



# ISSAQUAH PROGRAM EVALUATION

## THE OVERALL PROGRAM

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this evaluation was to examine the methods of the EcoTeam Program, and the benefits derived from participation. This summary presents the major findings of a Spring 1998 mail survey of fifty Issaquah-area<sup>1</sup> residents who participated in GAP's Household EcoTeam Program between 1992 and 1997.

### METHOD

Twenty-five of these households participated before 1995, using a different version of the EcoTeam Workbook than the twenty-five participating after 1995. However, the program elements and goals were similar enough to provide both groups with the same evaluation form. All households surveyed were offered a Canvas Shopping Bag or a Water Conservation Kit as an incentive to complete the evaluations. Sixty-two percent (31) of the evaluations mailed to Issaquah EcoTeam participants were completed.

### BEFORE THE PROGRAM

- 26% of the respondents in the survey described themselves as “consistently practicing sustainable living.” The remaining 74% of the respondents fit in categories describing lesser levels of sustainable lifestyle practices.

### AFTER THE PROGRAM

- 87% of the respondents indicated that participating in the EcoTeam Program “helped them go to their next level” of sustainable living.

### VALUES AND BENEFITS FROM ECOTEAM PARTICIPATION

Issaquah survey respondents indicated that the EcoTeam Program helped them develop

- a more informed and stronger stewardship ethic
- greater appreciation of their role in creating a sustainable community
- life-long resource-efficient lifestyle practices

<sup>1</sup>Defined as within the Issaquah School District

Households were asked to circle the number that most applied, using the following scale:  
 1=Most Important, 2 =Important, 3 =Not Important.

How well do each of the following describe the value and benefit you received from participating in the EcoTeam Program?

	1	2	3	Not applicable
• Developed life-long, resource-efficient lifestyle practices.....	42%	39%	10%	6%
• Put in place household systems for resource conservation.....	39%	45%	10%	3%
• A more informed and stronger stewardship ethic.....	48%	29%	16%	3%
• Greater appreciation of my role in conserving the community's natural resources and protecting its environment.....	45%	39%	10%	3%
• Got to know my neighbors better.....	42%	29%	19%	6%
• Greater connection to my neighborhood.....	39%	32%	23%	6%
• Greater sense of neighborhood safety and friendliness.....	16%	29%	35%	6%
• Commitment to improving my neighborhood.....	19%	45%	23%	6%
• Recognition that I can and do make a difference.....	42%	29%	23%	3%
• Greater appreciation of the role, programs and services of my local government in natural resource management and maintenance of environmental quality.....	29%	39%	23%	3%

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Respondents were given a number of opportunities to offer feedback about the EcoTeam Program. These responses have been summarized as follows.

• EcoTeam Process

Many of these comments referred to lack of participation at different levels (team, coach, etc.) of the process. There was one comment about the program fee.  
*Staff management and training of coaches will help with participation problems. There is a scholarship program available.*

• Program Materials

Comments in this area were directed at the amount of paperwork, the typeface and design, and the need for clearer questions in the Lifestyle Assessment and Results Forms.  
*We are continually revising our materials based on comments such as these.*

• Program Focus

There was some concern that the focus of the program needs more local information, and that there were not enough actions for those already practicing sustainable lifestyles.  
*We now have a community-specific resource handbook. Advanced actions are now available, and we place more emphasis on consistent behaviors, not just knowledge of issues.*

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## RECRUITMENT

The EcoTeam recruitment strategy was developed using several assumptions about what motivates individuals to take action on environmental issues. The results of the Issaquah evaluation confirm those assumptions.<sup>1</sup>

### THE INVITER

The enthusiasm and passion of the inviter plays a large role in motivating people to come to an informational meeting about the EcoTeam Program. More than half of the households surveyed, (52%) offered written commentary describing what specifically motivated them to attend.

- “She was enthusiastic, had done her homework and lived what she taught.”
- “[Her] passion for EcoTeams and GAP.”
- “She’s the model for eco-living...inspiring.”

### REASONS FOR JOINING AN ECOTEAM

People join EcoTeams to make personal changes on behalf of the environment. Individual motivations will vary.

Households were asked to answer the following questions using this scale:  
1= Most Important, 2= Important, 3= Not Important.

*How important were each of the following possible reasons for joining an EcoTeam?*

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Not applicable</u>
• To get to know your neighbors better.....	29%	39%	19%	6%
• To learn how to reduce your environmental impact.....	68%	26%	6%	0
• To be a better steward of resources for the sake of our children.....	74%	19%	6%	0
• To take advantage of the program support to do actions you were wanting to do but hadn't made time for.....	55%	26%	19%	0
• To stretch to the next level of sustainable living.....	52%	45%	3%	0
• To make a difference.....	71%	23%	3%	0
• To save money.....	26%	45%	29%	0
• To develop a greater sense of community in your neighborhood.....	26%	61%	10%	0
• To improve the neighborhood's health and safety.....	26%	45%	26%	0
• Because it seemed like a fun thing to do.....	16%	45%	35%	3%

## REASONS FOR ATTENDING AN INFORMATIONAL MEETING

1= Most Important, 2= Important, 3= Not Important.

How important were each of the following in motivating you to come to a neighborhood information meeting to learn more about the EcoTeam Program?

	1	2	3	Not applicable
• You were invited by your neighbor and you trusted this person.....	23%	29%	3%	23%
• Other neighbors had done the program and you wanted to find out what was going on in the neighborhood.....	3%	16%	19%	58%
• Your other neighbors would be attending.....	26%	35%	19%	16%
• You wanted to learn more about improving the neighborhood's environment.....	42%	45%	10%	3%
• You wanted to learn more about lowering your environmental impact.....	68%	23%	3%	3%
• You wanted to learn how to better steward resources for the sake of our children.....	71%	19%	3%	3%

## PRESENTATION CONTENT

Usually, the Informational meeting is conducted by neighbors who have already participated on an EcoTeam. Most of the Issaquah households surveyed were first-time participants.

1= Most Important, 2= Important, 3= Not Important.

How important were each of the following aspects of the informational evening in persuading you to join an EcoTeam?

	1	2	3	Not applicable
• The information offered by the introduction leader about the program and the community-wide sustainable lifestyle campaign.....	45%	35%	3%	16%
• Meeting your neighbors and seeing who you would do the program with.....	29%	35%	13%	19%
• Hearing your neighbors describe their motivation to make environmental changes in their life.....	16%	42%	23%	16%
• Your belief that the EcoTeam Program could help you make the desired changes.....	45%	35%	3%	16%
• Hearing neighbors who had been through the program describe how it had benefitted them.....	29%	48%	0	45%
• The informational video.....	10%	39%	26%	19%



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## POST-PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The Household EcoTeam Program encourages several volunteer activities; starting new teams by neighbor-to-neighbor outreach, coaching new teams, and transferring knowledge to work-place and community.

### VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE PROGRAM

Responses to the survey indicate that the most important factors of a participant's willingness to recruit neighbors to an informational evening are personal commitment to the environment and determination to "make a difference", combined with the support and inspiration of GAP's Program.

- 32% volunteered to coach an EcoTeam
- 23% volunteered to support the Campaign in other ways such as providing technical or other support

### ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PROGRAM

- 45% transferred knowledge gained from participating on an EcoTeam to their workplace. Respondents mentioned encouraging action in recycling, turning off lights and appliances, and using non-toxic cleaners. One participant changed her hair salon business to a "chemically sensitive salon" that no longer offers perms or highly toxic dyes.
- 29% continue to interact socially with former team members such as sharing meals or holiday parties.
- 26% continue to interact with former team members in neighborhood actions such as sharing tools, carpooling, and exchange of eco-relevant information.
- 26% volunteered to improve the neighborhood in additional ways. Respondents mentioned civic efforts such as clean-ups, tree planting, and joining the local homeowners board.
- 13% encouraged the government to provide other programs and services to support sustainable living. Respondents approached officials of City, State and Federal governments on behalf of various environmental causes.

EcoTeam participants reported reaching out in other ways, most indicating different ways that they have communicated to others what they learned from the EcoTeam Program.

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## PROGRAM ELEMENTS

The results from this part of the evaluation are an important source of feedback for Global Action Plan to consider when making program updates and revisions. Since the program is continually being revised, based on feedback from participants and field staff, some of the concerns or criticisms in this area have already been addressed.

### PROGRAM ELEMENTS

1= Most Important, 2= Important, 3= Not Important.

Which program elements enabled you to make changes in your resource use patterns?

	1	2	3	Not applicable
• The information you learned from the workbook about your impact on the environment and the opportunities to make changes.....	42%	42%	13%	3%
• The step-by-step format of the Earth Actions in the EcoTeam Workbook	58%	32%	6%	3%
• The support and encouragement of the team.....	68%	19%	10%	3%
• The Action Log where you created a time management plan for the specific day and time you would take the actions.....	13%	29%	48%	6%
• The knowledge learned from other EcoTeam members.....	52%	39%	6%	3%
• The design of the team-building and topic meetings to focus the group into becoming an empowering team.....	19%	52%	19%	6%
• The motivation of the topic leaders who led the different topic areas.....	26%	48%	23%	0
• The lifestyle assessment and result information that allowed you to appreciate your accomplishments.....	23%	35%	35%	3%
• The team captain motivation to keep the team on track and committed to producing tangible results.....	10%	48%	35%	3%

### FAVORITE TOPIC AREA

WATER, because...

- "We take it for granted."
- "Issaquah water is not treated and we have a responsibility to keep it that way."

ENERGY, because...

- "Easiest to see monthly savings."

CONSUMPTION, because...

- "It is the way we most affect our living styles and patterns."
- "Wanted to learn more conservative ways of buying."
- "Got more new ideas in this area."
- "It made me look at the labels much closer and pay attention to what I buy."
- "Deepened my consistency in eating organic foods."