

## THE GREENING OF EXETER: A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

By Principal Tyler C. Tingley '48, '64, '01 (Hon.); P'99

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”*

—Margaret Mead

The most powerful education takes place when an institution lives the values it espouses. Concepts such as protecting the environment come alive when a community addresses shared challenges and works to solve common problems.

As you will see in the story beginning on page 16, dedication to learning about environmental issues and acting on them is becoming a vital feature of campus life. I hope that now and in the future our commitment will provide our students with a working model of “small groups of thoughtful, committed citizens” who “can change the world.”

One important part of that lesson is showing how Exeter’s democratic and collaborative culture influences the way we approach environmentalism. Some schools favor a top-down method in dealing with this and other issues, but a presentation given by representatives of our Environmental Task Force at a recent National Association of Independent Schools conference reinforced my belief that great things happen when a collaborative approach is taken.

Faculty member Amy Schwartz talked about her work with the Academy’s Environmental Proctors (or e-proctors for short) and the recycling and conservation programs this group of 80 energetic students is rolling out. Joining her was trustee Paul Goldenheim '68, who discussed the trustees’ enthusiasm for increasing environmental awareness at the school. While drafting an environmental mission statement, Paul reported, the trustees met with students and faculty and received much constructive criticism from the group. The result, he added, was a much stronger piece.

Assistant Principal Tom Hassan, who coordinates the various environmental activities on campus, described how the Academy has evolved from a few champions carrying the entire weight of our environmental efforts to a place where ecological awareness has become a truly shared endeavor.

This grass-roots approach is, I believe, what will ensure our success. While there has always been a good deal of environmental activity on the campus, this new, concerted effort draws on the talents of our whole community—students and staff, faculty and trustees—and on those of our first environmental intern, Patrick Leslie '97. Together, we are changing not only what happens in our dorms and our dining halls, but in our classrooms and administrative offices as well.

Our efforts are paying off. We have seen energy use on campus drop and environmental awareness rise. I am confident we will continue to work together as Margaret Mead’s “committed citizens” to improve our corner of the world for ourselves and for future generations. ●

