

# The PortionPac Connection™

April 20, 2010

As promised, here's the first of a few articles written by PortionPac personnel about their first Earth Day.



*A picture from the archives.*

## Thoughts about Earth Day

by Mark Samios  
Education Director

**Just back from the army, and in my first year of teaching Social Studies to Junior high school students, Earth day 1970 was a big deal for me. We had a school wide celebration with guest speakers in the field in the back of the school. I remember it well because I organized the event. Children of the 60's, full of enthusiastic idealism... we were going to forge a better world, save the planet, end the war, and rid the nation and the world of poverty and disease. Somewhere along the way, like so many other generations before us, we must have become distracted. Forty years have passed and we are still struggling with the same problems.**

Today, I don't think there are many schools taking the whole day to celebrate and focus on Earth Day. I don't expect to see a million man march in Washington or more than a 15 second blurb on the nightly news. The nation is wrestling with a whole new set of priorities. At the same time, the American people are significantly more environmentally aware today than we ever were in 1970. There has been real progress in almost every aspect of the environmental movement. This progress has come by balancing environmental issues and concerns against economic realities, while also measuring the impact on people. **These three (planet, profit, people) are often referred to as the triple bottom line of sustainability.**

**Although I have resigned myself to accept the fact that I will never personally save the planet, I refuse to give up. Forever a teacher, I know that education is the only way to solve this problem. My enthusiastic idealism has given way to practical pragmatism. Success, (saving the planet) depends upon the actions of each of us working together. We must take real action in a real world. To that end, here is my list of actions that janitors and custodial departments and manufacturers can take that have real impact.**

**Profit** - Become the energy watchdog for your building. Turn off lights, appliances and computers when not in use. Work with the energy manager to find ways to save energy, and thus save dollars. That money might just be used to keep your job.

**People** - Become a health advocate. Lobby for the elimination of food anywhere in the building except for designated eating areas. Soda, coffee, milk and sugar, cake and cookies and lunches eaten at the desks throughout the building, provide food for insects and rodents alike. This isn't just about making your job easier, even though it will. It is a human health issue.

**Planet** - Become the guru of garbage. Encourage and educate the building population about the monetary and environmental cost of the trash we generate. Start a recycling program. Set a goal for lowering the amount of trash by department or section of the building. Encourage others in the organization who understand recycling to help. One school district I know is using the payments they receive for their recyclables to fund student activities. The students are enthusiastic supporters of the program, it has reduced the school budget, and the environment is saving on all sorts of materials.

**Be active** - Everyday do something sustainable. Complete at least one task. Each week challenge yourself to be just a little more sustainable. Keep track of your results.

**Educate those around you** - Every day try to educate at least one person on some aspect of sustainable behavior. Form a network of people who are also interested. Let people know that you care and want to make things better, encourage them to join you in this journey.

**Communicate** - Brag about what you have been doing. Send a letter or story to the newsletter. Send it to the local newspaper. Call the local TV station. Add it to the company web site. Every web manager is always looking for positive stories he can use, and what could be better than the building population trying to save the environment one person, one day at a time.

**Live sustainably** - Live today in such a manner as to ensure that the quality of life for future generations will not be compromised, and will in fact be improved.

**And finally...conjure up a little bit of that enthusiastic idealism and celebrate Earth Day 2010.**

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