

Earth Day, every day

Written by Administrator

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By TAN CHENG LI

Join the movement to promote sustainable living.

THIS Earth Day, on April 22, calls are out for people to protect and appreciate the Earth. It will mark the beginning of the Green Generation campaign, a movement promoting a new way of thinking, living and doing business where sustainability takes precedence.

Spearheaded by US-based Earth Day Network, the campaign is a two-year initiative that will culminate in the 40th anniversary of Earth Day in 2010. ♦ Earth Day is launching the Green Generation initiative in an attempt to preserve the planet and its resources for future generations and to make the world a fair and just place to live for all its inhabitants, ♦ says Kathleen Rogers, Earth Day Network president. ♦ The tough economic climate means that, more than ever, we have to plan a new green economy with a promising future for everyone. Earth Day will be a day to focus on moving away from fossil fuels toward renewable energy like wind, solar and geothermal, and on job-creating investments in a sustainable lifestyle. These investments in a more sustainable and just world will mean a better future for all of us. ♦

Rogers says the Green Generation is a global movement that everyone can join. It consists of ordinary people who are committed to a greener lifestyle to solve current ills plaguing the planet. They might be: consumers who are committed to buying green; community leaders who are focused on greening their communities; parents and teachers who work to provide healthy foods and green schools for their children; those who work in green jobs; academics whose research is focused on protecting the environment; scientists and engineers who develop new green technologies; corporations that are non-polluting and make sustainable products; governments that implement policies that will build a green economy and healthy population; and the religious community who are committed to a vision of a just, sustainable, green planet.

The Green Generation includes teaches and schools that nurture green consciousness among the young ♦

The Green Generation strives to include people of all ages and backgrounds. It will be comprehensive in its scope and encourages everyone to consider the impact that they have on the planet and its inhabitants, ♦ says Rogers.

♦ One can become a member of the Green Generation by voting for candidates that represent the ideals of the Green Generation, consuming wisely, staying informed and informing others, and transforming your school, home, and workplace into a sustainable environment. ♦

The Green Generation abides by three core principles:

♦ A carbon-free future based on renewable energy that will end our dependency on fossil fuels, including coal. By utilising alternative sources such as wind, solar thermal, photovoltaics and geothermal power, we will reduce our use of unsustainable energy sources.

♦ An individual's commitment to responsible, sustainable consumption. By eating local, sustainable and organic foods, buying green and energy-efficient products, as well as car pooling, using public transit, walking or biking whenever possible, you will dramatically reduce your footprint on the planet.

♦ Creation of a new green economy that lifts people out of poverty by creating millions of green jobs and transforming the global education system into a green one.

♦ The creation of a new green economy is vital to the success of the Green Generation. And by greening our schools, we will be teaching children from an early age that sustainability should be a priority. From there, they will grow into adults who will insist that their working and living spaces operate using sustainable practices. ♦

What

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would it take to shift to a green economy? A mere 1% of global GDP or US\$750bil (RM2,700bil), says the United Nations Environment Programme. This investment could create a Green New Deal to revive the world economy and protect the environment. Spending should focus on five sectors while creating jobs at the same time: energy-efficient buildings, renewable energies, better transport, sustainable agriculture and safeguarding nature.

Rogers says the new green economy should focus on tackling the climate crisis and other environmental problems as well as providing green jobs. ♦ There are many ways green jobs can be created in the context of the Green Generation. Putting together a new green energy programme, for instance, will create thousands of green jobs in solar, wind, and other renewable sources of energy. The retrofitting and construction of green schools will do the same. And skilled labour jobs will be required for the manufacturing of new, green products. We should examine a wide definition of green jobs, one that encompasses a wide range of occupations, from working in organic farming, or in demolition recycling, to teaching in green schools, ♦ says Rogers.

According to studies gathered by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute, a Washington DC energy think tank, Germany employs 214,000 people in renewable energy while Denmark's wind industry employs 20,000 and Spain's, 35,000.

In the following pages of StarTwo, you will see some aspects of the Green Generation: traits of a low-carbon world, a green building which reuses tyres, the habits of a sustainable shopper, a scientist who studies dolphins to preserve them, a man who finds new uses for old wood, and a way to keep your homes clean without chemicals.

Earth Day is a day of action and civic participation. So why not make a personal commitment to join the Green Generation by signing the Green Manifesto at earthday.net/node/13475. Make this Earth Day the beginning of a new era of personal responsibility for preserving the Earth.

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