



April 18, 2003

Earth Week at Mammoth Elementary

MAMMOTH LAKES, CA – While the return of winter raged outside, global warming and greenhouse gasses were hot topics inside the classrooms last week at Mammoth Elementary School.

As part of their Earth Week activities in celebration of Earthday 2003, the children of Mammoth Elementary learned about the theory of global warming, especially as it relates to mountain communities, and ways they personally could help produce less greenhouse gas. From turning off lights and television sets to riding bikes and walking, the children discussed how they could use less of the energy resources that burn fossil fuels, one of the main culprits behind the build up of greenhouse gasses in the earth's atmosphere. As a reminder of the lesson, the students were given recycled metal refrigerator magnets, printed with the message "Mammoth Kids CARE, Shut it Off – Turn it down!" for use at home to remind family members to conserve energy.

The children also learned that by using used materials in place of new products, they could help reduce greenhouse gas emissions (and save money) by lessening the demand on industrial manufacturing processes for newly made products. Many of these manufacturers, especially those located in countries with less stringent air quality controls, release large amounts of pollutants into the atmosphere, effectively increasing the thickness of the greenhouse gas layer. Like a greenhouse, the earth's atmosphere is meant to trap heat, making life as we know it possible, but most scientists now believe that human-caused air pollution is rapidly building up the atmospheric gas walls and effectively changing the global climate.

Turning their global warming and reuse lessons into an art project, the students then collected used items to create ornaments for the Earth Tree, using plastic food lids as the framework for their artistic, environmental statements. The finished ornaments have been hung on the tree, currently on display until April 27th in the indoor common area of the Von's Shopping Center. In the spirit of reuse, the Earth Tree was fashioned from a young aspen that had to be removed from a hazardous location two years ago. It was first re-used as part of the 2000 Earth Week events at Mammoth Elementary.

"The kids really enjoyed their Earthday activities," explained Mammoth Elementary School Principal Stacy Adler. "They showed me their projects and they were excited about them. Summing up the week-long

educational effort, Adler concluded, "The lessons the children participated in will transfer throughout their whole life, and the applications of these lessons will benefit not only theirs but future generations."

The 2003 Earthday activities were planned and directed by the Earthday Educational Consortium consisting of: Leslie Dawson from Valentine Eastern Sierra Reserve; Lisa Isaacs and Wendy Fujikawa from Mammoth Mountain Ski Area's Environmental Programs; and Debra Hawk, Alica Ellsworth and Troy Kelly from California Department of Fish & Game. Earthday gifts for all of the children were supplied by Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, the Town of Mammoth Lakes and Banana Boat Sun care.

