

SERT Spotlight



Shine a light on climate change by switching off for one hour.

Make a Difference in 60 Minutes

IN 2007, the World Wide Fund for Nature ([WWF](#)) organized Earth Hour as a lights-off event to raise awareness. The inaugural event took place in Sydney, Australia. The next year, 35 countries participated in Earth Hour and lights were turned off on all seven continents. Since then, the popularity of this grassroots movement has grown dramatically. Now the annual event is celebrated around the world as individuals, communities and businesses collectively turn off all of their non-essential lights for 60 minutes.

One might ask the question, “What good can possibly come from turning off the lights for Earth Hour?” Admittedly, going dark for only one of the 8,784 hours in 2020 will not greatly reduce our energy costs but it will make us think about electricity, how we use it, and most importantly, what we can do to reduce our energy use. The first step in modifying our behavior is to start consciously thinking about our daily habits.

Once we become aware of how many lights we’re using, and how much energy we’re consuming on a regular basis, we can start to change the way we live and work. When we realize that we don’t really need to have an entire classroom lit when we’re working in the room alone, we get a [task lamp](#) for our desk and start saving energy. When we notice that it’s easier to see the Promethean Boards and televisions when they’re not lit by an overhead light, we [delamp](#) those areas and start to save energy.

MARCH 2020

Sixty-one Schools Earned Energy Awards

The **SCHOOL ENERGY AND RECYCLING TEAM (SERT)** program is pleased to announce that our schools made significant efforts to save energy during the first quarter (September–November) of the 2019–2020 academic year. During these challenging budgetary times, any avoidable operating costs will have a positive impact on our educational initiatives. Sixty percent of our schools demonstrated great energy management behavior and showed energy savings compared to their baseline. Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) was able to achieve \$56,750 in energy cost avoidance for the quarter.

Schools achieving top energy cost avoidance as compared to their baseline usage are eligible to receive quarterly monetary awards. The baseline for each school is an average use of their prior five school years of the same quarter. Schools without an established baseline are eligible to receive a monetary Great Energy Management (GEM) award which is based on demonstrated active participation in the SERT program and energy-efficient behavior.

We applaud all of our students and staff for their commitment to conservation and sustainability and congratulate the following 61 MCPS schools for earning SERT energy awards:

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Arcola Elementary School | Luxmanor Elementary School |
| Ashburton Elementary School | Maryvale Elementary School |
| Bannockburn Elementary School | Montgomery Knolls Elementary School |
| Beall Elementary School | Pine Crest Elementary School |
| Bells Mill Elementary School | Piney Branch Elementary School |
| Belmont Elementary School | Rolling Terrace Elementary School |
| Bradley Hills Elementary School | Seven Locks Elementary School |
| Brown Station Elementary School | Sherwood Elementary School |
| Cedar Grove Elementary School | Flora M. Singer Elementary School |
| Clopper Mill Elementary School | Snowden Farm Elementary School |
| Cloverly Elementary School | South Lake Elementary School |
| Crethaven Elementary School | Takoma Park Elementary School |
| Capt. James Daly Elementary School | Travilah Elementary School |
| Diamond Elementary School | Viers Mill Elementary School |
| Galway Elementary School | Waters Landing Elementary School |
| Glenallan Elementary School | Watkins Mill Elementary School |
| Goshen Elementary School | Westbrook Elementary School |
| Harmony Hills Elementary School | Wheaton Woods Elementary School |
| Highland Elementary School | Wilson Wims Elementary School |
| Highland View Elementary School | Woodfield Elementary School |
| Jones Lane Elementary School | Wyngate Elementary School |

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

- Argyle Middle School
- John T. Baker Middle School
- Benjamin Banneker Middle School
- Cabin John Middle School
- Eastern Middle School
- Robert Frost Middle School
- Kingsview Middle School
- Neelsville Middle School
- Parkland Middle School
- Rosa M. Parks Middle School
- Rocky Hill Middle School
- Silver Creek Middle School
- Hallie Wells Middle School
- Julius West Middle School

HIGH SCHOOLS

- Clarksburg High School
- Richard Montgomery High School
- Paint Branch High School
- Seneca Valley High School

SPECIAL SCHOOLS

- Stephen Knolls School

Watts Up?

**POSTER CONTEST
ENTRIES ARE DUE
ON APRIL 1!**





Summit Hall Elementary School's SERT Team

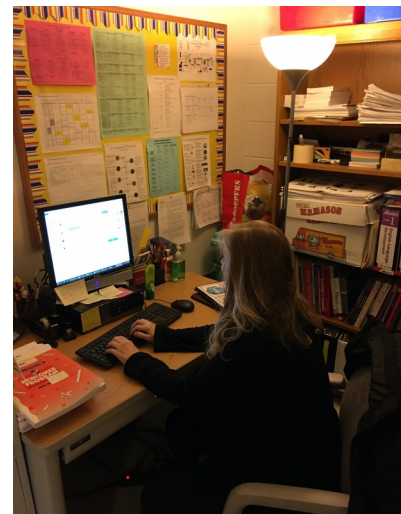
THE SERT TEAM at Summit Hall Elementary School is made up of fourth and fifth graders who meet each week to help with their school's recycling and energy conservation efforts. Under the guidance of Heather Hunter, focus teacher and SERT leader, students walk around the building checking that lights in unoccupied rooms have been turned off and leaving handwritten notes of positive affirmation for the teachers and their students.

Since accepting the role of SERT leader in September, Mrs. Hunter has been busy creating a new SERT team and working hard to involve both students and staff in energy-saving and recycling practices. She has also taken the lead in Summit Hall's application process for recertification as a [Maryland Green School](#). SERT program staff have assisted in this endeavor with various outreach activities including a staff meeting, Read Aloud, and light board presentation.

Summit Hall has a long history of recycling participation, maintaining a pounds per person rate that is at-or-above the average MCPS elementary school. Their energy use for the 2018–2019 school year was 5% lower than their baseline average. As a recipient of the 2013 U.S. Department of Education [Green Ribbon Schools](#) award, Summit Hall continues to employ the practices that help reduce environmental impact and costs, improve the health and wellness of students and staff, and provide an effective environmental and sustainability education.



TOP LEFT: Recently Yusuf Umar from the SERT program conducted “Lunch and Learn” sessions, teaching SHES students how to properly recycle items typically found in the cafeteria.



TOP RIGHT: Several teachers and staff members use task lamps at their desks during planning periods instead of overhead lights, which saves energy.

BOTTOM LEFT: Bottle filling stations reduce the use of plastic water bottles.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Now that they're expert recyclers, SERT team members help in the cafeteria during lunchtime, making sure that their fellow students are recycling properly.



Make a Difference in 60 Minutes

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After observing Earth Hour, we may realize that we don't need to have multiple lights on in our homes, and we might just modify our behavior and start saving energy. When we're cleaning the school at night, perhaps we'll only turn the lights on in the one area that we're in. When we each make a conscious choice to conserve energy every day, we then start to make a huge difference in the amount of energy we use systemwide.

CONSERVATION ISN'T A NEW CONCEPT FOR MCPS.

Montgomery County Public School's (MCPS) commitment to responsible environmental stewardship spans nearly four decades, dating back to the 1970s when our first energy policy and program took shape. Since then, MCPS has become a national leader in the areas of sustainability and environmental stewardship. The [U.S. Department of Education](#) (ED) has recognized ten of [our schools](#) with the National Green Ribbon School Award, an award that was introduced in 2012. In 2013, MCPS was recognized with the District Sustainability Award by the ED. These awards reflect the results of tremendous collaboration across our many offices, departments, and schools to create successful programs and best practices in sustainability. Engaged students, staff, local partners, and community members develop and enhance environmental sustainability

and stewardship within MCPS through a variety of venues and initiatives. MCPS continues to embrace a culture of environmental sustainability that deeply permeates our schools and the organization as a whole, and we thank you for being part of that culture.

Earth Hour isn't merely a suggestion to spend 60 minutes with the lights turned off. Switching off is a symbolic gesture that reminds us to use energy wisely, and to make conservation a way of life. Visit www.EarthHour.org to find great suggestions for celebrating the event and to learn about how you can make a difference.

SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2020

8:30-9:30 P.M.



03.20

SERT SPOTLIGHT is produced by the School Energy and Recycling Team (SERT) program and distributed to school-based SERT leaders and team members, building service personnel, and many others who are interested in conservation and environmental sustainability.

As part of the Montgomery County Public Schools Department of Facilities Management, the SERT program provides opportunities for all schools to participate and receive incentives and recognition for their energy conservation and recycling efforts. The SERT program supports a balanced environment for the integration of all students to work together in a culturally diverse environment. Our goal is to provide the resources, support, and vision of the future for a successful conservation program at each school. SERT's motto, "It's your world. Choose to conserve!" promotes the connection between human behavior and its impact on the environment. It reinforces our culture of conservation and encourages participation in our mission to conserve resources and recycle actively.

