

SUSTAINABLE PRINCETON RECOGNIZES 2009 SUSTAINABILITY LEADERS

Chris Muflam | January 19, 2010

(Princeton, NJ) – The Mayor of Princeton Borough, Honorable Mildred Trotman on January 11, 2010 announced and honored the winners of the Sustainable Princeton 2009 Leadership Awards in three categories – Individuals, Organizations and Businesses – at the Princeton Environmental Film Festival held at the Princeton Public Library.

“We are here tonight to honor the 2009 Sustainable Princeton Leadership Awardees,” said Wendy Kaczerski, Chair, Princeton Environmental Commission and Member, Sustainable Princeton Executive Committee, in her opening remarks. “Sustainable Princeton began as a committee of Princeton Environmental Commission in 2005 and this is our fourth year of honoring individuals, organizations and businesses in our community who are integrating sustainability into their spheres of influence and inspiring us to take action in our community,” added Princeton Environmental Commission Chair Wendy Kaczerski.

“Princeton is a better, stronger, healthier and greener community because of your efforts, said Liz Lempert, Princeton Township Committee Member. Despite the tough financial situation with the economy in 2009 “winners of this year’s sustainability awards have proven to us that what is good for the earth is often good for our community and our bottom line too,” added Liz Lempert, Township Committee Member as she congratulated the awardees for their inspiring leadership.

“In November 2009 at the New Jersey League of Municipalities Convention the Princetons were recognized and awarded a leadership award for sustainability and I have no doubt that that would not have taken place but for the dedicated individuals who do so much in Princeton to bring about public awareness, preserve and protect our community and our environment for future generations,” said Princeton Borough Mayor, Honorable Mildred Trotman as she thanked the awardees in her remarks before presenting the awards.

Individual Awardees

Liz Cutler, Sustainability Coordinator, Princeton Day School

Liz Cutler received an award for her passionate environmental leadership that has inspired countless students and parents to protect the environment. Serving as Princeton Day School Sustainability Coordinator, Liz Cutler has guided Princeton Day School to launch a strategic initiative including a PreK-12 curriculum that incorporates sustainability, a campus organic garden and energy conservation measures. Liz Cutler also directs Organizing Action Sustainability in Schools (OASIS), a consortium of 17 Princeton area schools dedicated to learning and sharing experiences on sustainability in schools.

Steve Carson, Science Teacher, Environmental Club Advisor, John Witherspoon Middle School

“Steve Carson is a role model of sustainable living for his students and the community. Steve Carson rides his bike rain or shine, near or far to reduce his carbon footprint. He teaches

sustainability in his science class at the John Witherspoon Middle School and as Teacher Coordinator of the school's Environmental Club was instrumental in creating the school's edible garden and works with students to help the school and their families reduce energy and waste," said Princeton Borough Mayor, Honorable Mildred Trotman, before presenting the award to Steve Carson.

Organization Awardees

Hometown Princeton

"Hometown Princeton promotes shopping at locally owned businesses, strengthens the local economy, reduces greenhouse gas emissions and builds a sense of community among Princeton residents and local businesses. Hometown Princeton was founded to promote locally owned and operated businesses in Princeton, support local civic organizations and charities and protect the environment. By shopping locally residents can reduce their driving, keep their money circulating within the local community, and sustain the unique character of Princeton," said Mayor Mildred Trotman. She then presented Nick Hilton of Hometown Princeton with the award.

Princeton Community Village

"To Princeton Community Village, for improving energy efficiency to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to meet the social needs in our community Princeton Community Village residents formed a Green Team that has led to the purchase of Energy Star appliances, the use of energy efficient compact florescent lamps, LEDs, the replacement of boilers with fuel efficient models that help lower utility costs, the purchase of energy efficient vehicles and ongoing educational programs for residents on how to live sustainably," said Mayor Mildred Trotman before presenting Susan O'Malley, Site Manager, and Marlene Galioto, Director of Property management, Princeton Community Village, with the award.

Business Awardees

Verdant Organic Lawns

"To Verdant Organic Lawns, for reducing the use of toxic chemicals, greenhouse gas emissions and noise pollution in our community, Verdant Organic Lawns is Princeton's first organic lawn care company accredited by the Northeastern Organic Farmers' Association Organic Landcare Program. It uses organic alternatives to synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, operates a hybrid vehicle, propane and battery powered equipment and assists residents with composting in their yards and gardens," said Mayor Mildred Trotman. She then presented Brian Ruddy, owner of Verdant Organic Lawns with the award.

McCaffrey's

"For reducing greenhouse gas emissions and for meeting our community social needs, McCaffrey's Green Team has reduced the carbon footprint of the store by diverting its food waste from landfills to composting facilities thereby reducing methane gas emissions, recycling all plastic bags and promoting reusable bags, reducing fuel and electricity use through consolidation and planning. The store also promotes community social programs, provides a senior citizens' discount, and promotes the adoption of green practices by other New Jersey

Boards of food utilities,” said Mayor Mildred Trotman, before presenting Jim McCaffrey, Owner, and Steve Carney, Manager, McCaffrey’s with the award.

Panel discussion with awardees

“What is it that motivates you to do this work?” asked Wendy Kaczerski, Chair, Princeton Environmental Commission.

“Susan O’Malley and I work at Princeton Community Village with 238 affordable housing units and sometime last year around March or April Chris Muflam wrote a letter asking if we could do something to make the village more sustainable. So we met and put together a Green team,” responded Marlene Galioto, Director of Property Management, Princeton Community Village. “And some of the things we’ve done so far are we had a green day in August when we invited Mrs. G TV and Appliances. She came and talked about energy efficient washers, dryers and air conditioners. We also looked at working with Mrs. G TV and Appliances to offer rebates to our residents on the surcharge of purchased energy efficient air conditioners. We are also looking at putting together a litter patrol team to help keep the grounds looking cleaner”, added Marlene Galioto.

“Thanks to Sustainable Princeton for great inspiration and leadership. I grew up in Princeton and I was tired of walking home from school. I am surrounded by people here in Princeton and it is great to be part of that group. I got interested in doing this with a sustainable focus. All this contributed to it, “said Steve Carson, Environmental club Advisor, John Witherspoon Middle School.

“Being green and being sustainable is not expensive, it saves the business money and it is a smart thing to do,” said Jim McCaffrey, Owner of McCaffrey’s. “With the economy being the way it is we are looking for ways to save money. The 410,000 pounds of waste that originally went to landfills is now being composted and coming back to us in a usable way is just one example. The plastic bags that are now being recycled and how we cut the bills on how much we are paying for plastic bags because we reduced their usage dramatically has caused such a cost effectiveness. The message to get out there is that being green is really smart business,” added Jim McCaffrey.

“In 2008, two million nine hundred and four thousand plastic bags were returned by customers and recycled. In 2009, three million seven hundred and sixty seven thousand bags were returned and recycled. Goodwill, a non-profit organization picks them up 3 times a week for recycling. The organic compost program was launched on Saint Patrick’s Day in 2009. We sent 206 tons of food waste to the organic food waste facility in Woodbridge which converts it into organic fertilizer. We reduced our landfill usage by 75% in less than a year,” said Steve Carney, Manager, McCaffrey’s Princeton.

“I think we saved about \$52,000 in electricity costs by installing technology that monitors compressors in our refrigeration system and store lighting system, and we are not done yet,” added Jim McCaffrey, Owner of McCaffrey’s.

“Hometown Princeton was an idea whose time had come as a fellow said to me a year ago or so, when things were pretty tough out there, the need to shop locally was felt. The idea banged around my head for a while until it seemed that it was an idea I could do something about or get rid of. I was able to get a few energetic people to get out there and beat the pavement. We thought we would be doing really well if we got 20 stores joining us but we ended up with 50. We raised a considerable amount of money and spent it on a website to promote this message. We truly believed that there is an ecology site effect. The benefit to this is clear: you travel less, generate less carbon footprint, waste less staying here. But there’s also an element to the town that is not evident to some of the people who live here, what the retailers provide. We give back to the community and we wanted the community to support us and we wanted to make that evident in the literature, and I hope we did that,” said Nick Hilton of Hometown Princeton.

“What motivates me is knowing that our biggest footprint is not in our buildings and factories, it is in our kids. Our kids are our biggest carbon footprint, the way they grow up, who they become, the choices they’re going to make, and that’s the carbon footprint. And if we don’t work on that now we’re in really some deep trouble. So, I am motivated by knowing that what I do as a teacher is changing the course of their history and all of our history,” said Liz Cutler, Sustainability Coordinator, Princeton Day School.

Strategy for the road ahead

“What needs to change in the next 5 years in order to achieve greater sustainability?” asked Wendy Kaczerski, Chair, Princeton Environmental Commission.

“People have to vote with their food dollars and shopping dollars” said Liz Cutler, Sustainability Coordinator, Princeton Day School.

“Get the kids at Princeton Community Village involved, give them the tools to understand and to lead,” said Susan O’Malley, Site Manager, Princeton Community Village

“We have to get our idea of promoting other organizations more broadly disseminated to other civic organizations,” said Nick Hilton of Hometown Princeton.

“Lower the use of pesticides and synthetic chemicals in golf courses,” said Bian Ruddy, Owner of Verdant Organic Lawns.

“Lifestyle changes, recycling water bottles and voting with our dollars,” said Jim McCarffrey, Owner of McCarffrey’s.

“Princeton residents need to visit www.earthlab.com to calculate their carbon footprint for use in Sustainable Princeton reports.” “Join a working group.” “Households and small businesses need to do an energy audit. Princeton Environmental Commission is paying for a pilot energy audit program in 6 households and 3 small businesses. Three energy audit companies (Energy Smart Inc, Deforest, and Princeton Air) have been selected to do the energy audits”, said Diane Landis, Sustainable Princeton Coordinator.