in the town,” said Jim Armstrong, selectman for the town of Hanson. “Green Hanson does a great job of getting the word out.”

Whitman-Hanson science teacher Bill Thrasher and students from Whitman-Hanson’s Student Environmental Awareness Club showed off some miniature models of clean energy alternatives, including wind turbines, solar panels, and a model car that runs on solar energy and water.

“It splits the water into hydrogen and oxygen and then runs on the hydrogen,” Thrasher explained. “It’s the car of the future.”

Though the hula hoop contest and the hokey pokey caught the attention of the younger crowd, the meaning of the day was not lost on them. Gianna Belivacqua, 5, marveled at her own ability to generate electricity from the sun. “Using the science stuff” earned her highest accolades of the day, and Bill Thrasher was even deemed “cool.”

Some of his older students took a hand in helping during the event. Sophomore Matt Dyer took charge of the Kids’ Recycling Relay, in which kids had to separate plastic from aluminum.

“It’s important to get kids to realize the importance of recycling and being responsible,” he said.{sidebar id=2}

Fellow SEAC member Angela Dwyer, a junior, added, “It’s great to get younger kids involved. People really just don’t understand the impact their actions have, so it’s important to get the word out.”

Earth Day comes on the heels of some town-wide environmental accomplishments. Hanson recently took part in the Environmental Protection Agency’s Municipal Energy Challenge and exceeded expectations by reducing its energy output by 14 percent. Efforts to do so included changing light bulbs in buildings and traffic lights to more energy-efficient options.

With flowers planted, dances danced, and the sun shining bright in the sky, the atmosphere at Town Hall was one of optimism and camaraderie.

“This was absolutely a success,” said DiMascio. “We had good weather, a good turnout, and good energy.”

“In summary, it’s all about Yankee ingenuity,” said Armstrong, who is an energy engineer by trade. “It makes sense. It makes sense, so why wouldn’t you do it?”