

News from the Watershed

Teach your children about the environment and make good stewards for the future.

As we move into the New Year I thought it might be nice to think of the way our children and today's youth view us as adults. I have heard people say that they can't make a difference, that a problem is just too big, etc. I don't believe that and I teach my son that one person can make a difference, especially when the environment is involved. If you are one of those folks that think one child or one family can't make a difference, read on. If you are one of the people that do believe that everything we do can make a difference, then this article is for you as well.

Some of the littlest things that we do in life can make a big difference. As parents, we need to set a good example for our children. As employees, we need to show our customers that we are conscientious of our environment and as human beings; we need to take care of this earth since it's the only one we have. Also, wouldn't you like to leave this planet knowing it was a better place because you lived on it?

So what are some of these little things that we can do and teach our children to do that will make such a big difference? Let's take a look:

- Use a cloth bag to shop with instead of continually using plastic ones
- Toss organic waste such as your lettuce trimmings or potato peels into a compost pile
- Use less fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides by using your compost
- Turn off the lights when you leave the room
- Turn off the water when brushing your teeth
- Walk, ride a bike or take the bus instead of traveling by car
- Take faster showers or baths in just a small amount of water
- Help hang clothes on the line instead of putting them in the dryer
- Choose products that are not over packaged
- Recycle
- Let your voice be heard; write letters and go to meetings to voice your opinion on environmental issues.

These are only a few things that each of us can do to help the environment. Perhaps the most important thing that we can do is make sure that our young people are educated about their surroundings. If they are taught from a young age, chances are that they will grow up and utilize the good habits that they learned from your example.

Take your children to your local park and explain the role that nature plays. Talk about the trees and wildlife. Maybe you don't know much about such things. Take some time to educate yourself by reading or researching on the web. It really doesn't take that long and you may find yourself getting very involved in the subject matter. Your children will enjoy the quality time with you and learn about the environment in the process. You may find yourself looking forward to these times and discover that being out doors is very relaxing and enjoyable.

Encourage your kids to get involved in environmental issues. Help them write letters to their political leaders about the issues they care about. Support them and continually encourage them with their efforts in these areas. The small amount of time you take today will pay off in a big way in the future.

If you are interested in finding out more about the environment and what you can do to help, please contact our office at (863) 402-6545 or visit our website at <http://www.highlandsswcd.org/>. We also visit schools and do programs for kids of all ages about agriculture and the environment. To arrange

a program for your club, school or group, please call Corine at 402-6545 and I will be happy to set something up.

Remember, one person can make a difference and that person can be you!