



SERT Flash

School Energy and Recycling Team



SERT Goes to the Mall!

Recently, members of the SERT Office took a field trip to the National Mall in Washington D.C., to attend the United States Department of Energy (USDOE) Solar Decathlon. The Solar Decathlon is a competition in which college students must create the most attractive, effective, energy-efficient solar power house. Twenty Solar Decathlon teams hail from all over the continental United States as well as Puerto Rico, Germany, Spain and Canada. The teams spent nearly two years transforming ideas into reality before transporting their masterpieces to the National Mall. The event provides valuable learning experiences for student competitors and markets ready examples of solar and energy efficient building technologies for the public. To compete, the teams must design and build energy-efficient houses that are powered exclusively by the Sun.

The houses were open for the public to walk through. Staff and volunteers would direct you on a tour of each house explaining how they designed houses to achieve net zero. Zero-energy homes produce enough energy to equal or exceed their energy consumption over the course of a year.

SERT staff were pleasantly surprised when we noticed a number of students and adults wearing Parkland Middle School tee shirts. Parkland Middle School was recently outfitted with solar panels on their roof to help offset the rising energy costs for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). The principal, Dr. Benjamin OuYang, scheduled a field trip to the Solar Decathlon for Parkland's students. Surprisingly, Dr. OuYang managed to arrange for 22 buses to take 800 students and all but a few staff members to this event where USDOE is hoping to engage our next generation to help solve our energy problems. MCPS was well represented.

All in all it was a great, exciting, and very educational trip for both students and staff. We look forward to the next Solar Decathlon. Hope to see you there!

Do you have a "SERT Flash" you would like to share about your SERT efforts? Please submit a photograph and paragraph about your team and you too can be featured in a future FLASH!

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"It's your world...choose to conserve"