

Earth Week at UWO full of opportunities to learn, engage

by Brittany Farrell - Friday, April 20, 2012

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/18263/earth-week-at-uwo-full-of-opportunities-to-learn-engage/>

A week-long Earth Week celebration gave University of Wisconsin Oshkosh students, faculty staff and community members several opportunities to learn and engage.

Tree planting, interactive art exhibits, a Green Living Fair, speakers, workshops and a Saturday, April 21 Garden Planting Party at the Third Avenue Gardens segued into April 22 Earth Day, recognized since the 1970s.

The week-long celebration included a workshop on experimental sustainable structures, demonstrated by Amanda Bramble, outside of Reeve Memorial Union on Wednesday afternoon.

Bramble showed students and faculty how to take basic elements like mud, sand, water and straw and construct a cob structure that is entirely made from the earth. Cob-building is an ancient way of making homes and structures and can be dated back to prehistoric times.

Students like Ken Remer, who were passing by, noticed the miniature model of a home Bramble was building Wednesday.

Remer, a senior studying religious studies, said he feels it is important for not only students, but also businesses, to get involved with sustainable initiatives.

"I feel that our society has not yet embraced being sustainable," Remer said. "It is especially important for the University and students to get involved more; universities are a hot-bed for new ideas and sharing of thought. I own an e-commerce business, and I feel sustainability within my business is economically viable."

Austin Sayler, a junior studying environment studies, also stopped and observed the demonstration.

"I would like to live the most natural way possible, it's just the right thing to do for our Earth," Sayler said. "If we are going to live on this earth, we need to take care of it."

Other students participated in Earth Week's Shantytown, which involved the construction of a sheet-metal shanty. The week's events also featured the preparation and selling of Fair Trade Coffee from Nicaragua outside of Reeve during the week.

Douglas Haynes, an English professor who has three-times taken a group of students to Nicaragua, said he's passionate about students exploring the way other parts of the population live, such as in shanties like the one outside of Reeve. Shanties are home to more than 1 billion people worldwide, students involved in the Earth Week project said.

“I don’t think they can understand it unless they see it,” Haynes said.

Mike Lizotte, director of sustainability at UW Oshkosh, said Earth Week activities on campus have grown in popularity over the years. What originally started as a one-day celebration and recognition is now a more-than week-long awareness-building event engaging the campus and community, he said.

“Truth is, we might, at some point, need an entire month,” Lizotte said.

Learn more:

- [Sustainability at UW Oshkosh](#)