

Earth Week is big celebration at UCM

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Actor Ed Begley Jr. talked about sustainable living practices and taking personal responsibility for the environment at Hendricks Hall Thursday as part of Earth Week activities at UCM. (Chris Eversole photo)

WARRENSBURG, Mo.-- This week America celebrates the 40th anniversary of Earth Day. UCM is taking this celebration to another level with one of the biggest celebrations in the region. There have been many movements throughout campus that have also moved the campus towards becoming greener.

In addition to these initiatives throughout campus, the university has also formed many partnerships with local businesses to make this year's earth day celebration a success. The university has partnered with Trane on a \$36.1 million project to reduce energy consumption.

"Without this partnership there would be no way that we would have been able to get the keynote speakers we were able to get" said Steven Boone interim dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, and chair of the planning committee for this year's events.

"The stage this year was set for making a bigger splash with this celebration, given the university's big green movement, and steps in terms of sustainability" Boone said.

This year's them "Change your behavior, change our world" brings home this mission of the university in the green movement. "The theme actually jut came up on the recommendation of one of our board members in a brainstorming session" Boone said.

The festivities for the week started last Saturday with a volunteer service day. According to Melissa Loper who coordinated the event there were about 129 participants in the all day event.

"This service project put people in the mindset for earth week", Loper said.

According to Looper the main project of the day was starting a nature trail at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Warrensburg "We were able to assist them with getting the project started" Looper said.

The participants according to Looper removed a pile of debris that had accumulated over the last several year including tons of trash including tires and furniture. This was the first earth day service event "the volunteers worked hard, but felt fulfilled" Looper said. The day brought together the campus and local communities Looper said.

This was exactly what President Obama had in mind for this year's earth day celebration. In an address on April 13, Obama said that Earth Day "is about the citizens who come together time and time again to demand cleaner air, drinking water, and safer food." He went on to say in his speech that change will "come from Americans across the country who take steps in their own homes and their own communities to make that change happen" Obama said.

The week's events continued Monday with a speech by John Hess professor emeritus of biology and earth science who led a discussion entitled "It's all around us." Monday evening brought the Haute Trash Fashion Show to campus. The show had student models who displayed clothing made out of recyclable materials. Among these materials were plastic shopping bags, tires and general trash.

Tuesday brought another speech by Robert Mann founder of Bridging the Gap. The lecture entitled "The Options Migration, Adaptation, or Extinction!" which asked the question of what we are going to do in this rapidly changing human habitat, to preserve the well being of other species. The day concluded with the independent film "The Chances of the World Changing," which was about an artist who abandons his life's work to build an ark filled with endangered animals.

Wednesday brought a trade show with about 20 artifacts to campus. There was also a roundtable discussion on a green sustainable economy. As well as a short-film festival presented by Point of View which is an award winning independent non-fiction film series. The film shown was entitled "Food Inc." and was about the waste in America's food industry. The night concluded with a concert in the amphitheatre by three student bands.

On Thursday, a green luncheon was held on campus, which included a presentation via Skype by Daniel Wallach of Greensburg, Kan. entitled "Greensburg Kansas from total destruction to America's Model Green Community." There was also a lecture on "Going Green in Missouri" given by Chyanne Cardarella from Shook, Hardy, and Bacon LLP of Kansas City.

The day concluded with the keynote address of the week from actor and environmentalist Ed Begley Jr. at 7:30 p.m. in Hendricks Hall. Begley lectured about his sustainable living practices and the importance of taking personal responsibility for the environment. In his lecture, "Living Like Ed," Begley also shared the day-to-day realities of "living green" with his not-so-environmentalist wife.

The week will conclude Saturday morning with a Bio Blitz, an annual gathering hosted by The Wildlife Society at Pertle Springs. This event is designed to encourage involvement in conservation and wildlife related activities.