

The Illuminator

The Terminator. The Green Lantern. The Caped Crusaders. Larger than life super heroes that show up on both the big and small screen. In my third grade class, one of our personal super-heroes is "The Illuminator." It is the job of "The Illuminator" to be in charge of turning on & turning off lights. A seemingly-mild-mannered job, yet in a classroom blessed with an abundance of windows (& a science teacher that stresses things like kilowatts used this month last year versus this year), all of a sudden my students started making different decisions about their light usage. All of a sudden, the lights just never got turned on. All of a sudden, a small step seemed big in our own little world.

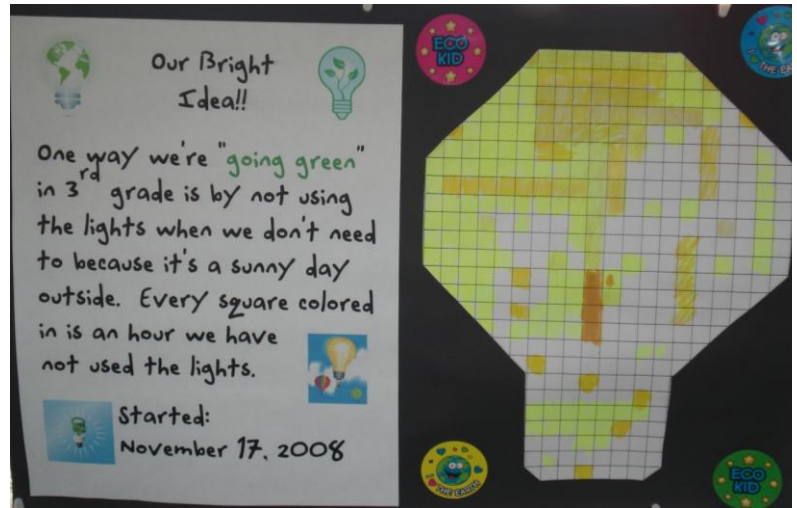
On November 17, 2008, a movement started in my third grade classroom. With the help of graph paper, we started recording the number of hours we went *without* turning on lights. One particularly sunny week, we went 4 of 5 days without the lights being turned on. All student-inspired. By Christmas, a mere month later, we had recorded well over 60 hours without lights (when we normally would have had them on). By January 30th: over 125 hours with no lights.

People often wonder "What can I do" as if wondering "what can 'li'l ole me' do?" My third graders have shown that the answer is "quite a lot."



Our Bright Idea

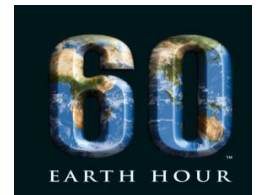
Here is our recording process, in action:



Ecology Technology: Mark Your Calendars

Visit www.earthhour.org and you will see something exciting happening world-wide, scheduled for March 28, 2009. You'll see that it is the third consecutive year this event has occurred the last weekend of March. What started as a local movement in 2007 in Sydney, Australia went global in 2008. You'll see a one-hour commitment dedicated to working toward an end of global warming. You'll see a **World Wildlife Fund** event that you can be a part of on March 28, 2009 from 8:30—9:30 pm. By turning off your lights for an hour that day, you can be a part of an event that spans continents, building eco-awareness.

To see a YouTube video of world coverage of last year's Earth Hour 2008 go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CRs-ZIRIPo>.



Illuminating Fun Facts



- ✦ Lighting is responsible for about 11% of a home's electric bill.
- ✦ Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL's) can last from 5--10 years, even with heavy usage, which saves money over time.
- ✦ CFL's give off the same light as the traditional incandescents (Thomas Edison's old light bulb creations) & use 75% or 80% less electricity...but the most energy efficient light bulb is the one that's turned off!
- ✦ Due to trace amounts of mercury in CFL's, they can't be thrown in the trash. Go to <http://earth911.com/> to learn where and how you can recycle them in your area.

The Green Team Gazette

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CynerGreen, CGKidz, and Gibson Island Country School, a Green School in Pasadena, Maryland. Our mission is to educate and share ways to "go green"—both big and small--and be environmentally-proactive at home, in school, and beyond. It is written by Vicki Dabrowka, and edited by Danelle Hoffer. Additional contributors include: G.I.C.S. Science Teacher Tim Decker; G.I.C.S. Head of School Laura Kang; CGKidz creator, twelve-year old Riley Hoffer. To learn more visit www.cynergreen.com, www.cgkidz.com, and www.gics.org.



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