

When it comes to saving our environment, people often think that their actions are meaningless. I always hear the phrase, “what can one person do anyway?” While this statement is so far from the truth, it needs to be addressed. Sure, I turn off all unused lights, drive a hybrid vehicle and use fluorescent light bulbs in my home; however, I wanted to know how I could get others to participate. I wanted to convince people that they were making a difference. I began to think, if people don’t believe they are making a difference on an individual level, what if I convinced them to do something on a group level? With a little inspiration from Earth Hour and a lot of knocking on doors, I finally came up with an idea.

In February of 2008, I organized a local version of Earth Hour. I went door to door and asked people to sign up. The rules were simple: for one hour on February 13<sup>th</sup>, they would turn off all electronics and lighting in their home. When posed with the question of individual insignificance, all I had to do was show them the list of neighbors that were participating. That was enough to convince them that their efforts were a part of a greater plan.

The event was a success. On February 13<sup>th</sup>, 20 homes in my neighborhood participated in what we called “Candle Hour.” Not only were we saving energy, but we were having a lot of fun as well! I got to meet so many people that I would have never met otherwise. For that single hour, participants did everything from organize a neighborhood kickball game to barbequing. One participant even took the time to teach her daughter how to knit. The event was so successful that we try to do it every month! My hope is to one day be able to have a Candle Day where my entire neighborhood doesn’t use electricity for the entire day.

EarthDrive for Earth Day Scholarship Essay

Diane Elizabeth Melville

I truly believe that saving our planet is a group effort. While individuals can do their part to lower their energy consumption, it is also best that we try to get others to do the same.

I make it a point to tell everyone I know about how they can lower their consumption.

Together, we can accomplish great things—and save our planet.

### **Application Information**

Diane Elizabeth Melville

Miami, FL

