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'Green Team' looks to make Bromfield more energy efficient

by Erin Fay

Three months ago, Bromfield sophomores Emma Sullivan and Evelyn MacMahon were in their global studies class when they began to fear for the earth's future. As they learned about the dangers of climate change, Evelyn turned to Emma and said, "We should do something about this." What originated as an idea shared by these two soon became a club they call the Green Team.

Though recently formed, the Green Team already has 15 regular members, as well as an additional 15 students who have expressed interest through the club's Facebook page. Officially recognized by the School Sommittee on Jan. 14, the Green Team has wasted no time in searching for creative and practical ways to make the school and Harvard more energy efficient.

"We've been thoroughly planning things," says MacMahon, before listing some of their ideas, which include replacing the water bottles in the vending machine with biodegradable ones and reducing paper usage in the cafeteria. The club has also created a survey that members plan to pass out to students in homeroom within the next few weeks. This survey will help determine which of their ideas students would be on board with and what issues interest them the most.

With help from faculty members Bryce Mattie and Joshua Clarke, members of the Green Team use their meetings to discuss ways to improve awareness of environmental stability at the school. "We spin around a lot of ideas," says MacMahon. As an example, Sullivan described how members of the Green Team noticed that students were taking two paper cups to keep themselves from burning their hands when they bought coffee. To decrease the school's use of paper, the club is looking into recommending the school provide cup sleeves. MacMahon explains, "We're researching a lot of small ideas like that and then talking to people to see whether they're realistic."



Planning a Bromfield Blackout

One event that co-presidents MacMahon and Sullivan are especially excited about is their plan for a Bromfield Blackout. This event, which they hope will take place in the spring, is to be a day on which the school would try to use as little energy as possible. The two will meet with Principal O'Shea soon to discuss their plan and set a date. MacMahon hopes that this event in particular would help raise awareness at the school in a dramatic way.

"We're also trying to make it more fun," MacMahon says. "We're hoping that approach will make it into a more school-wide thing so

it won't die out after we graduate." The previous environmental club at Bromfield fell apart after its leaders graduated, Sullivan adds. She hopes that in rebuilding it, they can create a club that will last long after they have graduated.

When asked if they receive any funding from the school, Sullivan replied that they don't, but she said the Student Council is considering offering the club a grant. MacMahon said that if the club is awarded the grant, members would probably put it toward one of their paper usage plans, "Something small but significant."

The co-presidents also expressed interest in teaming up with the Harvard Energy Advisory Committee, although they have not yet contacted that group. One of their ideas, adding sidewalks to Harvard's streets to encourage walking rather than driving, might benefit from the Energy Advisory Committee's assistance, but would ultimately require the support of town boards and an appropriation of funds at Town Meeting.

Any student is welcome to attend a Green Team meeting. The club meets Mondays after school in teacher Mattie's room. "It's something that we are passionate about, something that we really want to see happen in the school, and I think the biggest thing is to just have people aware that it's something that needs to be changed and needs to be changed now. We want to get students to be supportive and participate as much as they can," MacMahon said. Added Sullivan, "I think in the short time the club has been around we've made a really good start."

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