

## CDDHS working to save energy

By LAVINIA KERR Staff Reporter

Students from Centre Dufferin District High School (CDDHS) Environment Club wrapped up their school year by interviewing the Shelburne residents who tested a new energy saving technology called *PowerCost* monitors.

In January the group asked for 50 residents in Shelburne to volunteer and participate with an energy saving project and 30 residents, including members of council, came forward. Each participant had a *PowerCost* monitor installed in their home at no cost to the homeowner.

The monitors, made available for the project by the Ontario Conservation Bureau and Hydro One, are a device that show immediate energy savings. The school environment club was working in partnership with Reduce the Juice, a grassroots student-led organization that has been encouraging homeowners in Orangeville and Shelburne to save energy in the previous two summers.

Small table top monitors were installed by the students that allowed participants to know their energy consumption at any time and how much it was costing them.

The *PowerCost* monitor is made by Blue Line Innovations and retail for about \$150. It's described as an unobtrusive small electric clock, that provides a real-time readout of electricity a home is using, in dollars and cents and in kilowatts.

Another component to the system, called a detection unit, is a small device that fits over the household utility meter, affixed by a simple ring clamp. It transmits the energy consumed by counting turns of

the metre disk and sends that information through a wireless signal to the the powercost monitor inside the home.

Information from the monitors was collected by the students and sent to the University of Waterloo.

Over the summer club members will work with the University to analyze the information they have gathered and then publish the results.

"We wanted to find out if these PowerCost monitors really will make a difference," said Rebecca Higginson-Rollins, a grade 12 student who worked on the project.

"Global warming, smog and other environmental problems are directly related to our overuse of energy, and if these monitors will help people conserve, that is very good news."

"People were pretty shocked to see how much using their dryer was costing them," Ms. Higginson-Rollins said. "I'll bet that a lot of clotheslines are used more this summer because of the monitors we installed."

The study, called the Shelburne Power Awareness Project, is designed to see if receiving immediate feedback about electricity consumption and cost would cause people to reduce the amount of power they use. Information collected through interviews and weekly hydro meter readings by the students will be analyzed this summer under the guidance of Jennifer Lynes, a professor from the University of Waterloo.

"The opportunity to work on this project and to and work with Professor Lynes to figure out the results is fantastic," said Stephen Krysak, one of the leaders of the Environment Club who plans to study Environment and Business at Waterloo next year. "It is pretty rare for high school students to get the chance to work on something that could make a difference ... and this technology might really change the way people use energy. "

"These students showed that if you give young people the opportunity they can have a real impact on their community," said Randy Dryburgh, RTJ Project Coordinator. "They ran this whole project, from making presentations to Town Council to troubleshooting the monitors when people had problems. They were amazing."

"We offered people a perfect way to save money and protect the environment at the same time," said Nancy Cruz, a grade 10 student "And when the project was over, everyone was very willing to answer all our questions about how the monitors influenced their household. They all want to know if their experience was similar to their neighbours."

CDDHS Environment Club members include: Ms. Higginson-Rollins, Steve Krysak, Ms. Cruz, Brooke Crewson, Sarah Pugsley and Jessie Varey. Kim Sayers is the club's teacher advisor.

Ten PowerCost monitors have been donated to the high school environment club as a reward for their participation in the project.

They plan to use these monitors next year to continue to educate people in the community about energy conservation.