

Helping kids see the light

By Lois Levin and Heather Tausig/ Special To The Tab
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Kids can be effective ambassadors for change. Teach them about ways to protect the environment and they will often educate their parents and encourage them to take conservation measures.

Four local elementary schools- Horace Mann, Williams, Mason Rice and Burr- have had assemblies recently where students learned about climate change, discussed ways to save energy at home and gained insight into the relationship between energy efficiency and global climate change. The assemblies were organized by members of The Green Decade Coalition's Energy Committee.

Heather Tausig, Director of Conservation at the New England Aquarium, has shown "In Hot Water", a short and entertaining documentary film for children about how global climate change affects our oceans and the animals and human communities that depend on them. Biologist Eric Olson has provided fun demonstrations that help students understand that energy efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) reduce carbon dioxide emissions and thereby help to slow global warming.

In conjunction with the program, the schools' PTOs are raising money by selling CFLs donated by NSTAR. Parents and students alike learn that one \$3 light bulb, which is as bright as an incandescent bulb, saves about \$50 in electricity costs over the life of the bulb, keeps a barrel of oil (or 500 pounds of coal) from being burned, and prevents up to 800 pounds of CO₂ from entering the atmosphere. The CFLs fit into most light fixtures, emit broad-spectrum light and have a pleasing color.

The students and their parents and teachers are also learning that CFLs (and all other lightbulbs) must be disposed of responsibly as household hazardous waste. Newton's Rumford Ave Depot accepts lightbulbs and non-alkaline batteries from 7:30 am – 2:30 pm weekdays, and 7:30 am – 12:30 pm Saturdays.

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Williams School 5th grader Stewart Ostrow and Green Decade Coalition Energy Chair Eric Olson demonstrate that CFLs save energy, as Heather Tausig, Michele Davis and Rowan Davis watch. Photo credit: Margaret Ford