

# S.E.E. Program-How we can make a difference on Earth

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It is only two months into the year of 2010, and the world has been shocked by two deathly earthquakes, one in Haiti and one in Chile. The Haiti one was reported to be a catastrophic magnitude 7.0  $M_w$  earthquake and has resulted in more than 200,000 people's deaths. Although the fatality of the Chile earthquake was much smaller than the Haiti earthquake (700 deaths), the rating of the magnitude was a frightening 8.8 on the moment magnitude scale. These two earthquakes make the science-fiction movie "2012" seem realistic to many people. Although I do not think these two earthquakes will lead to the disastrous ending in the movie "2012", they may be the result of horrific global warming. Our earth is under the threat of more realistic disasters, and we need to take action now!

The S.E.E. (Sustainability & Energy Education) program, created by E.S.P. (Energy Services of Pensacola) teaches our future generation (including me) how to protect our earth and environment. Through this program I learned that the key to protecting our earth is to maintain a sustainable (*definition*-not being wasteful; not compromising; not polluting future generations) environment. Specifically, we need to minimize the amount of waste we generate. We need to avoid polluting our water and air, and we need to use more renewable materials than non-renewable materials.

To minimize the amount of waste we throw out, we must reduce, reuse, and recycle as much as possible. Reducing, reusing, and recycling are all connected. We can do it daily. For example, when no one is in a room, we must turn off all lights and fans. When no one is using the computer or watching TV, they should be turned off. We should turn off all water faucets after using them. We can print using both sides of a piece of paper rather than two pieces of paper. To reduce the amount of materials we waste, we must reuse our materials and recycle them. We can reuse a lot of would-be-wasted materials. For example, we can buy a cloth bag that we use every time for shopping instead of disposable plastic bags. You can use plastic shopping bags from stores as garbage bags, too. People may use The Emerald Coast Utilities Authority (ECUA) organization for recycling. Aluminum soda cans, steel tin cans, corrugated cardboard, paper, newspapers and magazines, and many others can be recycled. Generally, plastics with numbers 1-7 (typically found on the bottom of the container) are also recyclable. By recycling, we can significantly decrease the amount of trash that goes into our landfills each year.

We also need to avoid polluting our water and air. One way to stop polluting our water is to use vinegar as a cleaning detergent when cleaning your bathtub instead of Bleach. When you drain the tub, the Bleach will go down the drain and pollute the rest of our water supply. However, when you use vinegar it does not pollute nearly as much. Similarly, you can also use baking soda to wash your clothes instead of laundry detergent. Baking soda is much better and greener for the environment. To protect the air, we can stop using spray bottles of air freshener. A much healthier way of getting your house to smell good is to plant flowers, trees and bushes around your house. That way, whenever you feel in need to freshen up your air a little, you can just open your windows and pick a handful of flowers. This fragrant, fresh smell is much better than a spray of air freshener for the environment.

Further, to protect our earth, we need to use more renewable materials than non-renewable materials. Renewable materials can be replaced in a human's lifetime (approximately 100 years) while non-renewable materials cannot. Although non-renewable materials are in general cheaper and more reliable, renewable materials are much better for our environment, air, and water. For example, people can install solar generators instead of power lines. Solar generators transfers solar energy into electricity, a much greener choice than to use fossil fuels to generate electricity, like coal, oil, and natural gases. Instead of using gasoline for your car, you can use a biofuel, such as Ethonal and biodiesel.

Protecting the earth is everybody's responsibility. Let's keep the three R's-reduce, reuse, and recycle-active daily. Let's bring the S.E.E. program to more people. Together, we can make our environment greener by being more sustainable. Together, we can avoid the disastrous ending in the movie "2012" becoming a reality.

Let's go green!