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16

Monday
Sep 2013

Education, Raising Philanthropic Children, Ways to make a difference

≈ 0 Comments



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” That infamous Margaret Mead quote is what came to mind after my inspiring conversation with Grades of Green’s Kim Martin

Six and a half years ago, Kim Martin was an environmental attorney with young children in elementary school. She befriended 3 other like-minded

mom's; Lisa Coppedge, Shaya Kirkpatrick and Suzanne Kretschmer, who had been deeply impacted by Al Gore's environmental movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*. The four of them began working together to find creative ways to green their school. Before long, these savvy moms and their school were winning national awards for their efforts and making an amazing impact on their youth, school and community.

They realized that they were truly onto something much bigger as their initial students moved onto middle school and began asking questions about where were the recycling containers and why was the school using styrofoam? Moments like these prompted the four women to take their extraordinary volunteer efforts to the next level and three years ago they founded the non-profit, [Grades of Green](#).

Their mission is simply to inspire and empower kids and the broader school community to care for the environment. The vision of Grades of Green is to make environmental protection second nature in young minds.

Their [website](#) breaks down initiatives for individuals and schools to make small and simple changes that have big impacts. Things such as Walk to School Wednesdays, (de)Tox Thursdays, Campus composting and Electricity Challenges. All these activities are free, simple, easy and impact full. The kids learn by doing, not by lecture. The founders' dream is that this next generation lives in harmony with the earth and that all their decisions big and small reference that point.

What started as a small thoughtful group of committed citizens has already begun to change our world. Today, [Grades of Green](#) is in more than 209 schools, in 30 states and has worked with over 130,268 children and counting. That small thoughtful group has become a large one and as their motto says, "Every shade makes a difference."

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