

Harwich Learning Center Wins National Energy Award

by William F. Galvin

HARWICH – The Adventure Seekers Energy Club, a group of 10 students within the Harwich Community Learning Center programs, has been nationally recognized for their energy conservation efforts.

The fifth- to seventh-grade student group was honored with the National Energy Education Development (NEED) program's Special Category Project of the Year for the most outstanding energy project developed through a school-based energy education program.

The project was funded by the Cape Light Compact Energy Education Program. Retired Harwich Elementary School teacher Sally Andreola, who works for Cape Light Compact, wanted to do an energy club project with the Adventure Seekers, Ann Emerson, director of the Harwich Community Learning Center Programs said. Andreola served as the advisor for the program.

"She's awesome," Emerson said of Andreola.

This was the first year the club participated in the program, Emerson said. The program consisted of placing energy information on bulletin boards and hosting an Energy Carnival for younger students while selling nearly 1,000 compact fluorescent light bulbs to teachers and parents. The energy club will also be assisting in an Energy Carnival on Thursday (today) at the middle school. Emerson also said as part of the club's program they went to SEMASS in Rochester to learn more about converting waste to energy.

The NEED program recognizes youth energy achievement and outreach efforts. The Adventure Seekers Energy Club's effort was initially judged by the state Department of Energy Resources and recognized as Best In State. In April, the National Awards Review Panel, made up of leaders from energy, education and government sectors chose winning projects from 60 entries forwarded from the states.

The Eastham Elementary School Green Energy Army was also recognized as the State Elementary School winner. Nauset Regional High School's Green Team and Cape Cod Academy were runners up at the state level.

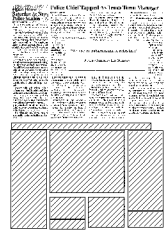
"The students has fun while learning about energy efficiency and sharing information with other students. Being honored with the top national award in their category is exciting," Ann Emerson, director of the Harwich Community Learning Center Programs, said. "I feel great about it, it's amazing."

The members of the energy club were pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the Cape Light Compact Energy Program, Emerson said. Since 2002, Cape Light Compact in partnership with NEED and the Cape Cod Cooperative Extension has offered educational services to the Cape and Martha's Vineyard schools, providing information, materials, teacher training and classroom presentations as part of the mission to promote an energy conscious and educated society.

The HCLCP program is a self-sustaining one, funded solely by the fees of the participants. The school-age care program is for students in the Kindergarten through seventh grade. The program strives to provide an environment with social, emotional and academic support skills as well as self-esteem building activities.

With the creation of Adventure Seekers, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Carolyn Cragin said, they wanted to develop a program that would challenge the students. "Now they're all honor roll students and that's better in the scheme of things than getting an award," Cragin said.

But awards are also important, especially when they come on the national level. The energy club will be honored at a National Recognition Ceremony in Washington, D.C. on Monday, June 27. The Cape Light Compact will pay for the accommodations, but the students must



fund the transportation. To help defray that cost members of the club will be selling compact fluorescent light bulbs through Ann Emerson at 508-430-2355. They are also looking for someone to sponsor the trip. The transportation for the students and advisors is estimated to cost \$3,000.



Students from the national award winning Adventure Seekers Energy Club within the Harwich Community Learning Center Programs made a visit to the SEMASS plant in Rochester in March to learn more about converting waste to energy. COURTESY PHOTO