

The Hoosier Environmental Council's Our Place Program: A Hands On Approach to Environmental and Civics Education

Our Place is the Hoosier Environmental Council's K-12 Place-Based Education project, which combines environmental education with civic engagement and student voice. Our Place facilitates student-driven projects based on environmental issues within their own communities.

Background on Our Place

- The Our Place project is based on nationally renowned environmental educator David Sobel's book *Place-Based Education, Connecting Classrooms and Communities*.
- Place-based education emphasizes hands-on, real world learning experiences; enhances student appreciation for the natural world; and develops student awareness of civic responsibility.
- Discovery and self-directed inquiry give students ownership of the issues they choose to study while meeting state academic standards.
- Sobel describes it as "a starting point to teach language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and other subjects across the curriculum."



Teachers participating in the workshops will receive

- Sub pay for attending the workshop (if held during the week) or a \$100 stipend (if held on a Saturday)
- A personal copy of David Sobel's book *Place-Based Education Connecting Classrooms and Communities*
- Copies of *The Kid's Guide to Social Action* by Barbara A. Lewis and *How to Change the World—Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas* by David Bornstein for their school corporation's professional library

Teachers attending a workshop and signing the Our Place contract will be required to complete an Our Place project with at least one class during the 2010-2011 school year, to participate in evaluation of the project, to meet with a resource person at least 3 times during the school year, to set up an end-of-the-project presentation in which students share their project with the public and to write an outline of their project for the HEC website.

To help with their semester-long Our Place project, teachers will receive

- A \$300-stipend for classroom supplies related to the project
- \$50 for a student presentation and celebration of final projects
- Assistance from a resource person who will help identify guest speakers, supplies and materials for the project.

Learn more by contacting Trish Whitcomb, Our Place Coordinator, at whitcomb@hecweb.org