

Koala-ty Refurbished at Bay Meadow Elementary, Orlando, FL

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About 10 years ago parents, teachers, and community members of the Bay Meadows Elementary joined together in the realization of a dream. Their dream was to provide an interactive, living outdoor classroom for students and teachers, named the Koala-ty Interactive Children's Garden. Businesses including Walt Disney Co., Rinker Materials Corp., landscape architects, Canin Associates, and many parents and friends worked diligently to amass over \$20,000 in cash and service donations for the creation of this garden.

The garden encompasses one-third of an acre and is composed of four

mini-gardens: an arboretum, a Storybook Garden with an amazing maze, a Hummingbird and Butterfly Garden, and an American garden. The garden has been designed as a teaching tool to enhance math, science, social science, and language arts. Unfortunately, a year-long renovation project at Bay Meadow Elementary prevented students and teachers from utilizing the space and the garden languished amidst the construction. Upon returning to the school, parents, teachers, and students weeded, mulched, and cleaned up the garden. Audubon International partner, Walt Disney World, assisted with the refurbishment of the garden



Students from Bay Meadow Elementary, Orlando, FL work hard to refurbish their outdoor classroom in preparation for 500 annuals supplied by Walt Disney World.

by donating over 500 annuals for the students to plant to encourage the butterflies and hummingbirds to return. Goals for this year include: increasing the size of the garden to over half an acre; restoring power to

continued on page 10

Improve Your Environmental Performance with Culture

To improve environmental performance in your organization, begin by becoming an environmental champion and foster employee buy-in and involvement. Your goal is to create an environmental culture within your organization, making environmental stewardship "the way people do things." Start by reviewing eight common failures for environmental organizational change (adapted from John Kotter, *Leading Change*, Harvard Business School Press, 1996) and make a plan to ensure your success:

- 1. Failing to Create a Sense of Urgency:** Moving people, and entire organizations, in a new direction can be like moving an iceberg. Create a sense of urgency. Environmental stewardship has to be viewed as a critical part of your long-term success, and a critical part of each person's job.
- 2. Not Creating a Guiding Coalition (Team):** Build a "resource advisory group" or "green team," selecting people from all levels and departments. Be aware of who has an ability to help you motivate staff and coordinate operations. Who has knowledge and technical skills to help solve environmental problems? Who has the authority and respect to help you mobilize people to take action?
- 3. Underestimating the Power of a Vision:** People want to feel as if they are a part of something bigger than themselves. Create a vision to inspire people. Find the connections between the day-to-day actions and the effect that those actions can have on our natural environment.
- 4. Under-communicating the Vision:** Once you've developed a "vision message" relay it to staff. Use posters, regular meetings, and perhaps even bonuses or other incentives to reinforce that vision and the role that each individual plays in achieving it.
- 5. Not Addressing Obstacles:** Most environmental efforts fail in businesses because they are viewed as side issues—not core to financial health. Avoid this by tying all of your actions explicitly to business value. Environmental performance and business goals (e.g., revenue generation, cost avoidance, image and public relations) can, and often do, go hand-in-hand.
- 6. Failing to Create Short-term Wins:** Keep yourself and your staff motivated. Publicize and celebrate those shorter-term successes. Then, set new goals to inspire continuous improvement and longer-term excellence.
- 7. Declaring Victory Too Soon:** Don't settle for limited results. Remember that the long-term goal is to create an environmental culture in your organization. One or two recycling success stories do not lead to changed culture. Be patient and include a periodic process to review and update program goals.
- 8. Not Anchoring Changes in the Culture:** Use projects and performance goals to change behavior, but use management systems, reward programs, and training programs to reinforce and embed that behavior in staff. As an environmental champion, part of your job to ensure success is managing the environmental culture that you've created.