

Wade Thomas Elementary, San Anselmo, California

Student Green Team Imparts Change

Wade Thomas Elementary School has pursued many avenues for becoming greener over the past several years. The “Cool the Earth” program, which they are running for the third year, teaches students about how their everyday actions are related to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and global warming, and inspires them to take simple, measurable actions with their families to reduce their carbon emissions.

The nonprofit “Cool the Earth” program is a grassroots, school-to-home program founded in 2007 by Carleen and Jeff Cullen. The program launches with a school-wide assembly featuring an original, age-appropriate play to educate children about global warming. Students then go home with a coupon book that lists 20 no-or-low-cost energy efficient actions. To ensure that these environmental practices become part of participant’s everyday living, the families and children aged 5-13 commit to taking actions over the entire school year. The coupons are completed and sent back to school, where they are tallied, tracked and displayed on a tracking banner to the entire school community.

As the school community’s awareness of their environmental impact has grown, they have made efforts to be more green at school. Some parents have organized a student green team, which has focused on reducing waste at lunch time and started a composting program for lunch waste which they use in a school garden.



Photo Credit: Wade Thomas Elementary

School Snapshot

Elementary school focused on teaching students about sustainability and hands-on conservation practices

Climate Actions

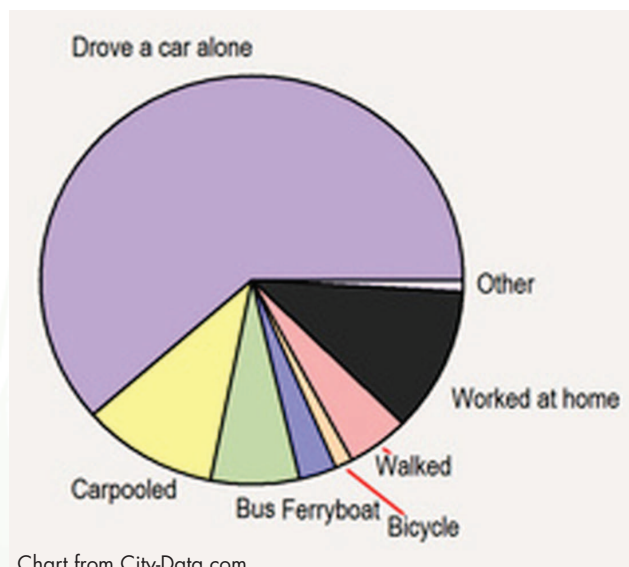
- Reduces lunch waste by monitoring its disposal and directing kids to separate garbage
- Started a composting program
- Maintains a school garden that includes flowers, vegetables and herbs
- Reuses and recycles paper
- Retrofitted lighting
- Updated plumbing fixtures
- Uses green cleaning products
- Formed a student green team
- Encourages biking, walking and carpooling
- Participates in “Cool the Earth” program
- Used water and energy audit tools

Estimated Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions

- 250 metric tons of CO₂ through “Cool the Earth” program

Modes of Transportation in San Anselmo

Over half of the San Anselmo community commutes to work and school by driving a car. If more students biked or walked to school there would be a great reduction in GHG emissions.



What Actions Did Wade Thomas Elementary School Take to Cut Waste?

In an effort to reduce waste, the school encourages bringing reusable picnicware for large school events, and has purchased compostable paper products for such events. Sustainable products are purchased using funds raised through sales of reusable water-bottles and no-waste lunch kits. By composting their food waste, the school significantly reduces what they send to landfills from such events. Teachers and students reuse and recycle paper in the classrooms and office to cut waste too.

What Actions Did Wade Thomas Elementary School Take to Drive Less?

The student green team works closely with Safe Routes to School which actively promotes and rewards walking, biking and carpooling to school. The program uses events and contests to encourage children and parents to try walking and biking. Classroom lessons teach children the skills necessary to navigate through busy streets and persuade them to be active participants in the program.

What Actions Did Wade Thomas Elementary School Take to Be a Green Business?

With the help of local high school students, the school has begun the process to certify their school as a green business. Water and energy audits performed as part of this process showed that the school has taken measures to prevent water waste by having all plumbing fixtures meet current plumbing standards and requirements of the local Water District, and that retrofitting of the lighting has been done.

Wade Thomas Elementary School has played a big role in turning their Marin County school into a safer, healthier, and more sustainable learning environment. Parents at the school even worked with the district maintenance supervisor to recommend and implement strategies to promote safer indoor air quality and encourage the use of environmentally responsible materials, resulting in district-wide adoption of green cleaning products.

PROUD PARTNERS INCLUDE:



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

CALIFORNIA AIR RESOURCES BOARD | LAWRENCE BERKELEY NATIONAL LABORATORY | BERKELEY INSTITUTE OF THE ENVIRONMENT
CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION | NEXT 10 | CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION



"The ongoing programs such as Cool the Earth and Safe Routes to School are perfectly suited for children of this age. They are such positive ways to raise awareness about sustainability and build lifelong earth-friendly habits."

-Nancy Wasserman
Principal, Wade Thomas Elementary School



Photo Credit: Safe Routes

Students participate in Cool the Earth and Safe Routes to School to learn how to protect the environment and reduce vehicle miles traveled.

Contact Information

Nancy Wasserman, Principal
Wade Thomas Elementary School

150 Ross Avenue

San Anselmo, CA 94960

Phone: (415) 464-7149

Email: nwasserman@rossvalleyschools.org