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HSBC North America and Eco-Schools USA Bring Climate Education to Chicago Schools

On January 26th and 28th, 2010, National Wildlife Federation (NWF) and their new Eco-Schools USA program joined forces with HSBC North America to bring Eco-Schools and Climate Education to the greater Chicago area.

The team presented two trainings, one at HSBC North America headquarters in Mettawa, Illinois and the other at the Academy of Global Citizenship in south Chicago. Individuals from seven schools participated in these trainings along with HSBC volunteers that will be providing on-the-ground support as each school begins to implement their HSBC Eco-Schools Climate Initiative.



Laura Hickey

A three-year grant from HSBC Holdings, Inc. supports this global initiative, which has 11 participating countries including the United States. The goal of the Initiative is to develop a global network of schools that are actively participating and learning about climate change and finding ways to reduce carbon emissions and energy use in their schools and local communities.

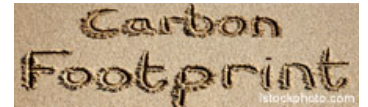
The trainings, designed and led by Liz Soper, Associate Director of Eco-Schools USA, brought together school representatives and HSBC volunteers to learn more about the Eco-Schools program and how best to integrate climate education and service learning into the participating schools' existing curricula. Laura Hickey, Senior Director of Global Warming Education for NWF led an interactive discussion on the importance of presenting climate change education in an age-appropriate format and brainstormed ideas with each group for pro-active projects at different grade levels. Carol Timms from Educational Dividends presented a comprehensive overview of energy and carbon assessment and provided participants with a series of tools and resources to use at their own schools to determine baseline energy use. In a session on action planning, participants learned how best to use their energy audits to create a strategy for reducing their school impacts.

The participating schools will use what they learned in the trainings to begin implementing their own Eco-Schools Climate Initiative. Each school will be paired up with several HSBC volunteers who will utilize their skills and knowledge to provide important on-the-ground support to schools. "The support these volunteers will be able to provide to schools is critical," said Liz Soper. "HSBC North America has a strong volunteer commitment and students can learn so much from these dedicated individuals." Across the nation and on a global level, HSBC has a strong commitment to addressing the issue of climate change and has done its part in reducing its own energy use and carbon emissions. HSBC North America has also provided each participating school with a \$500 seed grant to jump start their program.

Schools will spend the remainder of the year developing their Eco-Schools program and implementing the Climate Initiative. At the end of the school year, each

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participating school will participate in an Eco-Code competition in which schools will submit their "mission statements" about climate change in a variety of creative and artistic formats. On a national level, the Chicago-area schools will compete with schools from the second U.S. pilot location, Buffalo, NY. They will go on to an international competition with schools from the other 10 participating countries. International winners will be provided funds to continue building their programs.

The seven schools participating in the greater Chicago area include: St. Martin de Porres, Waukegan, IL; Warren Township High School, Gurnee, IL ; Dundee-Crown High School, Carpentersville, IL; Academy of Global Citizenship, Chicago, IL.; Al Raby High School, Chicago, IL; Lincoln Elementary, Chicago, IL; and the Charles Gate Dawes School, Chicago, IL. A similar training will be held in Buffalo, NY in March, 2010.

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