

ECOTEK Scientists Visit National Renewable Energy Laboratory



The high cost of gas; ways to combat global warming; breakthroughs in the field of green science and the decline in STEM education in the United States dominate the news headlines. Many people discuss the impact of these issues and promote a dooms-day culture. Ecotek Lab student scientists are different. They have been trained to look at the problems with a 'can do' attitude and to use their background in science and global policy to create tangible solutions. What's more, they know the importance of sharing their ideas and innovations with the world.

On February 29, Jenna Snapp (5th grader), Yusuf Jihad (5th grader), Simon English (7th grader), Amber Young (8th grader), Chandler Harris (8th grader), Evan Morton (9th grader), and Dhareus Franks (9th grader) spent their day with scientists at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Golden, Colorado. Upon arriving onsite they learned about a wide range of renewable energy programs being pursued by the United States Department of Energy. For example, they learned about cutting edge technologies involving geothermal, wind, hydrogen fuel cell, wave energy, lithium batteries and biofuel. The students also attended a presentation on how alternative energy helps combat global warming. The presentation was given by Dr. Helena Chum, NREL Fellow and world renowned bioenergy scientist.

The visit to the NREL was a capstone activity for the students. Earlier in the week (February 26 thru 28), they participated in leadership meetings on green science at the National Green Schools Conference in Denver, Colorado. Amber spoke about her research on using nutrients found in wheat grass as a treatment for Alzheimer's Disease. Jenna and Yusuf presented their work on biodegradable plastic, while Simon, Dhareus, Evan and Chandler presented their research on biofuel. The students also participated in panel discussions on ensuring diversity in the green economy and they showcased the educational benefits of Ecotek Lab's green science kits- <http://www.shopecotek-us.com/>

The National Green School Conference was attended by 1,500 scientists, educators, and administrators from across North America. It is the premiere event for leaders in the green school movement. The keynote speaker for the conference was Secretary Arne Duncan. Ecotek Lab students were accompanied by their parents and supported by administrators at their home schools (i.e. Detroit Edison PSA). In summer 2012 Ecotek student scientists will be returning to NREL to design solutions that will increase the adoption of renewable energy in developing countries.

About the Ecotek Science Program

Ecotek is a science research lab program for young inventors and researchers in grades 5 thru 12. Student scientists work on projects aligned with the issues being addressed by world leaders at the United Nations. To learn more about Ecotek Lab go to <http://www.ecotek-us.com>

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