

CARBON-EMISSION REDUCTION

Captain Climate hands out awards

NELSON --- Superhero Captain Climate was in schools recently, rewarding students for carbon-emission reductions. Over 650 grade five and six students throughout the Kootenay Lake and Kootenay-Columbia School Districts participated in the BC Sustainable Energy Association's Climate Change Showdown over the past year. Awards were handed to the top scoring students, to acknowledge those who most effectively adopted lifestyle habits and consumer choices that would reduce their carbon emissions.

Local environmental educator Monica Nissen is the coordinator for the program in the Kootenays. She played the role of a climate action superhero when presenting the climate change workshop to 28 classes in the region. Her idea for the superhero theme, she says, was "to empower kids, giving them positive actions they can take to reduce their emissions, rather than weighing them down with bad-news stories."

The top-scoring class was Al Defoe's grade 6 class from Glenmerry Elementary School in



Trail. That school is also home to the winning student, Ricky Martin, who had the highest overall score in the show-down. Two other classes also deserve honourable mention: Jill Gingrich's class at Blewett Elementary School and Mary Larmour's class at Glenmerry.

The Climate Change Showdown, an education and outreach program developed by the BC Sustainable Energy Association, delivered over 550 free workshops in elementary school classrooms across the province, reaching over 14,000 households and stimulating greenhouse gas reductions of

over 7,500 tonnes.

"We found a successful way to influence household behaviour and reduce carbon emissions; after our workshop the children took the challenge home, worked with their families for four weeks, and won awards for Superhero reductions," reported Climate Change Showdown project manager Estella Bastidas.

The BCSEA offered the Climate Change Showdown presentations thanks to generous contributions from Environment Canada, Vancity, City of Vancouver, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, City of Coquitlam and City of Richmond and Epod Solar. Local sponsors are: Fortis BC, Nelson and District Credit Union, Kootenay Association of Science and Technology (KAST), Kootenay Co-op Country Store, Paul Edney of 'We Are What We Do', the Town of Creston, and RDCK Area D Director Andrew Shadrack.

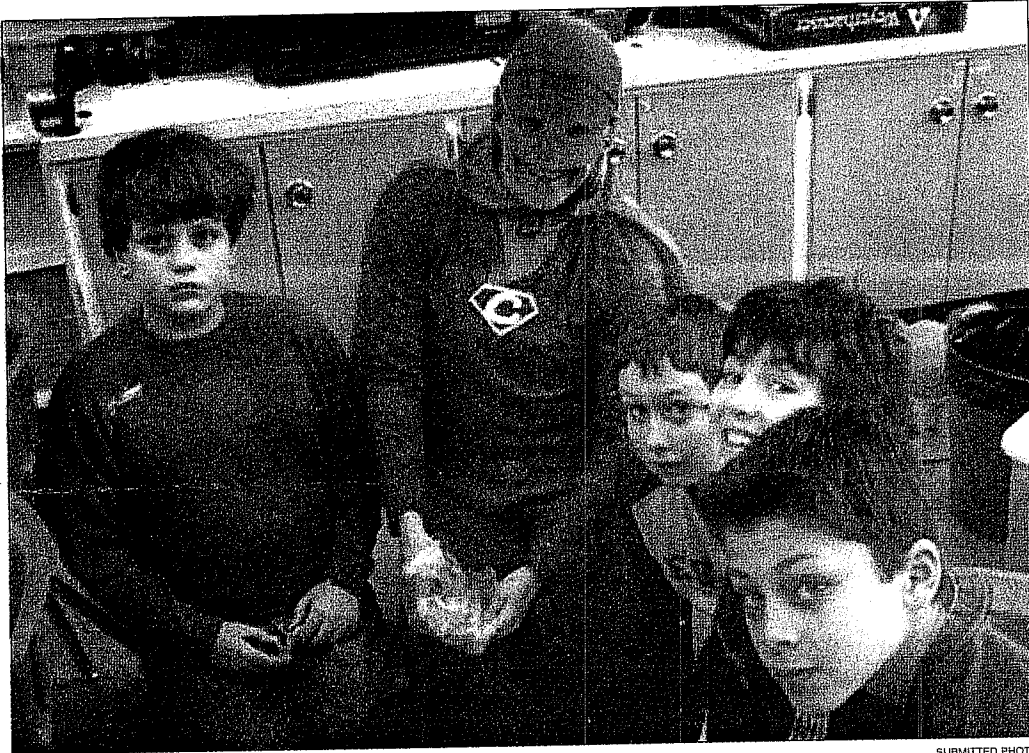
To learn more about the Climate Change Showdown Project, visit <http://www.bcsea.org/cshowdown/> or call Monica Nissen at 352-6346.

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Grade 6 students at Glenmerry received a visit from Captain Climate after being named the winners of the Climate Change Showdown.

Glenmerry classes win district environmental challenge

In addition, Grade 6 student Ricky Martin earns highest individual score for making most changes in his home

BY KATIE TURNER
Times Staff

Throughout the school year "Captain Climate" made her way to over 25 elementary schools across the region to encourage students to participate in the Climate Change Showdown.

The results are in and the environmental superhero has named Al Defoe's Grade 6 class from Glenmerry Elementary as the winner of the challenge, with Mary Larmour's Grade 5 class receiving honourable mention.

Captain Climate is the alter ego of Monica Nissen, an environmental educator who says she came up with the superhero theme "to empower kids, giving them positive actions they can take to reduce their emissions."

The showdown was put forward by the B.C. Sustainable Energy Association to 650 Grade 5 and 6

classes throughout the Kootenay Lake and Kootenay-Columbia school districts. It involved a variety of activities from games and videos, to class discussions all aimed at making the students more aware of their environmental impact.

In addition, the students were asked to participate in a four-week long challenge to get their families to reduce their impact as well.

Over spring break, Glenmerry students kept track of the changes they made in their homes and submitted their results to their teachers a month later, said Defoe.

"I think it taught them that within their own families there are ways they can cut down on their impact," said Defoe.

Environmental issues are something that was talked about in the classroom even before the challenge, said both Defoe and Larmour.

"The reason we got involved was because we talk a lot about conserving," said Larmour. "I think it acknowledged what we've already worked on."

The highest individual score in the entire showdown came from Grade 6 Glenmerry student Ricky Martin, who made the most changes in his home.

"I liked it because we got lots of time to do it and it was good experience," said 11-year-old Ricky.

Even after the challenge, the Martin family has continued to reduce their impact doing simple things like changing to water-conserving shower heads and turning off the lights when they leave the room, said Ricky.

"I learned that you can conserve energy just by yourself," he said.

If there were one message he could give to kids his age about the environment, it is, "I would tell them to shut off your lights and not have long showers and carpool."

In total, B.C. Sustainable Energy Association delivered over 550 free workshops to elementary schools across the province.

The association estimates that through the showdown, they reached over 14,000 households and reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 7,500 tonnes.