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Shoppers, day campers do their part for Earth Hour

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With the flip of a switch, people all over the world helped to save the Earth Saturday night. The World Wildlife Fund asked people in every corner of the world to cut back of electricity by turning off their lights for one hour, from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. March 28.

Earth Hour is about more than sitting in the dark. Organizers of the annual event encourage people to spend that hour considering their role and the state of the environment and what they can do to make the world around them a little greener.

Whole Foods Market in Willowbrook did its part by inviting local families to turn off their lights and head for the store for an evening of dimly lit family fun.

Nancy LaBreacht, marketing and community relations specialist, said safety concerns kept the store from turning off the lights completely, but things were a bit on the dark side, in a good way, during Earth Hour. The first 75 shoppers were given free flashlights to help them navigate around the store, and everyone was treated to snacks.

"I wanted it to be a family event," LaBreacht said, so to make a trip to the grocery store fun for the little ones, she invited a professional storyteller.

Marie Ringenberg told stories of food and the environment as she entertained the Earth Hour crowd.

Pleasant Dale Park District also did its part to spread the word about Earth Hour and the importance of conserving energy. Karla Olson, marketing communications coordinator and environmental leader for the park district, said an entire day of the district's Spring Break camp was dedicated to Earth Hour. Children 5 to 13 spent Friday doing activities that taught them what they can do to reduce energy use and improve the environment.

They played flashlight tag, Earth bingo and made glow-in-the-dark posters that they could see when they turned off the lights in their own homes Saturday night.

"We're encouraging families to turn off the lights, tell a ghost story," Olson said before the event.



A full morning of activities Friday at Pleasantdale Park District was aimed at teaching children about Earth Hour and the environment. Jimmy Roskopf, 9, and Mark Kiessler, of Countryside, make Earth Hour posters. (Herb Shenkin/for The Doings)

A full morning of activities Friday at Pleasantdale Park District was aimed at teaching children about Earth Hour and the environment. Karla Olson, with the Park District, talks about Earth Hour. (Herb Shenkin/for The Doings)



Earth Hour began in 2007 and last year grew to include 400 cities worldwide. Nearly 4,000 cities and towns in 88 countries took part in Earth Hour 2009.

A full morning of activities at Pleasantdale Park District was aimed at teaching children about Earth Hour and the environment and included a light-tag game. (Herb Shenkin/for The Doings)



A full morning of activities Friday at Pleasantdale Park District was aimed at teaching children about Earth Hour and the environment. Frankie Mesec, 6, of Willow Springs, is the target of light tag game. (Herb Shenkin/for The Doings)



A full morning of activities Friday at Pleasantdale Park District was aimed at teaching children about Earth Hour and the environment. Kevin Brongiel, 8, of Hickory Hills, and Zach Kaloustian, 11, of Indian Head Park, do puzzles, quizzes and coloring about the Earth Hour topic. (Herb Shenkin/for The Doings)