

KUDOS

In our search for news of the sustainable, we found four University of Hartford alumni who have been leading the way to greener practices for quite some time. We thought they should get together and take a collective bow.

Adam Ney A85, '87 Greening your business

Adam Ney A85, '87, helps Connecticut businesses adopt smart, sustainable practices.

It wasn't long after Adam Ney graduated from the University of Hartford in 1987 with a degree in political economy that he joined the staff of the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA). Since then, Ney has helped guide the association's legislative activities as its assistant director of public affairs.

Two years ago, however, his career at CBIA took a firmness turn when he was asked to develop a roster of green initiatives to help CBIA's 10,000 member companies cope with the growing environmental challenges that impact corporate sustainability. Ney jumped at the chance, developing such programs as CBIA's Web-based Green Business Resource Center and the first state-wide corporate responsibility conference.

The experience also motivated Ney to develop AuctorVero LLC, a green building/green business marketing services firm that assists companies in developing strategies to make their operations more environmentally friendly. Through AuctorVero, Ney has also launched www.buildinggreen.com, the state's leading online resource for green business and green building activities. The site also houses a green blog written by Ney called "Auggie V's."

Says Ney "Green is no longer a movement but a smart business practice that cuts costs and diminishes waste, doesn't harm the environment, and can have a positive impact on an organization's bottom line."

Maria Sanzo M07 & Kathy Murphy M07 Raising awareness of household hazards

Kathy Murphy M07 and Maria Sanzo M07 were part of a group of 11 graduate nursing students in the College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions who were transformed into impassioned advocates of environmental education last year. It all started when their professor, Mary Jane Williams, introduced them to an innovative project. Presented in cooperation with the Connecticut Nurses Association (CNA), the project asked students to develop an environmental health curriculum. The students presented education seminars all across the state on pesticides, pharmaceutical disposal, cosmetics, household cleaning products, and other topics.

The success of the program inspired Murphy and Sanzo to sign on as environmental nurse consultants with CNA. The positions were made possible by a grant from Health Care Worker Home, a global coalition of more than 450 organizations working to reduce pollution in the health care sector. Today, the two women continue to

crisscross the state to teach nurses and others about the often devastating impact that environmental hazards can have on health.

"Graduate school opened our eyes to the effect the environment has on human health, and we are now committed to sharing our knowledge and working to improve conditions in our hospitals, our homes, and our community," says Sanzo.

Sharing knowledge means alerting nurses and others to toxins present in even the most mundane household products—like cosmetics, shampoo, and bottled water—and helping them to make changes, says Murphy.

"The European Union has banned 1,100 chemicals and the United States has banned only nine. They're light-years ahead of us in ensuring that products are safe," notes Murphy. As a result, she says, "Cosmetic companies like L'Oréal and Estée Lauder make products without toxins for sale in Europe but not for the U.S. market. We want people to know that, and we give them strategies to effect change."

Robert Roberts A87, '88 Keeping mercury out of the environment

In the early 1990s, when Robert Roberts A87, '88, was considering joining a startup business in recycling fluorescent lamps, his interest was entrepreneurial, not environmental. All that changed, he says, when he learned that the mercury in fluorescent lamps can cause birth defects and developmental delays in young children.

"I felt the need to do something about it," he says.

Whenever materials containing mercury are improperly disposed of, mercury can get into the water supply. It then works its way up the food chain, starting with bacteria and plankton and moving on to fish and humans.

In 1994 Roberts and his partner Raymond Gracich, filed an application with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection for a permit to build and operate a recycling facility. Northeast Lamp Recycling, Inc. (NLR), in East Windsor Conn., became the only permitted recycler of fluorescent lamps in Connecticut, and remains so today. In 2007 NLR processed in excess of 5 million lamps and nearly 1,200 tons of "e-waste"—computer monitors, CPUs, and other electronic waste containing mercury, lead, and other toxic metals.

What about all those compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) that consumers are being encouraged to use? "As incandescent bulbs are phased out and replaced with CFLs, the need to recycle will follow," says Roberts. Merit states and the federal government are working to find a solution. NLR has already come up with one.

"We propose to have collection boxes at stores that sell the bulbs as well as at sites like town halls and libraries."

