



Date: March 24, 2016

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For Immediate Release:

Yarmouth teachers and parents receive 2016 eco-Excellence Award for work in public schools

Awards Honor Individuals, Organizations or Businesses Who Demonstrated Commitment to Environmental Sustainability in 2015

PORTLAND, MAINE – (March 24, 2016) Yarmouth parents Jodi Federle and Kerry Weinrich together with Yarmouth Elementary School teachers Sheri Oliva and Renee Rhoads received a 2016 ecomaine eco-Excellence Award for developing a pilot waste reduction program at Yarmouth Elementary School. The program was fully adopted and has since been expanded to the town's middle and high schools.

"We are proud to recognize Jodi, Kerry, Sheri and Renee for their standout commitment to environmental sustainability," ecomaine CEO Kevin Roche said. "They have walked the talk of the waste hierarchy every day to leave the smallest carbon footprint in their path."

With the help of a grant from the Yarmouth Education Foundation in the Spring of 2014, the foursome designed a program and trained students, faculty and kitchen staff to separate organics and recyclables from cafeteria trash. As a result of their pilot program, compostable food waste from the school kitchen is now separated and hauled away by Garbage to Garden and the school is receiving compost back for use in their school vegetable garden. Recyclables are also being separated out of the waste stream and transported to ecomaine's single-sort-recycling facility on Blueberry Road here.

Furthermore, this program has proven to be replicable, having been expanded with additional help from Director of School Nutrition Blair Currier to Rowe Harrison Middle and the High School.

"For their teamwork and vision to recycle and compost, we are proud to award Jodi, Kerry, Sheri and Renee with a 2016 ecomaine eco-Excellence Award," said Chairman of ecomaine's Recycling Committee Erik Street, who is Director of Public Works for the town of Yarmouth, during the ceremony on March 23.

The eco-Excellence Award winners are selected based on effectiveness, increasing awareness, community impact and ease of replication of their initiatives or programs. Other criteria include:

- Each municipality may have an award winner in both the community and business categories.
- Any person or organization may submit multiple entries; self-nomination is encouraged.
- All effort or activities in support of sustainability are eligible for award, regardless of size or scope.
- Award recipients may be individuals, organizations or businesses.
- There is no age limit.

- The nominated activity must have occurred during 2015 or be ongoing to be eligible.
- Nominees must live, work or be located in the municipality for which the award will be given; that municipality must be one of the 55 ecomaine communities.



Photo caption:

Yarmouth parent Kerry Weinrich, center left, and Yarmouth Elementary School Teacher Renee Rhoads, center right, accepted the eco-Excellence Awards ecomaine from Board Member and Recycling Committee Chair Erik Street, left, and ecomaine Chief Executive Officer Kevin Roche, right during the awards luncheon here March 23.

ecomaine is the nonprofit, recycling and waste-to-energy operation that serves 25 percent of the state's population; it is owned by 20 communities and is located in Portland, Maine. Learn more at ecomaine.org.

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