

Don't use lights!



Enjoy what Nature has to offer!



December 5, 2012

Dear Neighbor:

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this year's Sarasota County **Energy Upgrade – Efficiency @ Home 2013 Calendar** illustrated by Sarasota County elementary school students.

Sarasota County is encouraging everyone to be thoughtful and sustainable in using our energy resources. In our homes, we rely on energy to power our lights, appliances, electronics and vehicles. We use electricity to heat water and cool and heat our homes. Energy is wasted by using too much or not using it wisely. Energy is not free; when we waste energy, we waste money and place unnecessary stress on our natural resources and the environment.

There are many ways we can use less energy at home right now.

Sarasota County's Energy Upgrade Program, www.enenergyupgradetoday.com, promotes the use of energy-efficient products and behavior that reduce energy use and save people money.

This year's calendar focuses on what each of us can do to reduce our own energy use and help keep our land, air and waterways clean and healthy. The choices we make today will shape our future.

Won't you join me in making this a more sustainable community and consider your own **"Energy Upgrade"** today?

As you can see by the illustrations in this calendar, our students are already aware that reducing your energy use can be as easy as:

- **Using energy wisely and promoting renewable energy sources like wind and solar and driving fuel-efficient vehicles.**
- **Buying ENERGY STAR qualified appliances and lighting, and turning off lights and electronics when not in use.**
- **Creating a water and energy "smart" yard. Reduce water pollution by limiting mowing and fertilizer use, planting buffers and using bioswales and rain gardens to filter stormwater runoff from our yards and streets.**
- **Turning off lights, adding home insulation and programmable thermostats and using "smart" chargers that turn off after charging is complete.**
- **Conserving water to save energy by installing WaterSense qualified water-saving faucets and shower heads and repairing leaks inside and out. Water requires energy for treatment and pumping, as well as heating in the home.**

We invite you to use this calendar as a daily reminder to be **"energy smart"** and take the time to enjoy the natural resources around you. We also encourage you to learn more about how you can conserve energy resources by participating in our community Sustainability Program and Neighborhood Environmental NEST Stewardship Team (NEST). For more information on our Sustainability or NEST initiatives, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at **941-861-5000**, or visit **www.scgov.net**.

Christine Robinson, Chair
SARASOTA COUNTY COMMISSION



Clara Mogford, Age 9
Venice Elementary, Grade 3, Ms. Hicks

In this calendar, we present 13 images created by local elementary school students, showing how each of us can be more energy efficient through wise energy use and water conservation within our homes and community. Sarasota County encourages everyone to do their part by living in a way that lessens our impact on energy resources.

We asked the students to imagine and show us how we could live more sustainably in our world. Their illustrations highlight ways to save energy and water and not waste these resources in our homes and yards. Then our judging panel, comprised of staff from Sarasota County, the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program and the Sarasota County School Board, rated the artwork on the best expression of theme, poster design, creativity and artistic skill. Copies of the winning calendar artwork will be displayed throughout January 2013 in the Sarasota County School Board Administrative Office, 1960 Landings Blvd., Sarasota.

Hundreds of talented students entered the contest, making it difficult to choose only 13 winning entries. As you will see in these pages, local students clearly understand the importance of using our resources wisely, and that our actions have a direct impact on our quality of life.

To get you started in your own home, we have listed some tips on how you can reduce your own energy use. On the back of the calendar, we have provided a link to our Energy Upgrade website. We also have included a “Thought for the Month” to help all of us preserve our natural resources and keep our county clean and healthy for the future.

This year, we also are highlighting Sarasota County’s Energy Upgrade community outreach program as a resource to help residents understand the home energy upgrade choices that are available based on our Florida climate. These upgrade choices can make your home more comfortable and help you to save money.

As you look at each page of this calendar, take a moment to think about what you can do to reduce energy and water use in your home or yard. In this calendar, we are highlighting five ways that Sarasota County and citizens can really make a difference in the wise use of our energy and water resources.



Save Energy and Money at Home

The average household in Sarasota County spent over \$1,600 on its electricity bill in 2010. The amount of energy savings that can be achieved in any home depends on the current condition of the home and its equipment, the available budget to implement energy upgrades, and the occupants' behavior.

Even if the homeowner has no experience or skills in home improvements, no-cost energy savings can be achieved through behavior change, such as turning off the lights when leaving a room. The first step towards efficiency is to evaluate current energy use and identify opportunities for improvement.



Money Isn't All You're Saving

5 Steps to Saving Energy and Money

• STEP 1- Learn It

Start by visiting **www.energyupgradetoday.com** to learn more about energy use in and around your home, and the choices you can make to start saving energy.

• STEP 2- Seal It

By using a caulk gun and weather stripping to seal air leaks, and adding insulation where needed, you can reduce your home energy bills.

• STEP 3- Do It

Each room in your house offers unique opportunities for saving energy and money, including lighting, appliances, electronics, and more. Visit **www.energyupgradetoday.com** for room-by-room energy savings.

• STEP 4- Cool It

In Sarasota County, 40% or more of a home's energy use is devoted to cooling. Scheduling regular air conditioning maintenance, sealing ductwork, and upgrading to a higher efficiency system can make your home more comfortable and reduce energy costs.

• STEP 5- Get It

When making home energy upgrades that require a financial investment, look at incentives that can help save money. Visit **www.energyupgradetoday.com** to learn about utility, local and federal incentives available.

Your home's energy use and utility costs are influenced by many factors that affect efficiency: attic and wall insulation levels; shading of the home by trees; quality and sealing of the windows and doors; properly sealed ductwork; efficient heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) and lighting systems; and, of course, how the systems are used. For more help, visit the Energy Upgrade website at **www.energyupgradetoday.com**.

For more information, contact the **Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000**.

When we can reduce the unintended impacts of wasting water, we are preserving the vitality of our communities for generations to come.



Save Water to Save Energy

There is a close connection between water and energy. It takes water to create energy by cooling electric power plants fueled by coal, oil, natural gas and nuclear power. Energy is needed to extract, treat and move water to our homes and businesses, and it is used in the collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater. Heating water for bathing, shaving, cooking and cleaning also requires a considerable amount of energy.

To reduce your water use, start inside your home. The following are some no-cost and low-cost ways to save water and energy:

- **Turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth and install a low-flow faucet aerator.**
- **Take shorter showers and use a low-flow shower head.**
- **Wash your clothes in cold water.**
- **Look for and purchase EPA WaterSense qualified faucets, toilets and shower heads.**



We can save water and energy outside the home in our landscapes. This is especially important if you have a permanent in-ground irrigation system. Ways to save water and energy outside the home include:

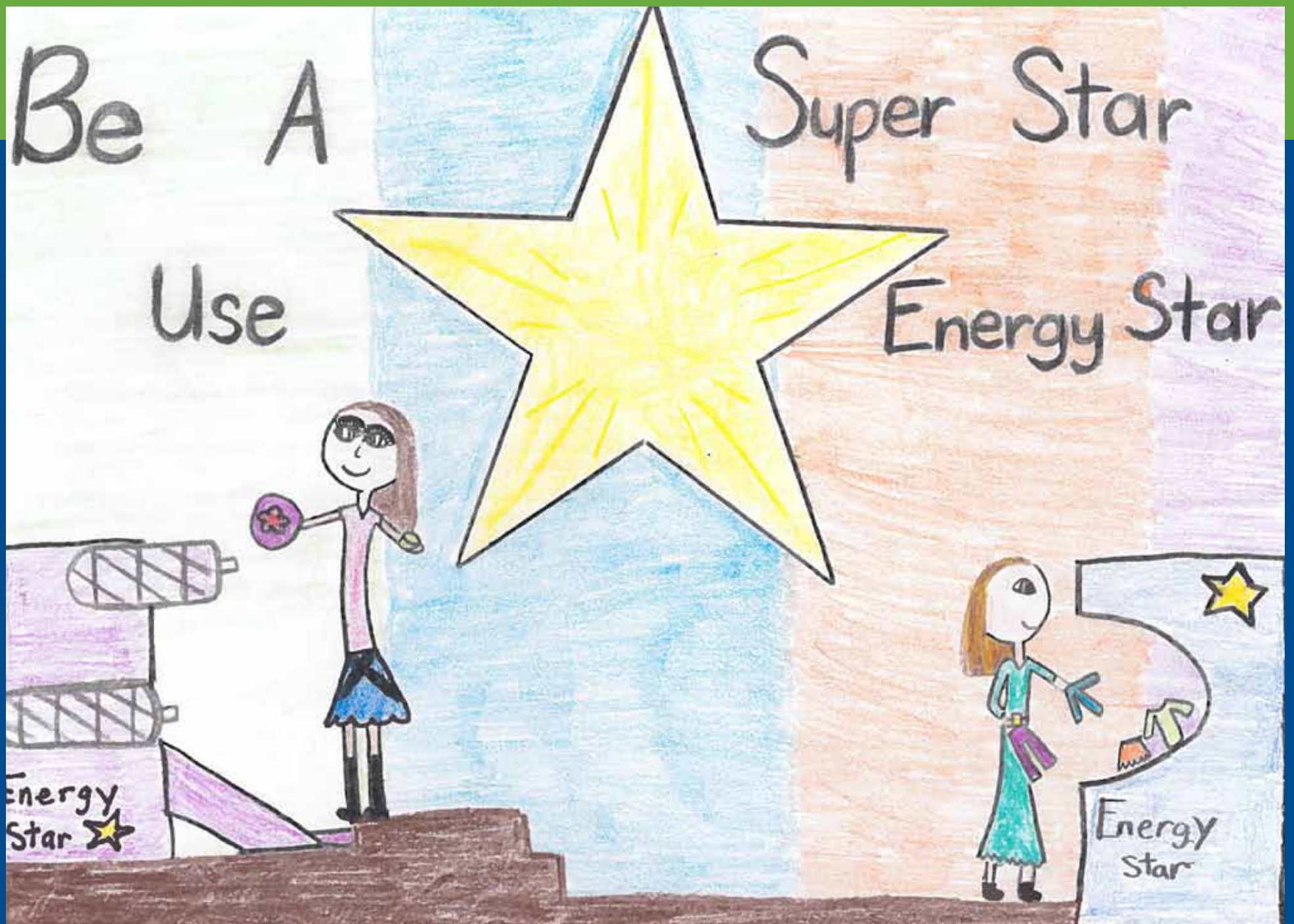
- **Water your yard or garden early in the morning to reduce evaporation loss.**
- **Adjust irrigation heads to avoid waste and overspray on the house, sidewalks, and street.**
- **Minimize mowing by reducing lawn area and adding landscape beds.**
- **Plant water-wise native and bay-friendly plants.**

For more ideas to save water and energy inside and outside your home, visit www.energyupgradetoday.com and see "Step 3: Room by Room DIY," which includes landscaping tips.

Realize the value of rain and maintain a system that allows you to retain as much rainwater as possible in your yard before it becomes stormwater runoff. Add a rain barrel or cistern to capture rainwater. Plant a rain garden to help collect and infiltrate stormwater and add beauty and wildlife value to your yard and the community.

When we can reduce the unintended impacts of wasting water, we are preserving the vitality of our communities for generations to come. For more information on rain gardens, visit www.scgov.net, keyword search NEST. Now that you have made the energy and water connection, use your knowledge to help yourself and your neighbors reduce the demand on these two essential resources.

Are you interested in having your own rain barrel? Visit the Sarasota County website at www.scgov.net, keyword search Rain Barrels, or contact the County Call Center at **941-861-5000**.



Isabella Thomsen, Age 11
St. Martha's, Grade 5, Mrs. Salomone

THOUGHT
FOR THE
MONTH

Look for ENERGY STAR qualified products that use less energy, save money, and help to protect the environment.

January 2013



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Turn
Off
The
Lights

Zoe Katsaros, Age 7
Englewood Elementary, Grade 1, Ms. Braucher

THOUGHT
FOR THE
MONTH

Turn off lights and computers and unplug electronic devices when not in use to save energy.

February 2013



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Use Solar Panels



Shannon Chan, Age 10
Pine View Elementary, Grade 5, Mrs. Seidell

THOUGHT
FOR THE
MONTH

Reduce utility bills by generating your own electricity from the sun with solar panels.

March 2013



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Samantha Shanahan, Age 10
 Laurel Nokomis Elementary, Grade 5, Mrs. Schenke

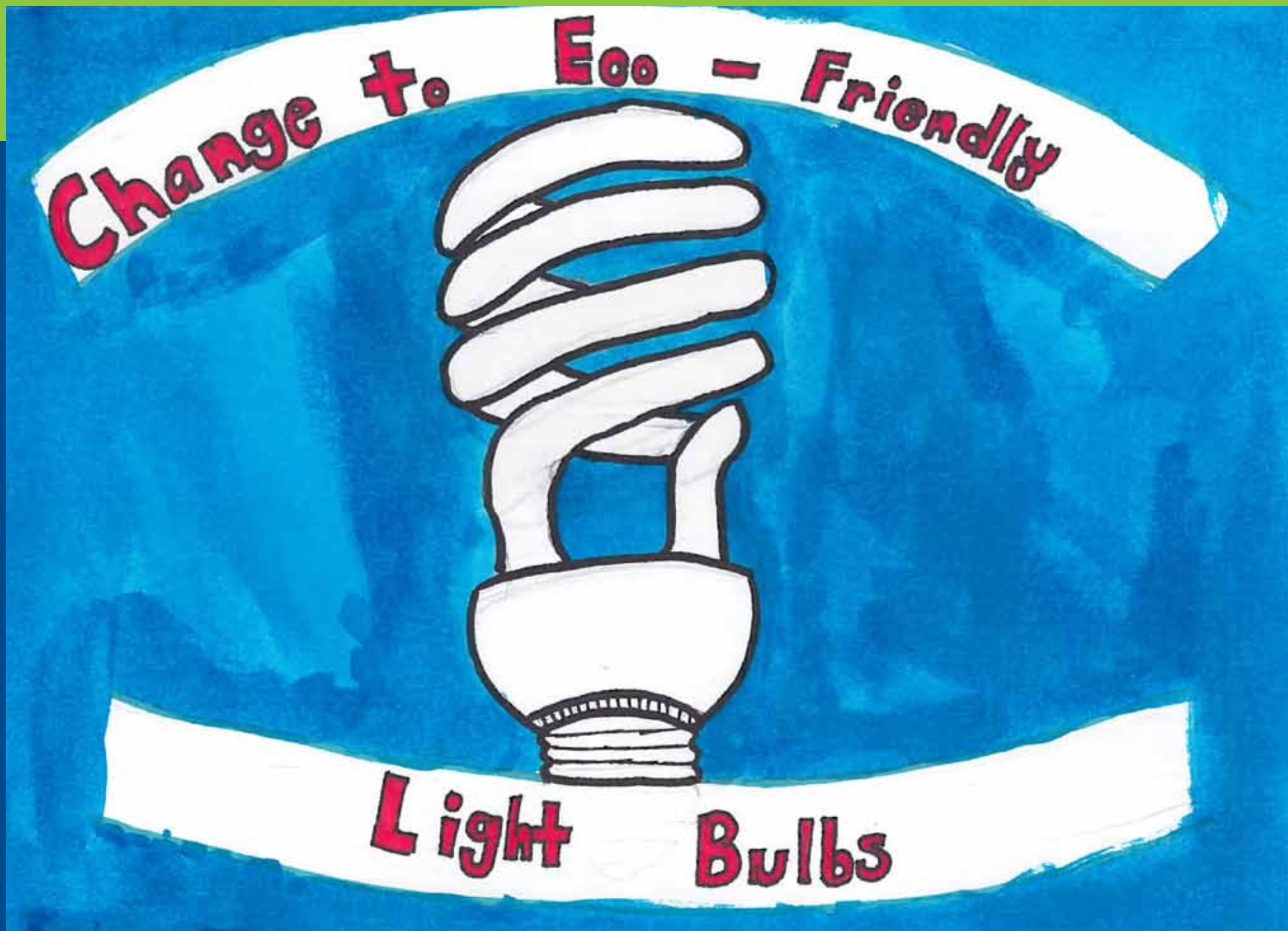
THOUGHT
 FOR THE
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Look for all the ways to conserve energy around your house and on the road to reduce energy costs.

April 2013



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Emma Griffith, Age 10
Ashton Elementary, Grade 4, Mr. Redington

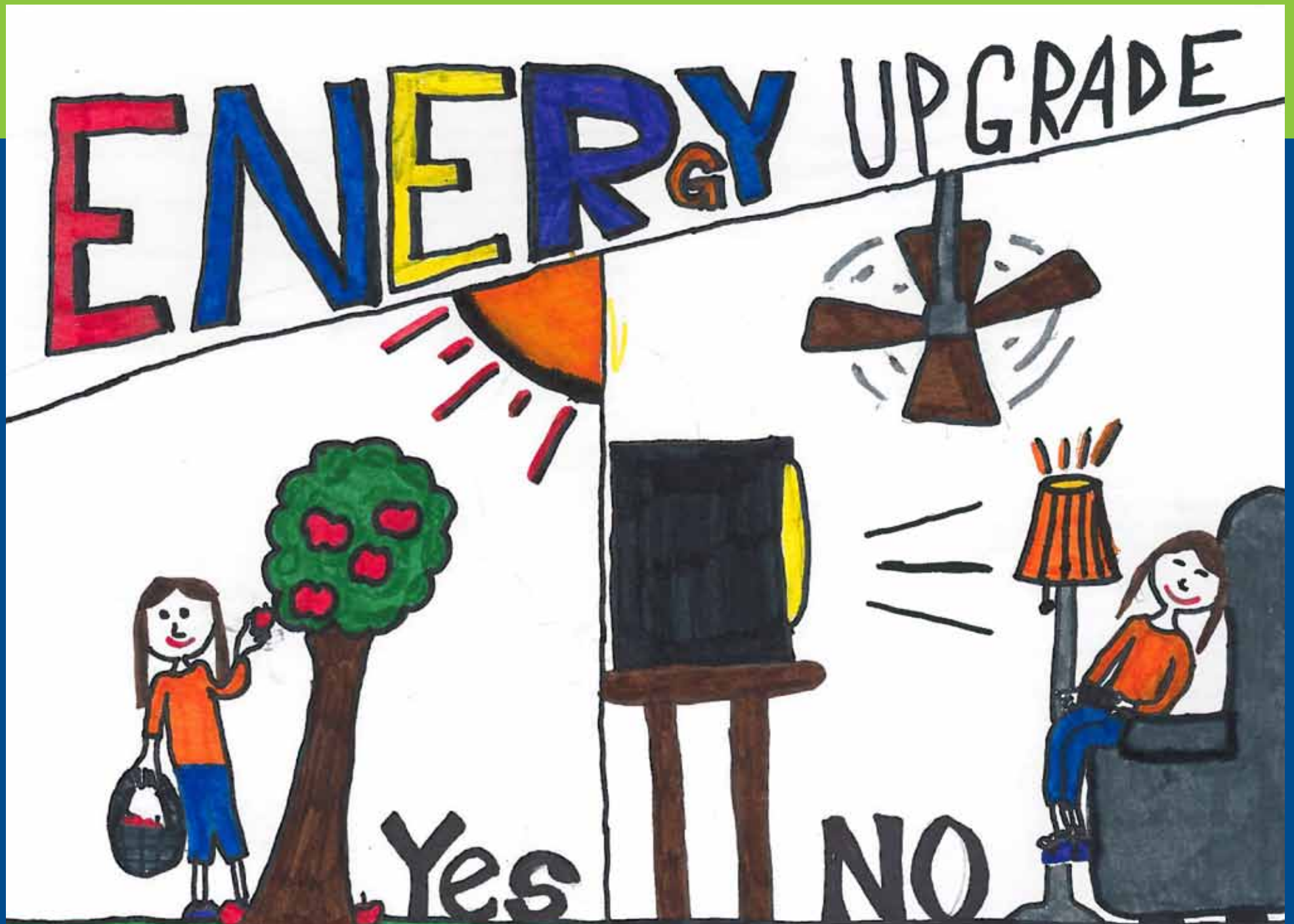
THOUGHT
FOR THE
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Change to ENERGY STAR qualified light bulbs to save energy and money.

May 2013



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Emma Young, Age 10
Venice Elementary, Grade 4, Mr. Hines

THOUGHT
FOR THE
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Save energy inside and outside the home: reduce turf grass and create a food garden.

June 2013



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Angelo Carrillo, Age 7
Ashton Elementary, Grade 2, Mrs. Tucker

THOUGHT
FOR THE
MONTH

Use a clothesline to dry your laundry with the sun to save energy and money.

July 2013



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Timothy Wiseman, Age 11
Oak Park Elementary, Grade 5, Mrs. Kennedy

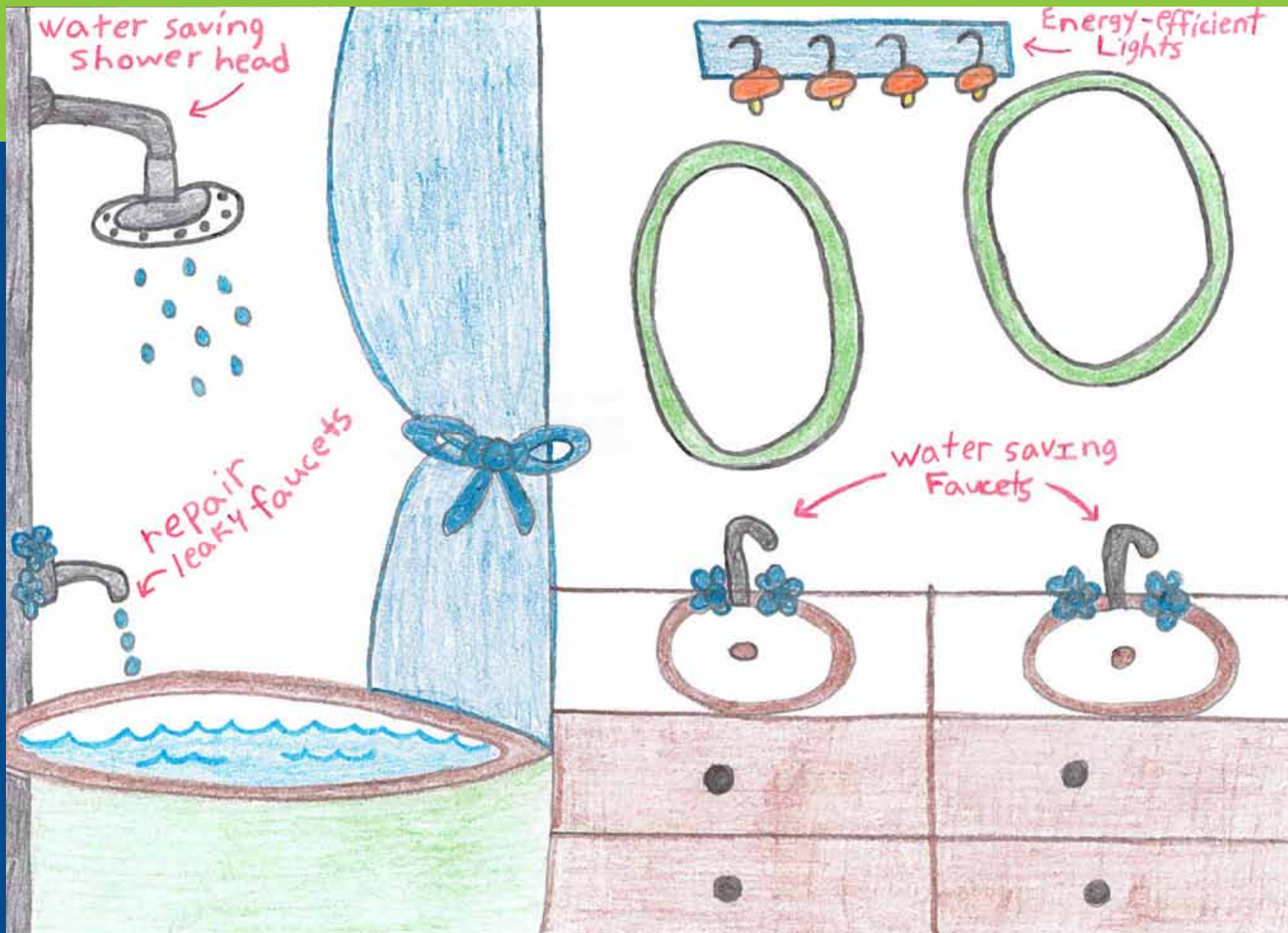
THOUGHT
FOR THE
MONTH

Plant landscape buffers and rain gardens to reduce runoff and pollution, and save energy.

August 2013



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Krystal Couch, Age 8
Glenallen Elementary, Grade 3, Mrs. Schenarts

THOUGHT
FOR THE
MONTH

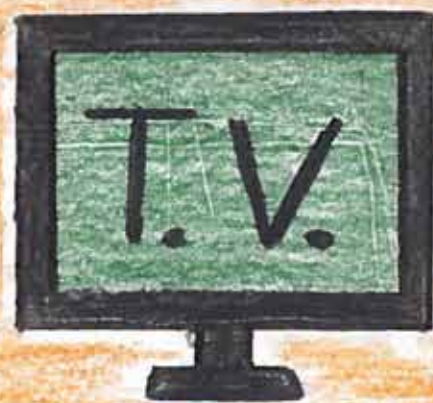
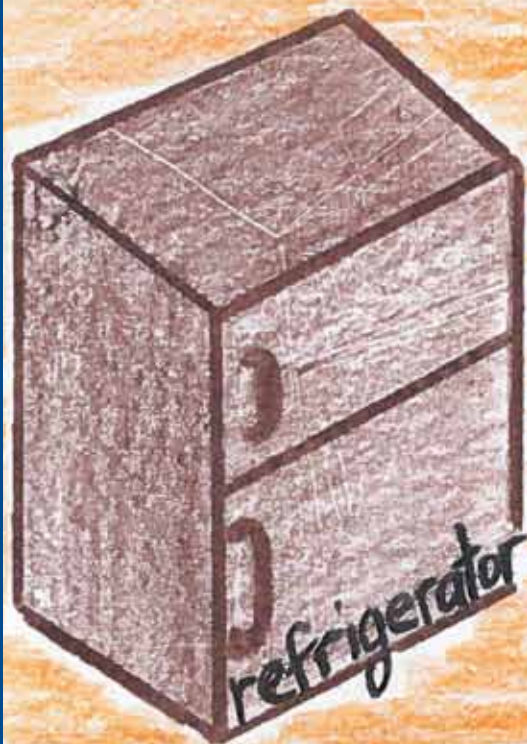
Conserve water and energy by turning off the tap and using WaterSense qualified products.

September 2013

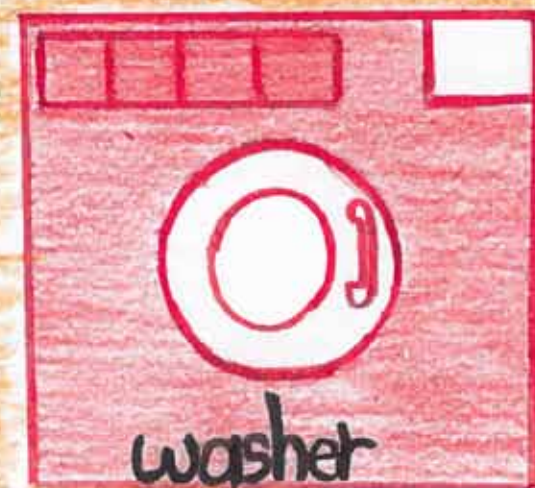


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Be A Star Use



Products



Jeanni Castro, Age 9
Bay Haven Elementary, Grade 4, Mrs. Morin

THOUGHT
FOR THE
MONTH

When buying new appliances, look for the **ENERGY STAR** label to save energy and money.

October 2013



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Brigitte McKittrick, Age 10
Lakeview Elementary, Grade 5, Ms. Usman

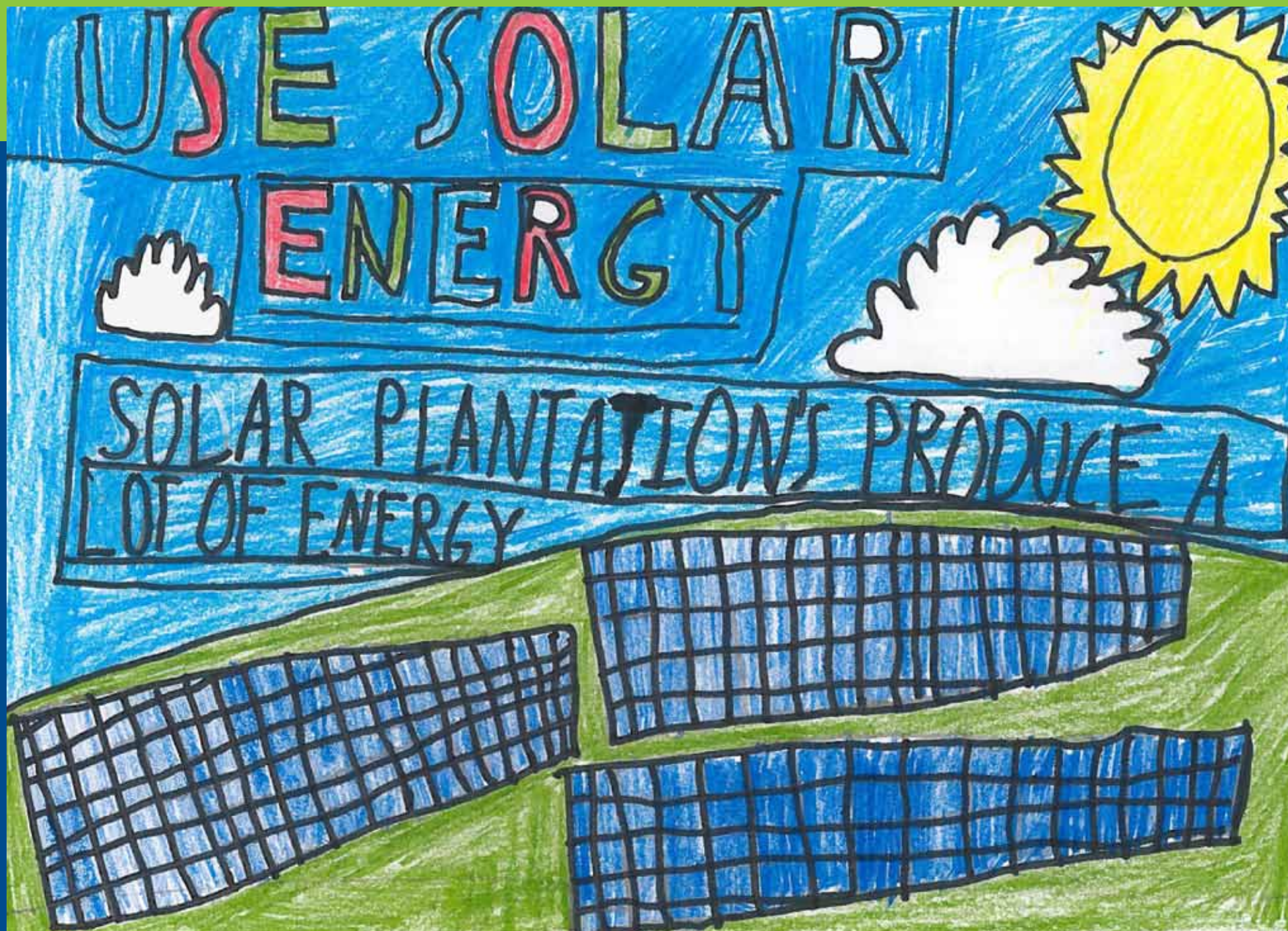
THOUGHT
FOR THE
MONTH

Visit www.energyupgradetoday.com for
room-to-room tips on saving energy and money.

November 2013



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Jordan Bender, Age 9
Island Village Montessori School, Grade 3, Mrs. Myrna

THOUGHT
FOR THE
MONTH

Choose the sun as a resource for local, clean, renewable energy in the Sunshine State.

December 2013



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By learning to eat foods that are locally available and in season -- and growing and buying local -- each of us can do our part to save energy.



Eating Locally to Save Energy

The system of food production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste that provides our food needs is energy-intensive. One-fifth of all petroleum, a non-renewable energy source, used in the United States is for agriculture. Rising energy prices affect the cost of food since petroleum is used to package and process the food and then transport and store it. Studies show that the average distance food travels in distribution is 1,500 miles. It also takes a lot of fossil fuel energy to produce chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The price of nitrogen is tied to the price of natural gas; the manufacturing of 1 ton of chemical nitrogen fertilizer requires about 35,000 cubic feet of natural gas.

By learning to eat foods that are locally available and in season -- and growing and buying local -- each of us can do our part to save energy. Local and unprocessed food is fresher, tastier, and more nutritious. It is also good for the local economy; buying directly from family farmers helps them stay in business. By supporting a sustainable local food system, you can help ensure that there will be farms in our community tomorrow, green space for wildlife, and access to locally grown food by future generations.

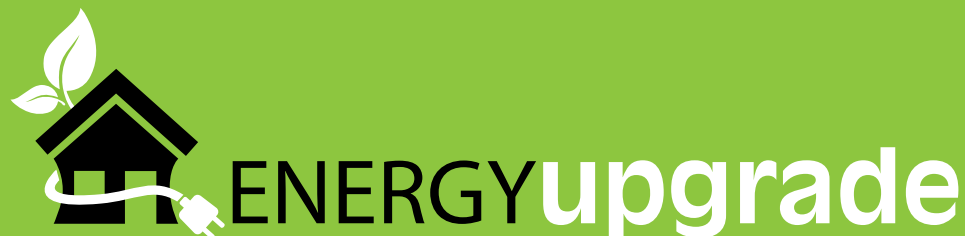
We can reduce energy used to produce, process and deliver seafood by purchasing and eating locally harvested seafood. Support sustainable seafood and our local economy by buying Florida seafood. Catch and cook locally harvested seafood from sea to table. For smart seafood choices and consumer pocket guides, visit www.seafoodwatch.org/. For information on what fresh seafood is available, visit www.florida-agriculture.com/seafood/.

The easiest way to eat local is to shop at farmers markets and local grocery stores that provide well-marked locally grown items. Eating locally includes foods from your backyard garden, school gardens or community gardens. Organic gardening practices reduce the use of petro-chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Consider reducing your lawn area with edible landscaping such as fruit trees, herb and vegetable gardens. Don't mow your yard; instead, grow food and eat it. For more information on vegetable gardening and local food, visit the UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County website at <http://sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu/AG/localfood.shtml>.



2013

Drive smarter to save fuel! There are opportunities to save money associated with our cars.



Transportation Choices to Save Energy

Nearly 30 percent of the energy used in Florida is consumed by our vehicles. Florida has more registered cars per capita than any other state, with nearly one car for each person. There are opportunities to save money associated with our cars.

Drive smarter to save fuel by:

- **Ditching junk in the trunk. An extra 100 pounds cuts vehicle fuel economy by up to 2%.**
- **Keeping your tires properly inflated to improve gas mileage by about 3%.**
- **Driving sensibly. Speeding, rapid acceleration, and rapid braking around town can lower gas mileage by 10%.**
- **Shutting your engine off. Idling gets 0 mpg; cars with larger engines waste even more gas.**



Not enough parking? Rising gas prices? Ride the bus. **Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT)** allows you to plan your trip using Google Maps. SCAT TRAC provides updated arrival information for selected bus routes. SCAT fleet includes 20 diesel-electric hybrid buses. You also can pedal and ride. SCAT buses have bike racks that accommodate standard-sized bicycles. For more information, visit www.scgov.net/SCAT.

Sarasota County's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will promote and encourage efficient and safe bicycle and pedestrian travel. For more information, visit www.scgov.net, keyword search Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

The Legacy Trail is the regional backbone of a recreational and nature-based trail system connecting communities across Sarasota County. The trail runs from just south of the city of Sarasota to Venice, following the former CSX railroad corridor. For more information, visit www.scgov.net, keyword search Legacy Trail.

Alternatives to gasoline-powered vehicles include neighborhood electric vehicles and other electric vehicles. **Neighborhood electric vehicles (NEVs)**, also called low-speed vehicles, are commonly used for neighborhood commuting, light hauling and delivery. NEVs are street-legal and limited to traveling on roads with posted speed limits of 35 mph or less.

Plug-in vehicles are available today from several automobile manufacturers. **A plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV)** burns no gasoline during the first 40 miles of driving after a charge, and then has an extended range gasoline engine. Electric vehicles (EVs) are powered by an electric motor, recharged by common household electricity, do not require tune-ups or oil changes associated with conventional vehicles, and have no tailpipe emissions. Plug-in vehicles owners typically refuel at home, but public and private charging infrastructure is available for drivers who wish to fuel their cars while away from home.



ENERGYupgrade

For more information on saving energy and water, visit:

U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy

<http://www.eere.energy.gov/>

Florida Solar Energy Center

<http://www.fsec.ucf.edu/>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, ENERGY STAR

<http://www.energystar.gov/>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, WaterSense

<http://www.epa.gov/watersense/>

OCTOBER 2012

Sarasota County Commission

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Energy Upgrade

Energy Upgrade

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Five Steps to Energy Savings

The less energy you use, the more money you save. But that's just the beginning. Enjoy other important benefits by improving your home's energy efficiency including:

- Increase your home's comfort year-round
- Add to your home's value
- Protect Sarasota County's environment
- Lead the County to a more sustainable future

Sarasota County has developed this site to help you use less energy, reduce your energy bills and enjoy the many other advantages of an energy-efficient home.

You can also download the Energy Saving Checklists below to make a customized list of the tips most relevant for your home. Choose which improvements you will implement, estimate the possible savings and then mark them off as you complete the improvements. There are four checklists that vary based on the cost of the improvements.

- No Cost
- Low Cost (<\$75)
- Moderate (\$75 to \$600)
- Investment (>\$600)

Energy Saving Checklists

- Investment Checklist
- Low Cost Checklist
- Moderate Cost Checklist
- No Cost Checklist

Links of Interest

- Sustainability

This program receives funding from the US Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program.

Sarasota County

Sarasota County, Florida 941-861-5000

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