

Application Narrative for “Green Group: Planting Environmental Seeds”

## **SECTION 1: JUSTIFICATION (20 points)**

### **A. Project Need**

Due to human activity, the earth is warming. Effects include rising seas, extreme weather, precipitation changes, reduced crop yields, glacial retreat, and species extinction. Helena is eighth on the list of U.S. cities experiencing the warmest average year for the past five years, compared to the previous 30 years, according to a September 28, 2006, *Independent Record* article, with daytime temperatures averaging 5 degrees warmer than in the past 30 years. Global warming already is affecting Helena’s students due to weeks of wildfire smoke causing health warnings, cancellation of activities, and struggles for asthmatic children.

No other educational issue is as urgent as the environment; yet, environmental education can slip through our established school curricula. Helena High School’s new Green Group—with 30 student members—is preparing to tackle these problems. The Green Group has created a program to educate students in all Helena schools, while expanding recycling, reducing consumption, and promote re-using at Helena High.

### **B. Purpose of Project**

Our 2007-2008 grant proposal has three prongs: 1)creating a Student Speakers Bureau of student “experts” available to give presentations in any grade level classroom and for community groups; 2)expanding Helena High recycling to include cardboard, cell phones, and aluminum cans; and 3)reducing plastic usage by supplying filtered drinking water for re-usable bottles and selling re-usable bottles.

Student “experts” will research in print, online, and in-person (by interviewing in-school and community experts). They will create polished, 45-minute interactive presentations. For example, a student “expert” could show snowfall data at Great Divide Ski Area, have other students predict future snowfall, and discuss the future of skiing.

Thus, students will see the *relevance* of climate change to their own lives, and the Green Group will be meeting all of the “3 R’s” (relevance, rigor, and relationships) promoted by the Helena High administration. Independent research will be *rigorous*, and *relationships* will be built between community experts and student “experts.” The PEAK gifted and talented program is also interested in pairing child “experts” with the teenage presenters. Green Group will market these presentations to teachers at all Helena schools through a professional brochure, e-mail, and student-to-teacher sales pitches.

## **SECTION 2: RELEVANCE TO GOALS (40 PTS)**

### **A. Creativity and Innovation**

The titles of the student presentations are creative, including “Where’d the Snow Go?” (dwindling snowfall); “On Thin Ice” (melting glaciers and polar ice caps); “It’s Not Easy Being Green” (practical ways to reduce and re-use); “An Ocean of . . . Lotion?” (ocean pollution); “Where the Wild Things Are” (preserving habitat); “Pollution: Is It in You?” (contaminants in drinking water); “Green Eggs and Green Ham” (food and the environment); “We’re Full of It” (overflowing landfills); “Are We Actually Hippie Tree-Huggers?” (environmental misconceptions); “The Two-Wheel Deal” (bicycling); “Is It Warm Out Here, or Is It Just Me?” (global warming); “Cars ‘R’ Us” (vehicle emissions and alternative fuels); “Where Did All These People Come From?” (population control). The 16 titles would be the same each year so Green Group can re-use its brochure.

The Green Group's *public relations campaign* includes a logo, T-shirts, website, and video spots on school TV (by a student videographer). The *recycling* program promotes interaction between regular education students and special ed students as they work toward a common cause. These two populations at school rarely mix on their own.

The Green Group's *on-campus focus* will promote a healthier school environment and reduce waste by supplying filtered drinking water to all of Helena High's 1,600 students. A school drinking fountain would be replaced with a cooler hooked into the school's plumbing. Tap water would run through charcoal filters. Students could then fill up their own bottles with this good tasting, healthy water. We believe this will greatly reduce the consumption of plastic water bottles, as many students do not drink out of the fountains due to the water's taste and also due to the mucous, chew, etc. spat into the basins. Plastic water bottles take fuel to manufacture, are made from fuel, take fuel to transport, and take fuel to recycle. They do not decompose; plus, chemicals can leach out of the plastics.

**B. Extension of Student Learning; C. Collaboration; D. Availability of Other Funds**

Students will work with local experts and even conduct their own field research (Science Seminar has agreed to conduct wildlife counts and create habitat presentations.)

Partners are the HHS Special Education Department; Trash for Trees (which has given us trees); PEAK gifted and talented program; Montana Learning Center Canyon Ferry Lake (which has offered its facility for a retreat); and Helena High Teachers (10 science and math teachers have agreed to be in-school consultants).

Green Group raises money through recycling, concessions, and fundraisers. Others have donated: the State of Montana provides free recycle bins and pickup; City-County Sanitation will donate a cardboard bin (\$200); Mike Lamb, attorney, purchased an

industrial paper shredder; Kathleen Ely will create a web site for \$200 (actual cost: \$400); Bruce Capdeville will design a full-color brochure for \$150 (actual cost: \$300); co-leader will fund web domain name; Green Group will buy filters each year (\$200).

### **SECTION 3: PROJECT DESCRIPTION (25 pts)**

#### **A. Design; types of personnel and strengths**

The project design is described earlier in this grant application in sections 1B and 2A. Five polished presentations will be ready by February 2008. All 16 topics may not be completed this school year. Brochure will be ready by February 2008. Curriculum integration is described in section 1B. Materials will be used as described.

One Green Group co-leader (a special education teacher) started the HHS recycling program in 2001 and ran it solo (collecting 50,000 pounds of paper); the other leader (an English teacher) spearheaded the electronic reader board sign project at Helena High.

**3B. Budget** (Please see attached budget form) Total request is for \$2,824.

### **SECTION 4: EVALUATION, DISSEMINATION, FUTURE PLANS (15 pts)**

Each student presenter will be evaluated by the attending classroom teacher. We will also gauge our success by recording the number of presentation requests. We will continue to track the pounds of paper we recycle, the amount of money made on ink jet cartridges, and the amount of cardboard we recycle. The success of providing filtered water will be measured by how many students use it. The Student Speakers Bureau's will disseminate quality information throughout all of Helena's schools by using students as teachers. In addition, information will be disseminated nationwide on our website. We hope to become a district, statewide, and possibly national leader in high school conservation. Other Helena schools could link to our program and even share our name.