



MEDIA RELEASE

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Grand Erie Students Embraced Their *Inner Green* at the 2011 Environmental Youth Symposium

Brantford, ON – Today 600 Grade Nine students from across Grand Erie District School Board engaged in environmental stewardship and conservation practices at the *Inspire Your Inner Green* youth symposium, sponsored by the Board's green energy partner Ameresco Canada Inc. The youth symposium was created to educate students on climate change, green technologies and the rewards of utilizing green energy and green products as well as to inspire students to take environmental action and become better environmental citizens.

Students were joined by keynote speaker, writer and youth leadership expert, Matt Tod, who spoke on the attitudes and skills necessary for students to recognize their own personal leadership abilities and to take action in their communities. "Being an environmental leader means becoming aware of the issue and caring enough to change yourself before you can change anything else," said Tod.

During the symposium, students participated in environmental workshops led by members of the community on such topics as solar power, art for action, the affects of climate change, living green and environmental ethics. The workshops were designed to excite students about the environment and empower them to become environmental stewards within each of their schools.

Carol Ann Sloat, Chair of Grand Erie District School Board said, "An event like this is such a great opportunity for our students. The Board is and continues to be committed to the environment and this symposium is just one way we are teaching our students to become environmentally responsible at school, at home and in the community."

Grand Erie has been a leader in conservation practices, playing an active role in reducing energy and water waste, as well as promoting recycling and composting in the classroom. The Board is one of the first in Canada to retrofit its rooftops with solar photovoltaic installations.

To keep the momentum going after the symposium, Ameresco encouraged students to participate in a school-wide environmental challenge. The winning school will receive a \$1,000 grant to go towards their school's greening efforts. The winning school will be named during Earth Week, April 18 – 22, 2011.

Mario lusi, President of Ameresco Canada Inc., said, "Grand Erie District School Board has shown great leadership in demonstrating concern for its students, the environment and future generations. It is the actions taken by the Board, such as today's youth symposium that encourage and inspire everyone to do their bit in creating a cleaner, greener and more sustainable future."

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