Calgary Teacher Wins Energy Educator of the Year Award

Grade 8 teacher inspires students to become energy conservation trailblazers

Ottawa, June 3, 2020 – Brooke Herwig, a Grade 8 teacher at South Middle School, Foundations for the Future Charter Academy, has been named the 2020 Energy Educator of the Year for her ongoing commitment to environmental education. The prize is one of two given out annually to a primary and secondary educator, as part of the Classroom Energy Diet Challenge (CEDC), an award-winning educational program. This is the second time a Calgary teacher has won this prestigious national award.

“I am humbled and delighted to be selected as the Energy Educator of the Year. Being able to help our students become energy-literate citizens is a passion of mine,” says Herwig. “My students and I are aware that selecting different forms of energy and using our resources wisely is key to our future health and prosperity. My Grade 8’s embraced these challenges with a willing spirit and drive. I could not be prouder of them!”

Going an hour without power, calculating your carbon footprint, and working with your household to use less water—these were just a few of the 16 energy-related challenges that engaged almost 40,000 students from across Canada during the 9th annual Classroom Energy Diet Challenge. Herwig’s class was one of more than 1,400 classrooms from across Canada that registered to participate in the CEDC this year.

Despite the COVID-19 lockdown, Herwig’s homeroom class successfully completed all 16 challenges, and created an open Edsby platform group, visible to the entire school community. Students could explain the challenges as they completed them in real-time, and offer tips for reducing energy usage in the home and school, once regular classes resume.

While isolating and working from home, Herwig’s students also pieced together an energy-saving themed video entry and won the CEDC’s video competition prize in the secondary school category. The win came with $1,500 in prize money and gave students a wonderful boost in a time when morale was challenged.

“The whole school has benefitted from the CEDC challenges,” says Justin Kool, Principal Educator at South Middle School. “The students made their learning visible in real-time, and shared their journey through displays and online messaging using the school’s Edsby platform. I am in awe at the innovation shown by Brooke and her class and can’t wait to see what they do next year.”

As school closures due to COVID-19 were announced, contest organizers modified the challenges to allow students and teachers to participate virtually. “This is a great example of a teacher inspiring students to think creatively to overcome unexpected challenges,” says Michelle Chaput, Director of Education at Canadian Geographic Education. “Confronted with a pandemic lockdown, the students looked for unique ways to share what their energy learnings with their school community and beyond through their winning public service announcement video.”

Nearing its 10th anniversary, the CEDC is Canada’s largest, bilingual, curriculum-based energy literacy competition that targets K-12 students and empowers them to join a community of young environmental stewards. This innovative national program is presented by Canadian Geographic Education with support from Shell Canada.
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