

DECCAN Chronicle

City

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Student mission: Save the planet

Feb. 21: Some of the city's young ambassadors for the environment are making sure their parents are clued in on green initiatives that can save the planet. When the electricity bill arrives every month, these children check to see if their parents have matched a benchmark that they have set for energy conservation.

While parents say they feel like they are being handed a report card, they know that their children are doing the right thing.

These ecologically conscious children are part of 'Conserve my Campus', a movement for students of classes IV to VII at five schools in the city — Frank Anthony Public School, Cathedral High School, JSS Public School, Bishop Cottons Boys' School and Delhi Public School (East). Around 450 of these green ambassadors are ensuring that they conserve energy (they say their household electricity bills have reduced by 15 to 50 per cent in the past few months) and protect trees and wildlife.

In the first year of the campaign, the children worked with issues in their immediate surroundings, but they are now addressing broader issues. They hold short skits and stage plays

Children from five schools are effective enforcers of change

to remind people of the necessity to protect the environment before it is irreversibly damaged.

"Children are effective enforcers of change and this initiative has really taken off because of the students involved. They have the courage to ask 'why not?' and work to bring about change," says Hema Hattangady, CEO-Conserv, an energy management organisation. She says the mascot Ziggy-The Planet Saver has been a hit with the children.

Through weekly presentations, the children gain 'debit points' for 'green debit cards'. The schoolchildren, who hold extemporaneous debates on ecology, display an understanding of the issues involved that belie their age.

As a song composed by students of Cathedral School goes, "With protocols and climate laws/we couldn't pull it through./Our policies and politics don't meet the burning issue./Where adults have failed