



## BIOGRAPHY – KAY McKEEN

Kay McKeen is the Founder and Executive Director of SCARCE -- **S**chool and **C**ommunity **A**ssistance for **R**ecycling and **C**omposting **E**ducation. As a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization, Kay & the SCARCE team reach hundreds of people – in schools, businesses and community groups - with innovative environmental education programs. Kay, her team, and SCARCE programs have been recognized innumerable – in local, national and international newspapers & magazines. In addition, Kay is often asked to speak at events and on cable & televised programs. The following highlights some of Kay's achievements & environmental programs she has developed since 1986.

- 2009: Illinois Recycling Association awards SCARCE **Recycling Hero Award** for leading efforts on food scrap composting in Illinois.
- 2009: Governor signed the Food Scrap Composting (SB 99) into law – a key initiative led by SCARCE for over 5 years.
- 2009: Recipient of the **Public Education Award** from the Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management (IAFSM)
- 2008: Led initiative towards collection of unwanted **pharmaceutical disposal** in DuPage County
- 2008: Recipient of **Illinois Environmental Hero Award** from Governor Pat Quinn
- 2008: Received the **Business Partner of the Year Award** from the Central DuPage AM Rotary
- 2008: Received The Conservation Foundation's **Paul Butler Memorial Award**, for extraordinary efforts in promoting conservation and the environment through her work with SCARCE
- 2007: Named one of DuPage County's "**10 Most Influential Environmentalists**" by The Daily Herald Newspaper
- 2006: Joined "**Clean Air Counts**" initiative to improve air quality in the Chicago metropolitan area
- 2006: Developed & implemented county program establishing **groundwater flow models and teacher-training** in all middle schools
- 2005: Developed & implemented county program establishing **watershed models and teacher-training** in all middle schools
- 2005: Received the **State of Illinois Hometown Hero Award** from Lieutenant Governor, Pat Quinn
- 2004: Along with **Lieutenant Governor's** office, lead efforts to develop a comprehensive **policy for composting** throughout Illinois
- 2004: Helped **State Representative, Sandra Pihos**, with House Resolution 0840 declaring May 4, 2004 **Illinois Clean Air & Asthma Awareness Day** and promoting **School Bus Idling Ban**
- 2004: U.S. Green Building Council, Chicago Chapter, **Re-Generation Award**, for educating children
- 2003: Began work with Lt. Governor Quinn's office to start **food scrap composting** for Illinois

- 2003: Founded and developed the **Green DuPage Patch Program** for community youth group members
- 2003: Kane DuPage Soil and Water Conservation's *Excellence in Environmental Education Award*
- 2002: Established the 'Tools for Schools' Rescue Program
- 2002: Established *The Green Bulletin*, an electronic environmental newsletter for the community at-large
- 2001: Founded and developed the **Ecology Flag Program**; 12 DuPage County schools have earned the Ecology Flag
- 2001: Illinois Recycling Association's *Recycling Educator of the Year Award*
- 2000: Received DuPage County Conservation Foundation *Brooks McCormick Environmental Award*
- 2000: Began ongoing association with The **Shedd Aquarium**, to conduct a **waste audit**, develop a comprehensive **solid waste reduction program** on-site, and assist in development of education programs
- 1999: Began ongoing association with **Field Museum of Natural History**, to assist in development of exhibit & education programs
- 1998: Began ongoing association with **Brookfield Zoo**, to assist in development of exhibit and education programs
- 1998: **Presenter**, the **Governor's Pollution Prevention Award** (one of 4 first-ever presenters)
- 1998: SCRAP Book Rescue Program is recipient of the *Role Model Program Award*, from the State of Illinois, Department of Commerce & Community Affairs [CCA] Bureau of Recycling
- 1997: Illinois Tool Works *Hi-Cone Ring Leader Team Award*, for Outstanding Environmental Education Program
- 1997: Founded and developed the **Earth Flag Re-Certification Program**; over 150 of DuPage County's 289 Earth Flag schools have earned Earth Flag Re-Certification
- 1996: *The Governor's Pollution Prevention Award*
- 1993: **Executive Director, DuPage County Solid Waste Education Center** in Carol Stream; developed the Center and established an extensive education program for schools, colleges, business, social, community, organizations and groups of all ages. Over 110,000 visitors toured the center from 1993 to October 2000, when it closed.
- 1993: Illinois Recycling Association's *Outstanding School Recycling and Reduction Education Program Award*
- 1993: Initiated Wheaton's "**Recycling Extravaganza**" community-wide annual recycling event to collect, or safely dispose of, items such as books, tires, scrap metals, electronics, athletic shoes, American flags, eyeglasses, household hazardous wastes. Helped over **10 towns** develop ongoing "Extravanzas" for their communities.
- 1991: Established SCRAP Book Rescue Center (now known as SCARCE's "Book Rescue Center"), in Glen Ellyn, **over 3 million books have been rescued from landfills for reuse since inception**
- 1990: Founded and developed two composting programs for schools Outdoor: "**Turning Garbage into Gold**" Indoors, with worms: "**Kids Aren't the Only Wigglers That Belong In School**"

- 1990: Founded and developed the four-step **Earth Flag Program**; 289 (90%) of DuPage County's 320 schools earned their Earth Flags since the program's inception. It has been adopted by many counties, and the state of Illinois.
- 1990: Established *Ripples*, an environmental newsletter for educators
- 1990: Established **SCRAP** (School Recycling Assistance Program), which evolved into **SCARCE**
- 1989: **Columnist, *Curbside Manners*** - an environmental 'Dear Abby' – from 1989 to 2000 and published in several west suburban newspapers to answer solid waste questions
- 1987: **Chair, Wheaton Environmental Improvement Commission** from 1987 to 2006
- 1986: Wheaton's *Citizen of the Year*
- 1986: Chairperson of committee that **designed and built the Wheaton Recycling Center**

A native of Cicero, Illinois, Kay has lived in Wheaton since she was 8 years old. Kay McKeen and her husband, Greg, have two grown children and three grandchildren. She credits her life-long passion to learn about the environment to her parents. According to Kay, they "cared about the environment, long before it was cool."

When naming Kay as one of DuPage County's 10 Most Influential Environmentalists', the Daily Herald wrote "McKeen has been at the forefront of recycling and conservation in DuPage County for almost three decades and has spearheaded hundreds of projects in communities throughout the region." Kay continues to inspire hundreds of people weekly with a simple message of how each person can help to care for and preserve the Earth's natural resources. For over 20 years, Kay's enduring legacy is the "ripple" effect in action – drop a pebble in a pond, see the ripples go on and on. Teach one person, and that person will, in turn, reach out to others about the stewardship of our environment.