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FAMILY

To Activists, Every Day Should Be Earth Day

Concerts and cleanups will mark the event, but it's often the more mundane things that count.

By BRENDA REES, SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

In honor of Earth Day 2002, Jennifer Scott-Lifland wishes everyone would visit a dump for an eye-opening experience.

"If everyone saw all that trash and waste, they might begin to realize how little actions can have big effects," says Scott-Lifland, a certified arborist for TreePeople.

If there's a universal lesson to teach kids on Earth Day, leaders from local environmental groups agree, that's it: Small changes add up to big differences. This weekend, activities ranging from concerts to beach cleanups will mark the 32nd anniversary of Earth Day. But just as important, these environmentalists say, are the examples adults set every day.

Founded in 1970 by U.S. Sen. Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin, Earth Day started as a nationwide environmental protest to draw attention to industrial pollution and conservation issues. It was part of the political movement that led to the creation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water and Endangered Species acts.

Scott-Lifland, who regularly meets with schoolchildren to talk about ecology, says youngsters sometimes have already absorbed save-the-planet ideas.

"Little kids seem to get this, but it's the parents who oftentimes need the education," she says. "Many people think it's too much work."

Conservation doesn't have to be complicated, time-consuming or costly. Just go back to the basics: Take only what you need and clean up after yourself. And it's easy to involve young ones in the effort.

"Tell kids not to leave the water running when they brush their teeth, wash their faces or play in the pool," says Hallie Jones of Heal the Bay. "And always sweep instead of hosing down the sidewalk."

L.A.'s 250,000 storm drains are a major source of water pollution in the Pacific.

"Whatever goes in here flows out there," Jones says. "We need everyone to pick up after their pet so dangerous bacterium doesn't get into the water system. And if you see a gutter drain clogged with trash, take a moment to clear it up."

To reduce local landfills, Jones stresses reuse of materials. Kids' lunches are full of disposable plastic bags and over-packaged foods. "Why not pack lunches and other items in reusable containers like Tupperware? Think of what you'll save not buying Baggies."

Indeed, eco-changes can be a cost-effective benefit to the environment, says Lori Shimonishi of the Coalition for Clean Air. Turning off light switches, TVs and computers is an important lesson to learn and also saves money. "Switch from incandescent lightbulbs to compact fluorescent ones," she also suggests, explaining that one 15-watt fluorescent bulb is comparable to a 60-watt incandescent one. "You're going to use less energy, have a reduced electric bill, and these bulbs last seven to nine years."

Although today's youngsters might have more of an eco-edge than their parents, they still need adults to be good examples. Parents can demonstrate clean-air behavior by tuning up engines, carpooling, not topping off gas tanks, and even seeking out dry cleaners that use less harmful "wet-cleaning" chemicals.



Students from Horace Mann get help planting a tree.
JENNIFER SCOTT-LIFLAND

"The only way kids are going to see an appreciation of the environment is for adults--parents and teachers--to show them nature," says Martin Schlageter of the Sierra Club. Children and young adults need to have firsthand experience with Mother Earth.

Hike through the surrounding wilderness areas, beaches and mountains of Southern California, suggests Schlageter, then "come back home and realize that your home is part of the natural environment around you."

"Landscape with native plants instead of plants that need lots of water. Compost your yard trimmings. Plant a garden. Be aware of all the living things right in your backyard or park."

Scott-Lifland agrees, adding that despite its concrete reputation, Los Angeles is an urban forest, bustling with trees, shrubbery and wildlife--assets we should all care for every day, not just on Earth Day.

"Don't wait or think it's someone else's job," she says. "If you see, for example, a little street tree that's not looking so hot, go over and give it some water, cut it back, help it. Our Earth, much less our trees, needs champions. Let's all be those champions."

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Earth Day Activities

The Whole Earth Festival 2002--Musical performances, celebrity storytelling, puppet shows, speakers, environmental displays and eco-friendly marketplace. Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Free. [Lake Balboa](#), 6300 Balboa Blvd., Van Nuys, (310) 455-2497.

Earth Day Fair at Cabrillo Beach--Children's activities, guided walks and environmental booths. Saturday only. Beach cleanup, 8 to 10 a.m.; fair, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free; \$6.50, parking. [Cabrillo Marine Aquarium](#), 3720 Stephen White Drive, San Pedro. (310) 548-7562.

Earth Day Celebration at the Los Angeles Zoo--Music, recycled art projects, insect displays, educational displays and appearances by Recycle Rex. Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Zoo admission: \$8.25; \$3.25, 12 and younger; free, under age 2. [Los Angeles Zoo](#), 5333 Zoo Drive, Griffith Park, L.A., (323) 664-1100.

Earth Day Rubble Removal and Nature Walk--Rubble removal on Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; nature walk, Sunday, 4 p.m. Free. [Madrona Marsh Preserve](#), 3201 Plaza del Amo Blvd., Torrance. (310) 326-2774.

South Bay Earth Day Concert and Celebration--Kids' activity walk, entertainment, eco-quizzes and Earth-friendly vendors. Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free. [Polliwog Park](#), Redondo Avenue and Manhattan Beach Boulevard, Manhattan Beach, (310) 226-2927.

The Aquarium of the Pacific's Earth Day Celebration--Live music, educational booths and an alternative transportation vehicle display. Saturday and Sunday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Aquarium admission: \$16.95; \$9.95, ages 3 to 11; free, 2 and younger. [Aquarium of the Pacific](#), 100 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, (562) 590-3100.

Earth Day Extravaganza--Tours of the ECO Station, moon bounce, experimental activities and ecological booths. Sunday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. [ECO Station](#), 10101 W. Jefferson Blvd., Culver City, (310) 842-8060.

Earth Day 2002: A Celebration for Youth and Family--Ecological activities for children and adults, live music, guest speakers. Sunday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. [Clover Park](#), 2600 Ocean Park Blvd., Santa Monica, (310) 458-8540.

Earth Day 2002: Spring Beach Cleanup--Beach cleanup, snacks and music. Saturday, 9 a.m. to noon. Free. [Beach Maintenance Yard](#), 4320 Olympic Plaza, Long Beach, (562) 570-1471.

Earth Day 2002--Beach cleanup, live sea creatures, games, mural painting. Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. [1021 N. Harbor Drive](#), Redondo Beach, (310) 318-0686.

Los Angeles Audubon Society Earth Day 2002--All activities Saturday. Bird walk at 8 a.m. followed by cleanup and planting projects until 11 a.m. Informative displays and kid's activities until 3 p.m. Free. [Kenneth Hahn Recreational Area](#), La Cienega Boulevard between Rodeo Road and Stocker Street, Baldwin Hills. (323) 876-0202.

Earth Day Celebration--Canoe relay race, nature and wildlife exhibits, helicopter rides, bird-watching walks. Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free, but some events require a fee. [Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park](#), 25820 Vermont Ave., Harbor City, (310) 548-7728.

Earth Day Celebration and Health and Safety Fair--Trail cleanup and habitat restoration, mobile skate park, arts and crafts, and live music. Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free. ***Yosemite Recreational Center***, 1840 *Yosemite Drive, Eagle Rock*, (323) 257-1644.

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