

Earth Day

Every day we should consider our actions towards the Earth and its ecosystems. The significance of celebrating Earth Day on April 22 is that just like Christmas, it is one day where everyone comes together for one cause. Originally, the Earth was celebrated around the time of the Spring Equinox, but in 1970 the American senator Gaylord Nelson designated April 22 to be Earth Day. This day was created to spread awareness and increase appreciation towards our planet. Now the United Nations have designated April 22 to be International Mother Earth Day. Various national and international activities are conducted to understand how we should protect our nature – plants, animals and environment. Now Earth Day is celebrated in over 192 countries.

So, how can we encourage other people to appreciate the Earth every day, and not just on April 22? Well to begin, we can personally choose to lead by example and make “green” choices. By making “green” choices, we are choosing to educate ourselves about protecting our planet’s nature. I believe this is the first step to encouraging our peers to make choices concerning the health of the Earth. This then can lead to educating others. When someone asks why you’d rather refill a plastic water bottle or carry your own refillable water bottle you then can explain your goal of making “green” choices every day. Once you make it a lifestyle choice yourself, your actions often influence others’ actions. Being an everyday advocate can keep people motivated and informed.

If involved in an organization, you can suggest doing community service acts throughout the year such as trash pick-ups or beautifying a local park with trees and plants. We do this in my 4-H club based off suggestions of members. A perfect example

of encouraging peers to help the earth every day was when I went to the National 4-H Congress held in Atlanta, Georgia. There, they had one day during the conference set aside for community service. The group I was in was sent to a local park, Piedmont Park, to help keep it beautiful. We raked up magnolia leaves by a pond and picked up trash. By doing this activity, the youth saw how easy it was to volunteer at their own local parks. This one choice executed by the Youth Design Team of the National 4-H Congress influenced over a hundred people to help keep the earth beautiful in their own communities. When in a position of leadership, encouraging actions like this influences our peers.

In my National Honor Society chapter in high school, we have been looking into service opportunities to help our own community's environment. As president, I have encouraged the members to investigate community service that would benefit the earth through our own community. In April, we plan to beautify our school campus by planting flowers. The flowers will help hold down soil and in windy eastern New Mexico that is important. It is also a way to help encourage the members to personally get involved in projects that help preserve the nature in our community. One of the members decided to look into partnering with the city for a project. She found that the city is involved in a national project, The Great American Cleanup, through Keep America Beautiful. It is planned that we will help the city with this event. By influencing the members to take care of the earth in our community it influenced one of them to take the initiative to further her actions.

We can encourage our peers to celebrate the earth every day of the year by being an advocate and example ourselves with the choices we make. Then we can

encourage the organizations or groups we are involved in to be active and preserve the nature in our communities with group projects. Once people learn how to become involved in keeping the earth healthy, they hopefully become active. This then can lead to people being motivated and informed about keeping our planet healthy and beautiful. Being informed isn't as difficult as it may sound. Word of mouth does spread quickly and correct information can be shared within the circles that we socialize. Sharing information and expecting the organizations that we choose to be involved with to make a difference by planning these projects will incorporate leadership and advocates in ourselves and our communities. By starting with ourselves, it may seem like a drop in the ocean. That drop can start ripples and then the ripples can turn into waves.