



“Signs of Sustainability” 2009

Sustainable Tompkins, the premiere organization devoted to catalyzing sustainable development in our region, continually seeks the newest *“Signs of Sustainability”* in our community.

We invite our community to keep watch through the year to spot individuals and organizations emerging on the local scene, all doing their part to help advance community sustainability.

Sustainable Tompkins highlights these efforts to help these new activists *“plug in”* and connect with other similar endeavors. With all of us working together in different ways to resolve our shared sustainability challenges, we spur faster progress of this social movement.

Join us in acknowledging the great work of this year’s *“Signs of Sustainability”* in our community!



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www.sustainabletompkins.org



Neighborhood Mini-grants

Sustainable Tompkins' neighborhood mini-grants program supports small-scale efforts to build neighborhood connections, local self-reliance, and long-term community well-being. Mini-grants, which range from \$150 – \$750 each, are awarded quarterly. Mini-grant awardees are selected from a competitive pool of proposals reviewed by a council of neighborhood residents and Sustainable Tompkins board members. Past mini-grants awards for community projects include:

- **Southside Neighborhood Association** to help develop this community group
- **Tompkins County Chapter of the American Red Cross** to conduct lead inspections
- **Ithaca West Hill Community Association** for a website to connect community residents
- **Mutual Housing Association** to conduct an energy audit and hold a landscaping fundraiser
- **Finger Lakes Permaculture Institute** for permaculture design of the MHA landscape project
- **Southside Community Center** for materials to develop their Children's Garden
- **Greater Ithaca Activities Center** for materials for its Intergenerational Garden
- **Sew Green** for no-cost sewing classes and reuse workshops for lower-income residents
- **Sapsquatch** for the "Maple Sugar Story" after-school program at Beverly J Martin Elementary
- **Free Will Awareness** group to start an indoor basketball league for neighborhood youth
- **Southside Neighborhood Association** for community engagement projects and events
- **Town of Ithaca** for materials for the Linderman Creek garden project
- **Crossroads Critical Commentary** to develop a newsletter exploring social justice issues
- **West Hill Baking Project** for materials and equipment for intergenerational baking projects
- **Tompkins County Youth Advocate Program** for support of YAPs Media Project
- **Titus Towers "Granny Squares"** to purchase a quilting arm to make handmade quilts for auction
- **Ithaca Freeskool** to print calendars and create a promotional video
- **Utica Street** multifamily garden seeds and plants
- **Shaleshock Citizen Action Alliance** to print newsletters raising awareness about natural gas drilling
- **Dacha Project** for a non-electric compressed-air water pump for their educational garden
- **IthaCan** for website support and supplies to teach food preservation skills

Mini-grant applications are due on a quarterly basis: March 1, June 1, September 1 and December 1.

For more information, including application instructions:
<http://sustainabletompkins.org/programs/mini-grants/>

New Sustainable Enterprise

In July, the **Cayuga Sunrise Holistic Haven** opened in Romulus NY. This yoga bed and breakfast "*alternative lifestyle*" retreat located on an historic estate overlooking Cayuga Lake offers vegan, raw and vegetarian cuisine, various retreat packages and Sunrise yoga. www.cayugasunrise.com

Congo Square Market, a new neighborhood market at the Southside Community Center, opened this summer featuring music, vendors, food and fun for the whole community! Named for the famous Congo Square in New Orleans, this local market honors African-American history, when recently enslaved African peoples and others could gather in Congo Square on Sundays for music, dance, and stories. Ithaca's Congo Square Market represents the empowerment of our local community. The market is a collaboration between Southside Community Center, Ithaca Youth Bureau, and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County's Whole Community Project.

Emmy's Organics creates raw, certified vegan, gluten- and dairy-free desserts. Their macaroons, pies, granola, fudge and vegan ice cream are packaged in recyclable, biodegradable packaging. <http://www.emmysorganics.com/>

Essential Saltes Baby offers handmade cloth diapers and diaper covers made of sustainable fabrics like bamboo fleece and velour, organic cotton and hemp. www.esbaby.net

Farmer Ground Flour is grinding grains locally grown by Cayuga Pure Organics in Brooktondale and Oescher Farms in Newfield. Farmer Ground Flour is available for bulk sale at Greenstar and is being used in local bakery products.

Food for the Planet is a new restaurant at 704 W. Buffalo Street, offering exclusively vegan foods, using organic and local ingredients where possible.

High Point Farms, LLC in Trumansburg provides its customers with high quality grass-fed beef and lamb, free-range eggs, and pasture-raised chicken and pork, using no antibiotics or growth hormones. High Point offers a CSA option where members receive shares of meat, eggs and cheese once a month. highpointfarmstburg@msn.com

Life's So Sweet Chocolates uses 50% local and domestic ingredients for its handmade chocolates, and offers them in environmentally-friendly packaging that is either made of recycled materials or is itself recyclable. www.lifesosweet.com

At **M.E.S.S. Express**, *Moving Every Student Safely* is their primary mission. M.E.S.S. Express is a for-profit social advocacy group that combats drinking and driving among college students by proactively acknowledging their transportation needs. By implementing two strategies, simplified bus chartering and prepaid taxi transportation, M.E.S.S. Express has successfully moved over 15,000 students safely.

Sapsquatch Pure Maple Products offers the opportunity to purchase shares of a local maple syrup harvest in a Community Supported Sugaring (CSS) project. Sapsquatch also supported an educational program to share the stories and traditions of maple sugaring with students at Belle Sherman Elementary. www.sapsquatch.com

Wishing Well's online holistic resource publication launched in October, focusing on community journalism, local business and events related to sustainability, wellness, and spirituality. <http://ithaca.wishingwellmagazine.com/magazine>

XEO, at 213 1/2 Dryden Road, prepares authentic Vietnamese bánh mì sandwiches and noodle bowls fresh every day, and is committed to using exclusively local ingredients.

New Sustainability-Related Organizations

The **Bioscience Resource Project** (BSR) acts as a hub for those interested in the science of food and agriculture, as well their environmental and social impacts. BSR produces www.bioscienceresource.org, an open-access website offering original news, research and commentary, as well as access to other resources. BSR provides critical analysis of the science behind modern agricultural developments such as GMOs and pesticides and offers constructive insights into alternatives. Our aim: a truly public interest science to enable a healthy food system and a healthy world. <http://www.bioscienceresource.org/index.php>

The **Dacha Project** is a new 16-acre self-sustaining educational homestead in Freeville. The project includes an earth-bermed structure and straw bale cottage, a fruit and nut tree orchard, and an organic garden. <http://dachaproject.com/index.html>

The **Danby Land Bank Cooperative** formed to support rural property owners wishing to utilize their fields and forests for grass and wood pellet production. <http://www.danbylandbank.com/site/home.html>

The **Danby Trails Committee** seeks to encourage healthful activity and eco-tourism in the town by providing access to the area's natural beauty. Jennings Pond Park is the focus point of the new trail system, which incorporates existing trails and roads as well as abandoned roadways, and adds in designs for new trails through unique natural areas. Summer youth groups in Danby began clearing additional trails.

The new **Dryden Solutions** group facilitates monthly conversations (second Tuesday) at the Dryden Community Center Cafe on issues related to food security, self-reliance, energy efficiency, conservation, transportation, and strengthening community.

<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=79430104052&index=1>

The Greek community at Cornell represents over 30% of the undergraduate population. The "**Greeks Go Green**" initiative raises awareness about Cornell's commitment to sustainability within the Greek community, shows local fraternities and sororities easy ways to make their chapter houses more eco-friendly, and informs chapter members about ways to be more sustainable.

<http://dos.cornell.edu/dos/cms/greek/upload/greeksgogreen.pdf>

The **Green Resource Hub** launched the *Sustainable Enterprise Network*, an organized social media platform to generate connections between and new opportunities for sustainable businesses. The SEN helps orient businesses to a triple bottom line approach to creating value. www.greenresourcehub.org

"**Growing Hope Together**" is a joint community project between the Newfield school district and the residents of Simenya, a village in Kenya. Newfield schools donated older laptop computers to the Simenya community to facilitate continued relationship between the schools. In addition, the project is supporting school gardening in both locations. In Newfield, the Emery Memorial Kids' Garden grew fresh vegetables for the local food bank and was used as a teaching tool for summer camp programs.

www.growinghopetogether.org

Ithaca's Food Web is an online resource offering news about local food in the region, including information about growers, producers, cooks, and food preservation. The Food Web examines larger food system issues and offers a calendar of food-related events and activities. <http://ithacasfoodweb.blogspot.com/>

Shaleshock Citizens Action Alliance is a grassroots group of Finger Lakes residents who are concerned with protecting our communities and environment from exploitation by the energy industry with regards to drilling for natural gas in the Marcellus Shale. <http://www.shaleshock.org/>

Share Tompkins formed to help community members share and trade goods and services in Ithaca and Tompkins County. The volunteer-run group organized six Community Swap Meets in 2009 and maintains an online directory of local and web-based resources that facilitate sharing. sharetompkins.wordpress.com

New sustainability programs or activities by existing businesses or organizations:

Energy Conservation

The *Tompkins Energy Conservation Corps* is a team of college students recruited by the Energy Saving program of **Cornell Cooperative Extension**. The Corps reached out to community leaders to conduct home energy audits and inform them about energy conservation and is developing educational materials to help residents take advantage of opportunities for energy efficiency.

The **Cornell Small Farms Energy Work Team** is a new initiative that provides clear and accessible information to small farmers about energy conservation strategies and renewable energy technologies. The group hosted a series of farm renewable energy field days on various farmsteads around the region. <http://www.smallfarms.cornell.edu/>

Students in the **Dryden High School Student Sustainability Club** were trained, through the *Green Energy Compass Home* program, to assist Dryden residents with energy audits.

Tompkins Community Action Energy Services Department rolled out the "*Energy Savings-Saving Energy*" program to inform homeowners, landlords and tenants about home energy-efficiency strategies and financing programs. Much of the outreach was done by teens in the summer *JobsBuild* program, learning about green job opportunities. TCAction's Energy Services department also hosted "*Toasty in Tompkins*", a series of informational sessions focusing on funding options available to make energy saving improvements more affordable. <http://www.tcaction.org/energy.htm>

The **Town of Dryden Highway Department** and the **Dryden Renewable Energy Work Group (DREW)** teamed up to conduct an energy audit of the highway department barns. <http://www.davidmakar.com/drew>

The **Town of Dryden Town Board** has allotted \$30,000 to town residents as grants of up to \$1,500 for energy efficiency upgrades.

Food Systems

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County offered a series of *Kitchen Garden Tours* throughout the region, showcasing the efforts of individual home gardeners and residential gardening groups to produce varieties of food. Josh Dolan, community food garden coordinator for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, has created a *Google map of area gardens*, showing school gardens, community gardens, farmers markets and CSA farms.

Felicia's Atomic Lounge strives to be a "*locavore*," a person or business that buys food from farmers and local businesses within a 100-mile radius. Felicia's is unique in that they are not just using local produce for items on their food menu, they are creating "*locavore cocktails*", a move that has garnered national attention. This past year, Felicia's added AlleyArt, an outdoor sustainable art gallery, and welcomes submissions from creative artists who use recycled or reused materials to make their art. www.atomicloungeithaca.com

This summer, the **Ithaca Bakery** sponsored a Local Foods Market every Thursday evening, offering local vendors and farmers space in the parking lot of their flagship store on Meadow Street to sell organic products, fresh produce, meats, dairy and more. <http://www.ithacabakery.com/pages/home/home.php>

The **Ithaca Farmers Market** expanded its reach, offering both a Winter Market at the Womens Community Building during the cold weather months, and opening a Thursday evening market at DeWitt Park. www.ithacamarket.com

New Roots Charter School instituted a "Farm-to School" program for its school lunches, maintaining ties with local and organic farms like West Haven Farm. New Roots students will learn about food preparation and storage. <http://newrootsschool.org/>

A second **Simply Red Bistro** opened at La Tourelle Country Inn and Resort, specializing in the use of fair trade, local and organic foods in its breakfast, lunch and Sunday brunch menus. <http://www.simplyredbistro.com/>

The **Sustainable Chicken Project** at Steep Hollow Farm reinforces urban and rural links by collecting and composting table scraps from city residents. Chickens forage on the insects and other organisms living in the active compost, which provides a protein source apart from commercial feed. Urban participants gain access to sustainably and locally raised eggs. Chickens live in a coop made from lumber from local sawmill, which is moved frequently to allow chickens to free range on grass within a protected area. By combining resources of Master Composter Tom Shelley and farm residents Christianne White and son Jasper White, the sustainable chicken project is learning a lot about producing high quality food close to the city of Ithaca. <http://steephollowfarm.wordpress.com/>

The **Tompkins County Office for the Aging** offered free coupon booklets worth \$20 each to income-eligible individuals over 60. The booklets allow for senior citizens to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at area farmers markets. The coupon books were made available at food pantries and churches around the county. www.tompkins-co.org/cofa

The **Town of Dryden** launched a Farmers Market on Wednesday evenings in conjunction with the Music in the Park Series.

In May, the **Town of Ithaca** dedicated its newest community garden on West Hill next to the Linderman Creek apartments. The garden offers plots to town residents, and youth employees received summer employment to help maintain the garden. www.town.ithaca.ny/us/garden.htm

A new Farmer's Market began in July at the **Town of Lansing** Town Hall. The organizers hoped to attract 5-6 vendors, but the Market opened with 13 vendors. By August, the Saturday morning market was hopping with more than 30 vendors offering a wide variety of fresh produce, baked goods and crafted items.

Wegmans held an Organic Fair at the store, inviting in growers and distributors of organic food products.

The **Whole Community Project** at Cornell Cooperative Extension works with community gardens and social service networks to improve child health across the county. The program works to make policy and other environmental changes by supporting and connecting existing efforts to improve our food system and recreational activity opportunities, and increasing public and political awareness of the many costs of childhood obesity, unhealthful diets coupled with sedentary lifestyles, and food injustice.

Green Building

The ER and ICU addition to the **Cayuga Medical Center** received LEED silver certification by the U.S. Green Building Council for incorporating key sustainable principles in its planning, design and construction. <http://www.cayugamed.org/>

The **Cornell University Solar Decathlon** team finished in 7th place in The Solar Decathlon 2009, an international, interdisciplinary design-build competition hosted biennially by the U.S. Department of Energy. Twenty college and university teams compete to design, build and operate the most attractive, effective and energy-efficient solar-powered house. The Cornell University Decathlon entry was shown at the New York State Fair, and moved to the National Mall in Washington for the final judging, offering thousands of spectators the opportunity to learn about this kind of cutting-edge, high-performance sustainable design. <http://www.cusd.cornell.edu/>

Participants in the *Women Build* training program - which empowers women by teaching them building construction skills - worked on a **Habitat for Humanity** new home construction project on Breed Road in Lansing. This local Habitat affiliate has adopted a "build green" policy, committing to build and rehab homes as energy-efficiently and environmentally "green" as possible. <http://tchabitat.com/>

Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services completed two new attached townhouse-style homes on Corn Street. Both projects are registered as LEED Platinum-level green Building and will be Energy Star certified for super energy efficiency and low-cost maintenance. <http://www.ithacanhs.org/>

The **Town of Caroline** started construction of its new Town office building, which is designed to be highly energy-efficient. The plans include renewable energy systems to power the majority of the building, including a geothermal heating-cooling system and 12.6 KW solar generating system.

Land Use

The **Finger Lakes Land Trust** unveiled its conservation plan for the Emerald Necklace Greenbelt and associated 78-mile Finger Lakes Trail Corridor. The Emerald Necklace is a proposed greenbelt that will ultimately link 50,000 acres of protected open space within the hills and valleys surrounding Ithaca. <http://fllt.org/index.php>

Herb Engman, Supervisor for the Town of Ithaca, donated 100 acres of forest and meadows to Greensprings Natural Cemetery, providing for this sustainable burial alternative. Greensprings maintains the land as wildlife habitat.

The **Ithaca College Natural Lands** committee began a Land Steward program, with more than 20 volunteers accepting responsibility for monitoring and reporting significant changes to a designated parcel of still undeveloped land on the 750+-acre South Hill campus. <http://www.ithaca.edu/naturallands/>

The first "Designing with Native Plants" conference was held at the Lab of Ornithology in February 2009 with 110 landscape professionals in attendance. The conference, organized by landscape architect **Rick Manning** and **Dan Segal**, owner of the Plantsmen Nursery, raised over \$5,000 for the Cayuga Waterfront Trail Initiative. <http://www.rickmanningla.com/RickPage.shtml>

Planning

Cornell University, an early signatory of the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment, met its pledge to develop a Climate Action Plan by September 15. Cornell announced its plan to become 100% carbon-neutral by 2050. <http://www.sustainablecampus.cornell.edu/climate/index.cfm>

Ithaca College met its September 15 deadline, as a signatory of the ACUPresidents Climate Commitment to develop and make public its Climate Action Plan, which is to also become 100% carbon neutral by 2050. www.ithaca.edu/sustainability

Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport is working to create a Sustainable Master Plan for the airport, making it the first airport in the country to undertake such an effort. <http://www.cscos.com/other/IthacaGreenmp>

Kendal at Ithaca completed its Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Project to celebrate Earth Day. The project identified ways to reduce the carbon emissions of the senior community by more than 2 million pounds per year, including changes to the energy management system, addition of insulation and energy recovery ventilation, and use of photosensor controls to maximize use of natural lighting. These changes are projected to reduce natural gas use by over 100,000 therms and electricity use by 732,000 kWh. Estimated annual savings are close to \$225,000. www.kai.kendal.org

The **Tompkins County Legislature** approved the Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Element developed by the Planning Department. The amendment to the County Comprehensive Plan describes a multi-faceted approach for Tompkins County to achieve at least an 80% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The plan outlines strategies to reduce energy demand, improve energy efficiency, and transition to renewable sources of energy.

<http://www.tompkins-co.org/planning/complan/documents/EGGEElementfromPublisher.pdf>

Recycling and Composting

Cargill Deicing Technology collected "gently used" winter coats, which were cleaned and distributed to families in need. Called the "Coats for Totes" program, anyone who donated a coat was given a reusable grocery tote made of 100% recyclable material.

The **Grassroots Festival's** sustainability efforts expanded this year to include a requirement for food vendors to offer compostable tableware. Grassroots is notable among national music festivals for its support for recycling and composting collection. <http://www.grassrootsfest.org/festival/>

Finger Lakes Reuse began offering its long-awaited deconstruction service this year, offering a sustainable alternative to demolition. The deconstruction crew completed seven building take-downs, salvaging building materials for reuse. www.fingerlakesreuse.org

In December 2008, **Friedman Electric**, an Energy Star partner, announced its new residential free recycling program for compact fluorescent lamps. Residents can bring exhausted CFLs into the store to be recycled at no cost. <http://www.friedmanelectric.com/>

Ithaca Rentals & Renovations (IRR) is offering composting support to its tenants in the North Campus properties. IRR is covering all the costs for this first year, including purchase of under-sink collection buckets, biodegradable liners, and outside bins for organic collections. IRR even offered a Compost Education event for its residents. <http://www.ithaca-rentals.com/>

New Roots Charter School "repurposed" the historic Clinton House, signing a five-year lease to use the building in downtown Ithaca as its new home. Students also use the large meeting room in the Womens Community Building as their cafeteria. <http://newrootsschool.org/>

Parkitects Inc., the local distributor for *Big Belly*™ solar-powered trash compactors, installed a public demonstration of their waste-disposal technology on the Ithaca Commons. <http://www.playgroundinfo.com/index.html>

The **Shortstop Deli** has integrated composting and recycling in its operations and offers compostable beverage containers for fountain drinks. www.shortstopdeli.com

The **TCDOG** group provides biodegradable, corn-based plastic bags for pet owners to scoop up their animal's waste and place these into collection bins for weekly collection and compost processing by Cayuga Compost. The Ithaca Dog Park at Treman State Marine Park is believed to be the first dog park in the nation to experiment with canine waste composting. www.TCDOG.org

Wegmans offers compostable plates, utensils and napkins in its Food Court and has installed compost collection receptacles.

Renewable Energy

Cornell Cooperative Extension's Renewable Energy program offered the first "Burn it Bright - Home Wood Heat Expo" at the Cayuga Nature Center, offering information about buying and stacking firewood, best burn practices and proper maintenance of wood stoves, woodlot management, burning grass pellets, and the latest high-efficiency technology.

Cornell University opened the Biofuels Research Laboratory to house scientists and engineers researching sustainable and economic solution to biofuel production from crops like switchgrass, energy sorghum and willow. http://www.walkerlab.bee.cornell.edu/Walker_group/Main.html

The **GreenStar Cooperative Market** recently installed 18 solar panels on the roof of the store's receiving area. The 4.05 kW grid-tied system consists of 18 SunPower 225watt panels. The system is designed to generate an average of 11.1 kWh per day, or 4,038. www.greenstar.coop

Social Activism

A number of students from colleges and high schools throughout Tompkins County traveled to the **2009 Power Shift** conference in Washington D.C. to encourage the Obama administration to support a sustainable future and a clean and energy efficient environment.

The International Environmental Policy course at **Ithaca College**, which will attend the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's 15th Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen, organized a "ghost walk" with more than 200 participants on campus to highlight the perils of rising sea levels from global warming.

The **local 350.org group**, supporting the international effort to highlight the need for substantive climate action, organized a rally on the Commons of community members committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The group organized rally participants into line to form the numbers 350 for a rooftop photograph which is posted on the national website.

When the town of Ithaca gets fracked by natural gas drilling, the water goes sour and the citizens start craving human flesh. Anna and other survivors band together to save their community. "*Frac Attack: Dawn of the Watershed*" is a short zombie movie made by over seventy members of the community to inspire action to protect our environment from the corporations who seek to exploit it. The film premieres on December 10th, 2009 at Cinemapolis and will then stream online for free and be screened by activist groups around the region. "*Frac Attack*" was created through the combined efforts of **Shirari Industries** and the **Dacha Project**, in association with **Shaleshock Citizens Action Alliance**.

Sustainability Education

Students in Corinne Morton's six-grade class at **Boynton Middle School** spent six months raising brown trout from eggs before releasing them into Fall Creek. The "*Trout in the Classroom*" project was made possible by Trout Unlimited, the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization, and the state Department of Environmental Conservation fish hatchery in Bath.

The **Cayuga Nature Center**, in collaboration with **Museum of the Earth**, developed "*The Field Guide to the Cayuga Lake Region*". With beautiful color photographs and accessible descriptions, this guidebook offers information about our area's flora and fauna. <http://www.cayuganaturecenter.org/>

The "*All Things Equal*" program on **Cayuga Radio Group's** station WHCU 970AM, which looks at diversity and equity issues, has begun to incorporate a broader focus on community sustainability in its weekly radio program. Podcasts of earlier broadcasts are available on the station's website. www.cyradiogroup.com

Cornell Cinema presented "*Earth Days*", an environmentally conscious film series held in conjunction with the Bioneers conference. This event marked the Ithaca premiere of a number of films, including "*Earth Days*", "*Split Estate*", "*No Impact Man*", and "*The 'Yes Men' Fix the World*". The filmmakers of "*Ice Bears of the Beaufort*" were on hand for their screening of their film. <http://cinema.cornell.edu>

Louise McGarry, a doctoral candidate in the **Cornell Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences**, organized the Sustainable Earth, Energy and Environmental Systems (SEES) speaker series on topics related to developing a sustainable society. This 7-part educational program, designed for high school and college students, was open to the general public. Podcasts of all the seminars are available. <http://www.eas.cornell.edu/cals/eas/news-events/sees-seminar.cfm>

Students in Dave Buchner's technology education classes at **DeWitt Middle School** must research a sustainability issue. Buchner's students recently completed a three-year project to develop a "*Veggie Go-Cart*" designed to run on waste vegetable fryer oil. Students in Buchner's technology class designed and built Robo Ranger, a robotic scare-gull, to chase away predatory birds for the National Audubon Society's Project Puffin, which seeks to reestablish populations of North Atlantic puffins on a Maine island. <http://www.icsd.k12.ny.us/dewitt/teched/index.html>

Dryden Central Schools formed several "*Green Teams*". The teams have removed over 115,000 pounds of food waste and mixed containers from the landfill since May of 2008. <http://www.dryden.k12.ny.us/~dfairch1/>

Shawn Reeves from **EnergyTeachers.org** offered an 8-session course called "*Solar Cookers for Learning Physics*" to students in the Northern Lights Learning Center, a cooperative homeschool educational group in Ithaca. Students learned scientific and engineering concepts related to solar energy, made novel solar cookers, and learned to use energy auditing tools like datalogging thermometers and infrared cameras. www.energyteachers.org

This was the first year the Pre-Teen Green Camp at the **Greater Ithaca Activities Center** (GIAC) focused on sustainability, local community and environmental awareness. The program featured outdoor activities, daily field trips, and a grassroots education program, called "*Play with Your Food*," to teach these young people about food systems through gardening, composting and cooking.

Fifth-graders in teacher John D'Antonio's class at **Groton Elementary** collected used shoes for *soles4souls* which sends them to the needy domestically and abroad. By December 2008, the class gathered more than 400 pairs of shoes. The students used the effort to practice their writing and technology skills as they blogged about their effort (mrdantonio.edublogs.org).

For *Sustainability Week* (December 26, 2008-January 3rd, 2009), the **Museum of the Earth** offered a full slate of family-friendly fun activities. Museum staffers instructed participants in crafting unique products made from reused holiday wrapping paper, bows and christmas tree pine needles. www.museumoftheearth.org

The *Cornell University chapter* of **Net Impact** organized that organization's largest national conference to date. More than 2,600 current and aspiring social entrepreneurs, corporate changemakers, social and public sector leaders, and academics gathered in Ithaca to discuss how best to advance sustainable global enterprise. Net Impact members believe in the power of business to create a more socially and environmentally sustainable world. www.netimpact.org

The **Suburban Cortland-Ithaca Shopper** set aside space for sustainability-themed articles, including "*Learning about Carbon Footprints*", bringing this sustainability information to more than 20,000 households.

In May, the **Sciencenter** opened its "*Garden of Gizmos: Physics in Bloom*" three-day event, consisting of 15 interactive natural science and environmental awareness activities for kids. Kids learned about balance by constructing paper butterflies, better understood insects by building "*Bee Hummer*" toys that hum while in motion, and grew "*green hair*" during the "*sproutheads*" plant activity. The Sciencenter also organized "*The Ultimate Global Science Experiment to Save the Planet*." In preparation for this interactive event in which participants were asked to turn off their power for an hour, the Sciencenter designed energy conservation learning activities which were used by science centers globally. www.sciencenter.org

WSKG-FM's "*Community Conversations*" program is a live "*town hall*" type radio discussion exploring important topics of interest. Three programs in the past year covered sustainability themes: "*From the Earth to Your Table and Back Again*", which explored composting; "*Sustainable Living*"; and "*Pulling On Our Bootstraps*", which discussed regional economic development through green collar job creation. <http://wskg.org/radio/local-productions/community-conversation.aspx>

Sustainability Events

The **Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes** hosted a "*Healthy Home*" house party, offering information on safer personal care and children's products, including demonstrations and recipes for making safer alternatives at home. <http://www.crcfl.net/>

CBORD's Green Team conducted an Earth Day event for the company's employees, with displays and demonstrations offered by local organizations. Coinciding with "*Bring Your Child to Work Day*", the event featured interactive activities to help teach CBORD employees and their families how to live green. The event also kicked off CBORD's new recycling and composting initiative.

Cornell Cooperative Extension partnered with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to offer a Green Jobs Forum in June. The free forum was broadcast to Cooperative Extension offices in 16 counties via Cornell's distance learning video conference network. The forum covered the green jobs market, finding green jobs, available training programs, and becoming a home performance contractor. www.ccetompkins.org

The annual *Green Buildings Open House* was bigger than ever - with 33 facilities open over two days. This year, **Cornell Cooperative Extension** and the **Ithaca Green Building Alliance** received a grant from the TC Tourism Board to add evening presentations to the Open House on Friday and Saturday nights. <http://www.ithacagreenbuilding.org/>

The **Dryden Beautification Brigade** offered the first annual *Open Gates Garden and Art Tour*, offering entry to five unique, historic gardens in the village of Dryden, with each garden also featuring the original work of a local artist.

The **Finger Lakes Cycling Club** led the *Tour de Solstice*, giving intrepid local cyclists the chance to make the shortest ride of the year on the shortest day of the year, the winter solstice. The fun ride was only a mile-and-a-half long over still-snowy streets, with a coffee stop at the midway point, and a hearty lunch at the end. <http://flcycling.org/>

SewGreen hosted Ithaca's first *ReCraft Fair* in December 2008 with fifteen local artisans, fabric artists, and designers participating. Every craft item was fashioned from reused, reclaimed, vintage, or earth-friendly materials. SewGreen also held a sale of refurbished classic sewing machines. SewGreen also hosted a *Green Halloween Masquerade Ball* in October to promote and support the SewGreen youth programs. The Ball included a DJ, dancing, games and a Recycled Costume Contest and was run by teen representatives of the youth organization. <http://www.sew-green.org/>

Silicon Solar hosted the *GO Solar Open House* in August, offering opportunities to learn about how solar energy works, product demonstrations, and free system consultations. Silicon Solar also hosted the *First Annual Winter Green Gift Festival and Holiday Party*, offering sustainable gift options, like solar-powered products, books, local handicrafts and foods. Information was offered about local renewable energy initiatives and carbon reductions. www.siliconsolar.com

Tompkins Cortland Community College hosted "*Cool It! Doing Your Part to Stop Climate Change*", a day-long educational event in observance of the International Day of Climate Action and 350.org. <http://www.tc3.edu/>

The **Tompkins County Public Library**, which received a grant for sustainability-related programming, hosted nationally-recognized green living expert and author Annie Bond for a free public presentation titled "*Ten Chemicals to Keep Out of Your Home*", about hidden pollutants in common products. <http://www.tcpl.org/>

In October, the **Town of Ithaca** paid tribute to local farms with the "*A Day on the Farm*" event. Eight farms within the township opened their doors to visitors, and guests were invited to stop at Tutelo Park for music, pumpkin carving and apple tastings.

Sustainable Community Development

Alternatives Federal Credit Union offered a unique holiday shopping event for its members. AFCU extended several of its business members the opportunity to sell their locally-made crafts and products in its lobby. <http://www.alternatives.org/index.html>

Comet Skateboards commissioned a dozen local artists to creatively alter skateboards as art projects, with 10% of the sales of the finished pieces helping to fund the restoration of Ithaca's outdoor skate park. The finished pieces were displayed during the *Funkin' Art Party* upstairs at Petrune's. One of the skateboards was decorated by ten preschoolers at the Corner of the Sky school in Ithaca. The proceeds from the purchase of that skateboard were donated to fund purchase school art supplies for those aspiring artists. <http://www.cometskateboards.com/home/>

The **Dryden Community Center Café** has become a hub for community conversation and activity in Dryden. This summer's "*Kids at the Café*" program offered fun ways to reuse items. Some activities involved transforming T-shirts: a no-sew tote bag for summer treasures, or twisted and tie-dyed for a new look. This year, DC3 has also been a meeting place for several new organizations aimed at community-wide sustainability. www.drydencafe.org

The **Green Resource Hub** conducted a fun holiday benefit activity, the "*No Drive*" Food Drive. Participants were given lists of stores and food items to purchase and a travel route. The only requirement was that the shoppers could not use personal motorized vehicles to travel between shopping locations - hence, the "no drive" part. The finish line of the "*no-drive*" food drive was at Loaves & Fishes, where the food items were donated. www.greenresourcehub.org

The **Ithaca Alternative Gift Fair** so greatly expanded this year - offering more than 50 organizations the opportunity to participate - that it required the Gift Fair to spread out into two different venues. The Gift Fair continued to offer extended sale hours and two weeks of Web sales following the main event. <http://ithacaaltgiftfair.org/>

Roots and Shoots, a local homeschool group, created and donated 30 reusable cloth shopping bags made with recycled fabric to Immaculate Conception Food Pantry in Ithaca. Participants of the food pantry are offered a reusable bag when they pick up their groceries. The Cloth Shopping Bag project was the result of a collaboration between Roots and Shoots and Sew Green, which donated the fabric.

SewGreen piloted a summer youth apprenticeship and jobs program in which ten teenagers from diverse backgrounds learned about sewing, reuse, and workplace responsibilities in a creative environment. <http://www.sew-green.org/>

The **SufferJets**, Ithaca's own roller derby team, shares the proceeds of each of their home games with a local non-profit group. Recipients so far include: Ithaca Foodnet Meals on Wheels, Ithaca Family Reading Partnership, Books Thru Bars/CRESP, Ithaca Skate Park, Big Brothers Big Sisters and Recycle Ithaca's Bicycles (RIBS). <http://www.ithacarollerderby.com/>

A portion of the sales of **Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit** (TCAT) Summer Fun Youth bus passes were donated to the Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes to help patients with their transportation costs. <http://www.tcatbus.com/>

Tompkins County Red Cross opened the Homeless Services Friendship Center & Shelter in December 2008. The new facility offers 18 emergency shelter beds and six permanent beds for targeted homeless men and women. The Friendship Center contains kitchen and shower facilities and a common room equipped with several telephones and computers with Web access that clients can use to search for jobs and apartments, obtain referrals, and compile their personal documentation. <http://www.tompkins-redcross.org/>

The **Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency** (IDA) voted for sales tax abatement on energy efficiency projects for small business and landlords. This includes products AND labor (net 7% decline as 8% sales tax with 1% fee). <http://www.tcad.org/ida/ida.php>

In December 2008, The **Whole Community Project** unveiled its *Healthy Passport* initiative to encourage kids to be physically active and interact with their community. Parkside 4-H afterschool program "piloted" their new passports to travel the "Southside Downtown Loop." At Southside Community Center, kids learned about open gym use, how to get food from a food pantry, and recycle bikes. At Beverly J Martin Elementary, the passport holders learned about planting gardens. At Greenstar Cooperative Market, kids found different colors of organic fruits and vegetables.

Sustainable Enterprise

Alternatives Federal Credit Union began offering special discounts on loans for green home renovations, solar panel installations, and hybrid vehicle purchases. <http://www.alternatives.org/index.html>

Ehrhart Propane is now offering biodiesel as a replacement for #2 fuel oil for home heating. Ehrhart also runs its delivery fleet on propane to reduce their carbon emissions. www.ehrhartpropane.com

Experience! The Finger Lakes, a regional tour operator, offers a guided Sustainability Tour to those who want to learn what makes Ithaca one of the top 100 Green Places to live. Tour stops include EcoVillage, MotherPlants, Warren Pond Farm, and the Trumansburg Farmers Market. www.experiencefingerlakes.com

Ithaca Guitar Works offers a more sustainable option for local musicians: *Wheatware*™ guitar picks are made from compostable wheat-based bioplastics. <http://www.guitarworks.com/>

Local First Ithaca received its certification as a member network of BALLE, the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies. <http://www.localfirstithaca.org/>

Shari Landsman, licensed real estate salesperson and EcoBroker at RE/MAX in Motion, earned the National Association of Realtors Green Designation. The NAR Green designation helps real estate professionals advocate for green principles in the design and use of homes and encourage the creation of sustainable communities. www.sharilandsman.com

SewGreen opened its "Rescued for Reuse" store in the DeWitt Mall, across the street from its classroom location in the Womens Community Building. The store offers fabric, yarn, sewing machines and more - all donated by members of the community with proceeds from the sales benefiting SewGreen's youth programs. <http://www.sew-green.org/>

Sustainable Operations

Acme Pest Control earned the QualityPro designation for excellence in pest management. QualityPro's environmental stewardship program requires that member companies must offer integrated pest Management services (IPM) to their customers.

Angelo Dry Cleaners, Ithaca's first "green cleaner" - using perchlorate-free methods - has begun packaging freshly dry-cleaned clothing in 100% recyclable, biodegradable plastic garment bags. <http://www.angelodrycleaner.com/>

The **Ithaca Journal** began using a new printing format that slightly reduced the width of its pages, trimming newsprint consumption by 50 tons a year. The Journal is printed on 30 percent recycled paper and uses soy-based ink in its printing. All of the printing plates used to produce the daily newspaper are recycled. That amounts to about 9 tons of aluminum each year. www.ithacajournal.com

La Tourelle Resort and Spa was selected by the NYS Dept of Environmental Conservation to participate in the GreenLeaf Eco-Rating pilot program. GreenLeaf is designed to help hotels further their sustainable efforts by measuring various environmental elements such as pollution prevention, resource conservation, recycling and composting, and strict use of environmentally safe cleaning products. www.latourelle.com

Sheldrake Point Vineyard received the 2009 Lake-Friendly Farm award from the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network. The winery received this annual award in recognition of its state-approved sustainable farming practices that minimize pollutant impacts to Cayuga Lake. www.sheldrakepoint.com

Wink's Body Shop opened a second auto body painting and collision repair facility on Court Street. Wink's is the first facility in the area to use environmentally-friendly waterborne basecoats, which reduces VOC emissions and is safer for the applicators. <http://www.winksbodysshop.com/>

Transportation

Andree Petroleum is the first local retailer to offer a biodiesel fuel pump for the public at its station at Third Street Extension. www.andrepetro.com

The **City of Ithaca Engineering Office** is conducting a year-long experiment with "sharrows", painted bike stencils capped by a pair of chevrons. These markings have been painted onto Cayuga Street, a high-traffic street too narrow for separate bike lanes. Sharrows are under consideration as an intuitive, effective traffic control option by the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. The City transportation engineering group has also installed bike lanes on several city streets, including a lane on East State Street.

"Redshift" is the name of **Cornell University's** entry in the Progressive Automotive X Prize design competition to develop a vehicle that exceeds 100 miles per gallon. Competing in the "mainstream" class, the team developed a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle with a diesel engine. The Cornell team advanced to the next round in its class, the only university team to remain in competition. <http://www.cornellaxp.com/>

Way2Go is a new program of **Cornell Cooperative Extension** that supports community members in transportation choices that promote individual, community and environmental wellbeing. Way2Go helps people make the most of all existing transportation resources, while encouraging improvements in transportation systems and options to achieve equity and sustainability. <http://www.ccetompkins.org/way2go/>

Dominos Pizza makes an impressive sustainable statement by delivering pizzas in its logo-branded SmartCar.

The **Ithaca Dispatch** vehicle fleet includes a Toyota Prius for fuel-efficient taxi rides. www.ithacataxi.biz

The **Tompkins County Alternative Fuels Consortium** - comprised of all 17 municipalities, Cornell, Ithaca College, TCAT, the county's school districts and fire departments - was successful in attracting a supplier for B20 biodiesel.

The **Tompkins County Legislature** approved a new County "Green Fleet" policy that states, in part, that the County shall "procure the most cost-effective and least polluting vehicles and fuel-using equipment possible" to meet operational requirements. The policy also requires each department that uses or maintains any vehicles to submit an annual strategic greenhouse gas reduction plan for its fleet, with goals including optimizing fleet sizes, increasing average fuel economy, and increased use of alternative fuel vehicles.

Pritchard Automotive Pritchard Automotive has been named as the first upstate New York dealership for the *Wheego Whip*, an all-electric, low-speed vehicle. <http://pritcharddodge.com/>



Finger Lakes Climate Fund

Sustainable Tompkins is launching the Finger Lakes Climate Fund to support local efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect our climate. The Climate Fund will provide our community a place to purchase offsets for those carbon emissions that we cannot avoid making. We applaud all efforts to decrease our carbon footprints at home and at work, but sometimes we have to travel to see loved ones or for critical business reasons. The Finger Lakes Climate Fund will allow you to calculate the amount of emissions caused by your travel or other emission-producing activities, and give you the ability to purchase offsets of those carbon emissions.

Carbon offsets purchased from the Finger Lakes Climate Fund stay local! Funds from the offsets you purchase will be distributed as grants to low-income community residents to help them reduce their energy consumption by insulating their homes or making other efficiency improvements. In the future, the Finger Lakes Climate Fund may support other types of local projects, such as renewable energy installations or sequestration projects.

Why purchase Local Carbon Offsets?

- You gain the satisfaction from making a real impact on climate emissions.
- The **Finger Lakes Climate Fund** invests in local projects, keeping our dollars working within the region.
- Our whole community benefits from such local investments:
 - People living in energy-efficient homes have more disposable income to make healthier food purchases and other investments in sustainable lifestyles.
 - We support a local, clean “green” energy economy. Local businesses will need more employees to complete energy efficiency projects.

What is a Carbon Offset?

A carbon offset is a financial instrument designed to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. *Each carbon offset represents the reduction of one metric ton of carbon dioxide or its equivalent in other greenhouse gases.* In the *voluntary carbon market*, individuals, companies, or governments purchase carbon offsets to mitigate their own greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, electricity use, and other sources. For example, an individual might purchase carbon offsets to compensate for the greenhouse gas emissions caused by personal air travel or commuting or to offset the amount of home electricity they purchase.

www.fingerlakesclimatefund.org



Didn't see your favorite "Sign of Sustainability" ..?

Sustainable Tompkins acknowledges three categories of "Signs of Sustainability"

(activities that started no earlier than December 1 of the prior year):

- A new sustainable enterprise
- A new group or organization supporting some aspect of sustainable development
- A new sustainable program element or activity rolled out by an existing business or non-profit organization

We need you to help us by being our "eyes and ears" throughout the year.

Anytime you see a new "Sign of Sustainability"- or if you *are* one yourself - let us know!

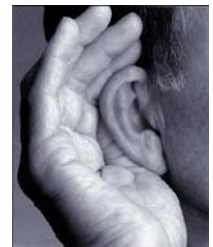
We've told you what we're looking for.

This 2009 program book is chock-full of great examples.

If *you* think it's a positive "sign", we bet that *we* will, too!

Don't take the chance that we'll spot a certain "sign",
or that somebody else will report it.

Make sure your favorite "sign" is included next year!



We'll keep the e-mail address for submissions open on our website all year long,
so please send your entries for "Signs of Sustainability" to:

sos@sustainabletompkins.org

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