

Students Picture



First annual conservation

(Illustration courtesy of Newmarket Hydro - Alexandria Goodman Alaras of Stuart Scott Public School took home the award in the Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1 category)

Newmarket Hydro was already in local schools talking to students about energy conservation. Pam Riley, energy conservation coordinator for the utility, was impressed at the level of knowledge she was encountering at her presentations on the environmental impact of electricity generation. But what most surprised her was the passion with which many young people drew the link from energy conservation to larger environmental issues such as global warming and air quality, issues they felt were important to their future. They clearly saw energy conservation as part of the big picture. And that's when the light went on for Riley. Why not have them put that "big picture" down on paper so we can all see it?

Student visions of conservation

In March of this year, Newmarket Hydro launched the "Picture Conservation" poster contest for students in the local schools with

a submission deadline of June 1st. The contest was open to all students in

Junior Kindergarten up to grade 8. More

than 10,000 flyers publicizing the contest were distributed to public elementary schools in the area with the support of the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) and the York Catholic District School Board.

Students were encouraged to share their personal visions of what conservation means. "They were invited to create their own images of what conservation should be about," says Riley. "We didn't want to limit their creativity, so we asked them to think about what conservation could mean to their friends or their families or even the entire world or maybe just their dog."

Prizes that value the future

To give students of similar ages equal opportunities to win prizes, four judging categories based on school grade levels were established: Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1, Grades 2 to 4, Grades 5 to 6, and Grades 7 to 8. Winners of "first prize" and "second prize" awards were selected in each of the categories. A "first prize" earned a Registered Education

Savings Plan (RESP) contribution of \$300 in the student's name while a "second prize" award received a \$200 RESP contribution.

By offering RESPs as prizes in this contest, the utility felt it was recognizing an important theme of conservation: the future and the fact that it belongs not to us but to our children. "We created this event because it's vital that we encourage conservation knowledge and habits in our children," says Paul Ferguson, president of Newmarket Hydro. "Young people are our future. If they learn about conservation early and then carry that awareness into their adult lives, then we'll all be better off."

Response from the community

The response from students was overwhelming with a substantial representation across all grade levels. The artwork demonstrated a wide range of styles and "an amazing degree of creativity," says Pam Riley, noting that students used many different strategies in their art. Some posters used unique images to illustrate conservation tips. Other artwork anchored the imagery around conservation themes or catch phrases that the students had created. Still others employed visual narratives to tell conservation stories.

Conservation in Newmarket

poster contest sponsored by Newmarket Hydro

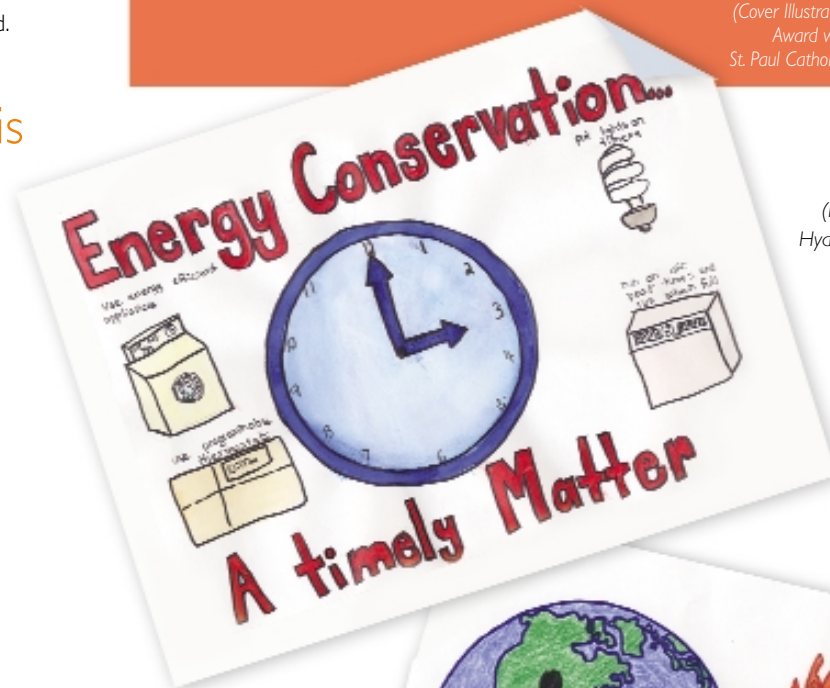
While the enthusiasm and creativity of the students for this project was obvious, the utility is also aware that it could not have happened without the support of the teachers, principals and parents who decided to get involved.

“We created this event because it’s vital that we encourage conservation knowledge and habits in our children,”

“We are very fortunate to have the support of our community,” says Riley. And she adds that the results “are too important” not to share with that community. Over the coming weeks, two collage-style posters featuring the winning student artwork will be produced by Newmarket Hydro and distributed locally. ■

Newmarket Hydro is an operating division of Newmarket-Tay Power Distribution Ltd. The utility is responsible for servicing over 30,000 residential and business customers in Newmarket as well as in the communities that make up the Township of Tay on the southern shores of Georgian Bay.

(Cover Illustration courtesy of Newmarket Hydro
Award winning poster from Jacob Heron of
St. Paul Catholic Elementary School, Newmarket)



(Illustration courtesy of Newmarket Hydro - A winner at the Grade 5 to 6 level was Nicole Stevens from Canadian Martyrs Catholic Elementary School)

(Illustration courtesy of Newmarket Hydro - Michael Hartzog from Stonehaven Elementary School was a winner in the Grade 2 to 4 category)

