

# Youth Energy Summit stresses sustainability



Just in time for Earth Day, the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission hosted its first Youth Summit. (Photo courtesy AIPC)

NEWPORT – Last Saturday, the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission (AIPC) Energy Alliance (funded by the van Beuren Charitable Foundation) and "National Grid Energy Action: Aquidneck Island and Jamestown" hosted a Youth Energy Summit for high school students from Aquidneck Island and Jamestown.

As the first event of its kind, organizers were not sure what to expect – but the Summit turned out to be a success story. The event focused on empowering students to contribute to the islands' energy sustainability needs through volunteer work, hands-on education, and community organizing. Student time and investment will also count toward the students' senior project planning, capstone and/or community service, a requirement for Rhode Island high school graduation.

The event was hosted at the East Bay MET School where students began the day working in the MET school's community gardens. By the end of the morning the students had fully composted all the garden plots. To learn more about thinking globally and acting locally, students toured Newport Biodiesel's plant with managing part-

ner Chris Benzak, who explained how the business transforms vegetable oil from Rhode Island restaurants into a clean energy source.

To conclude the day students ate lunch together at the MET and planned creative ways to become more involved in shaping Aquidneck Island and Jamestown's energy future. Volunteers from the community, Americorps, the Neighborhood Energy Challenge and Salve Regina's University helped facilitate the event.

AIPC is planning more youth energy events for the summer and fall, and it encourages interested students to get involved. Participation can be used for community service hours and integrated into high school projects. AIPC is also eager to accommodate students interested in becoming a summer intern at their Broadway, Newport office.

Intern schedules vary greatly and students may design a program for any length of time. If interested please contact Taylor Rock, AIPC Energy Coordinator, at [taylor@aquidneck-planning.org](mailto:taylor@aquidneck-planning.org) or 401-845- for more information.