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Innovative project nets award for Derry trio
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DERRY — Three students from Derry were among a select few in the nation recognized recently in Washington, D.C., by EPA administrator Lisa P. Jackson at the 2008 President's Environmental Youth Awards.

The Derry students were selected for the award due to their work developing Green Your Lives, a student-led initiative at Gilbert H. Hood Middle School. The program educates students and the school community about "going green" and putting their knowledge into action.

"The president joins me in honoring these students for leading the way towards a brighter future for their communities and our planet," Jackson said. "In each of these amazing projects, we see our country's future for clean energy, preservation, healthy communities and a well-protected planet."

The students, Dylan Mahalingam, Nisha Naik and Hillary Hughes, decided to start the project with the goal of promoting greener lifestyle choices in their community, and helping people to reduce energy costs and carbon emissions.

The work kicked off within the school, focusing on energy conservation, waste reduction and recycling. It then expanded to include a community outreach program — Give and Go — in nearby Bedford. There, they educated more students and community members on easy ways to incorporate environmental awareness into their lives.

Their outreach included an informational Web site, public service announcements, educational posters and videos for several schools across the state and country, and even building a model solar car and experimenting on creating a hydro prototype.

Winners for the President's Environmental Youth Awards were selected from among applicants to the Environmental Protection Agency's 10 regional offices. Regional EPA panels judged the projects on environmental need, accomplishments of goals, long-term environmental benefits and positive impact on local communities.