



PRESCHOOLERS, ENERGY ARE A NATURAL FIT

By JOYCE McKENZIE - April 8, 2009

TEMPLE TERRACE, Even at 4 years old, Kaitlyn Krasowski knows the drill.

“We can save a lot of electricity by turning out the lights when we leave a room,” said Kaitlyn, a youngster enrolled in the Goddard School, an early childhood learning center on East Fowler Avenue near Interstate 75.

And, when her teacher, Angie Brewer, asked why it is important to conserve electricity, Kaitlyn’s reply was immediate and to the point: “So we have lights when I grow up.”

She also appeared to be the leader of the pack when it came to having a clear understanding of the school’s weeklong Stepping Up for the Environment initiative that took place at the Temple Terrace site as well as Goddard School franchises across the country during the week of March 23.

Through a variety of activities and lessons, teachers focused their energy on developing the children’s awareness of the importance of preserving natural resources.

One project involved the children using their drawing skills to create a picture of a valuable source of natural energy that supplies nutrients necessary to grow healthy bodies and thriving plants.

Most of the children sketched portraits of the sun, many with beams of light streaming out on all sides.

“The sun can help us see when it’s dark inside,” Trinity Graham remarked as she waved her picture in the air for her classmates to see.

“Yes, Mr. Sunshine provides us with both light and heat,” Trinity said.

Kaitlyn pondered the thought for a moment, then softly uttered, “When the sun turns on, we can turn the lights off.” Trey Cactaitore said he thought it was also a good idea to turn the lights off when you leave a room, go outside or take a nap.

“When I go to sleep at nighttime, the moonlight keeps my room light,” said Kay Julius.

The week ended with a show of solidarity among the students, teachers and administrators to help reinforce the children’s commitment to conservation.

They turned off every light on campus from 10 to 11 a.m., a gesture that was also in celebration of global Earth Hour the following day.

Brewer said the conservation initiative provided some important lessons for the children. The topic, she added, should be a priority in all schools.

“I think as a society we are a bit spoiled and that there are a lot of ways we can save energy,” she said. “We, as a community, need to start to think more about these things. We need to get that mindset.”

Brad Toston, owner of the school, said his staff is diligent about preserving energy at the facility, both inside and out. When not in use, the lights in the offices, bathrooms, kitchen, pantry and janitor’s closet are always off. He has even cut down on the use of outside lighting when it doesn’t affect the safety of the children and their families.

“Through our example, the children learn our resources aren’t unlimited.”