

green report

BY CRISTOF TRAUDES

Another green effort for Linden Hills, this one targeting parents

Green might as well be the official color of Linden Hills. The neighborhood already is the home of nonprofit Linden Hills Power and Light, Eric Utne's first Community Earth Council and a soon-to-launch curbside compost pickup program. Now, its Environment Committee is set to launch a program aimed directly at parents.

Called EcoParents, it's meant as a sort of book club-style forum, with intimate gatherings at people's homes to discuss ways to reduce waste and toxicity.

The program is the brainchild of Keiko Veasey, vice president of the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council and the mother of two young children.

"It seemed to me that there are specific challenges and interests facing parents in wading through the myriad of information about environmental issues," Veasey said, "especially ones that may have a health impact on their children."

Her inspiration came from a New York Times article highlighting a similar program called the EcoMom Alliance, a much larger nonprofit that focuses on mothers to create a sustainable future. EcoMom has more than 200 chapters worldwide,



PHOTO BY MICHELE JOKINEN

Keiko Veasey is pictured at her Linden Hills home with her children Kaiya, 3, and Leo, 1. Veasey is starting a new program focused on teaching parents how to live eco-friendly lifestyles.

including one in Edina.

She also knew of Madison, Wis.-based EnAct, which brings teams of people together as a support system for making environmentally friendly lifestyle changes.

"It occurred to me that Linden Hills could be a perfect place to develop a similar system," Veasey said.

She intends EcoParents to be action-based. The group will meet about once a month to get educated, but individuals should go home afterward and make changes, too. At the same time, Veasey said judgments will be left at the door, that it'll try to avoid playing on people's guilt, unlike "too many environmental groups."

HOW TO BECOME AN ECOPARENT

To learn more about or to join EcoParents, e-mail project manager Keiko Veasey at ecoparents@lindenhills.org, or go to the Linden Hills Environment Committee page at www.lindenhills.org.

A kick-off event for the program will be held from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Oct. 14 at the Linden Hills Park building, 3100 W. 43rd St. Participants will receive a free reusable canvas shopping bag.

Funding for EcoParents is coming from several sources, including a grant from the Hennepin County Community Partners on Waste Education and Reduction program. The Hendry Family Foundation and the Linden Hills Environment Committee also are chipping in.

That money is meant to get the program started for a year. At the end of the year, Veasey said the goal is to have several of EcoParents' participants host gatherings in their homes to show non-group members how to make sustainable decisions. She'll also encourage members to expand waste reduction efforts at next year's National Night Out.

(Veasey was in charge of having this year's Linden Hills Neighborhood Festival produce no waste, an effort so successful it was again attempted at last month's National Night Out.)

While the focus of the group will be — as the program's name suggests — on parents, everyone with an interest in waste and toxicity reduction will be welcome. And it won't be restricted to people who live in Linden Hills, as long as the group doesn't grow so large that intimacy dissipates.

"This aligns well with so many of the things I feel strongly about — family, environment, community, civic engagement," Veasey said. "As the parents of two young

children, this is something I would want to be involved in if it already existed in our neighborhood."

Green Carpet Film Festival update

The Green Carpet Film Festival has a time, date and place. The celebration of sustainable living will begin at 7 p.m. Oct. 23 at the Edina Cinema, 3911 W. 50th St., Edina.

Contestants have five extra weeks to send in their films — the cutoff date has been moved to Oct. 8 to get schools involved. Here are a few basic rules:

- Submissions should promote the Minnesota Energy Challenge, focus on the benefits of recycling organic material or discuss anaerobic digestion.
- The videos should be between 30 seconds and two minutes in length.
- If the video focuses on the Energy Challenge, use the video to say how much energy you saved.
- Don't use any copyrighted material.

The films will be judged by WCCO anchors Amelia Santaniello and Frank Vascellaro, explorer/environmentalist Will Steger and Southwest Journal editor Sarah McKenzie. Complete rules and entry forms can be found at lhpowerandlight.com or by calling 285-6557.