



# SunWise monitor

An Update on EPA's SunWise Program

## SunWise Program Receives National Awards

In 2003, SunWise and the Curt and Shonda Schilling Melanoma Foundation of America (SHADE) together received the "Excellence in Cancer Awareness" award. Presented by the Congressional Families Action for Cancer Awareness, a program of the Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation, the award honored EPA and SHADE for their partnership and fight to eliminate skin cancer.

The Congressional Families Program is a network of more than 110 Congressional, Administration, and Supreme Court spouses committed to reducing cancer incidence through edu-



Left to right: Shonda Schilling, Kristin Kenausis, Paula Selzer, Sue Gorham, Linda Rutsch, and Curt Schilling

cation and prevention. It presents the excellence award each fall to an individual or organization for outstanding con-

tribution to cancer prevention and education. Past award recipients include: Katie Couric, Senator Bob Dole, Sam Donaldson, Patti LaBelle, Senator Connie Mack and Mrs. Priscilla Mack, Nancy Murkowski, the Honorable Sandra Day O'Connor, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, and Jane Seymour. For additional information, visit <[www.preventcancer.org](http://www.preventcancer.org)>.

In 2002, EPA's SunWise Program received the Federal Council on Skin Cancer Prevention's Annual Achievement Award, which recognizes a federal agency or individual within an agency for outstanding skin cancer prevention efforts.

First launched nationally in May 2000, the SunWise Program is now implemented in more than 9,000 schools in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, DC. For information on how to join, visit <[www.epa.gov/sunwise](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise)>.

## SunWise Partners with SHADE

Founded in 2002 by Shonda Schilling—wife of Boston Red Sox pitcher Curt Schilling, mother of four small children, and melanoma survivor—the SHADE Foundation strives to protect children from melanoma through education. In its first year, SHADE reached 21 million people through a public awareness campaign, distributed 50,000 free SPF 30 sunscreen samples, provided SunWise education to 126,000 children in 233 schools, engaged 3,100 children and 50 schools in a poster competition, and provided shade coverings to eight schools.

SHADE's Web site, <[www.shadefoundation.org](http://www.shadefoundation.org)>, is a place where melanoma patients, survivors, and their families can find information and support. Parents and teachers can find information on the SHADE SunWise partnership and programs to educate their children. Corporations and individuals can learn how they can provide sun safety lessons to children. SunWise looks forward to working with SHADE in 2004 to educate even more children and their families.



The Schilling Family



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# Made in the Shade

Thanks to a determined mother and melanoma survivor, kids in all 22 elementary schools in Collier County, Florida, now swing, slide, and climb on playground equipment covered by sun-protecting mesh canopies.



Merryhill School, Davis, California

A native of the “Sunshine State,” Teryl Brzeski is intimately familiar with the hazards of sun overexposure. First diagnosed with melanoma 18 years ago, Brzeski has beaten the odds in her battle against this most deadly form of skin cancer. Now she wants to make sure her young daughter and all other Collier county kids are as sun safe as possible.

After two years of persistent lobbying, the county school board voted to allocate the \$2 million necessary to erect the shade structures at each of the county elementary schools. The canopies were put in place over the summer, in time for the new school year. Collier County might be the only school system in the country with all of its playgrounds covered by shade.

The polyethylene canopies, which cover the 8,000-square-foot playgrounds, block out 90 to 95 percent of the sun’s UV rays and lower the temperature underneath by 15 degrees. The mesh construction allows heat to escape, lowering the risk of heat exhaustion and dehydration. Such canopies are widely manufactured and available in the United States.

A survey of elementary school principals, published in 2002 in the Archives of Dermatology by David B. Buller, PhD, and Alan Geller, RN, MPH, found that nearly three-fourths of schools report having shade structures, but most of those structures cover less than one-fifth of the school grounds.

So what’s stopping schools from erecting playground shade structures or ensuring that shade trees are planted on school grounds? Funding is certainly an issue, but the main problem appears to be lack of awareness. This lack of awareness, as well as other organizational barriers, has resulted in only 3 percent of schools surveyed having sun protection policies in place. Most principals (84 percent)

## Fast Facts:

Outdoor school recess often takes place during the peak sun hours between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.



The federal government has classified UV radiation as a human carcinogen, along with other cancer-causing agents such as asbestos, radon, and tobacco smoke.

reported that their students were outdoors during the peak mid-day sun hours, and most (76 percent) said they’d be willing to increase shade structures.



## CDC Guidelines for Sun Safety in Schools

In *Guidelines for School Programs to Prevent Skin Cancer*, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conclude that by actively promoting sun safety and implementing sun-safe lessons and policies, schools can change student behavior and help prevent skin cancer.

Among the recommendations presented in the report:

- Schools should adopt policies that reduce students’ exposure to UV rays, such as limiting mid-day outdoor activities, building shade structures, and allowing students to wear sunscreen, hats, and sunglasses.
- Sun safety lessons should be included as part of a comprehensive health education curriculum and integrated into other subject areas as well.

- Schools should provide skin cancer education and reinforce key messages over time, from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.
- Sun safety lessons should be delivered during times of the year when students have the most opportunities for sun exposure and sun protection.

The CDC worked with specialists in dermatology, pediatrics, public health, and education; national, federal, state, and voluntary agencies; schools; and other organizations to develop the guidelines.

For more information on the CDC guidelines, visit [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/healthtopics/skin\\_cancer/guidelines/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/healthtopics/skin_cancer/guidelines/index.htm).

# In the SunWise Spotlight

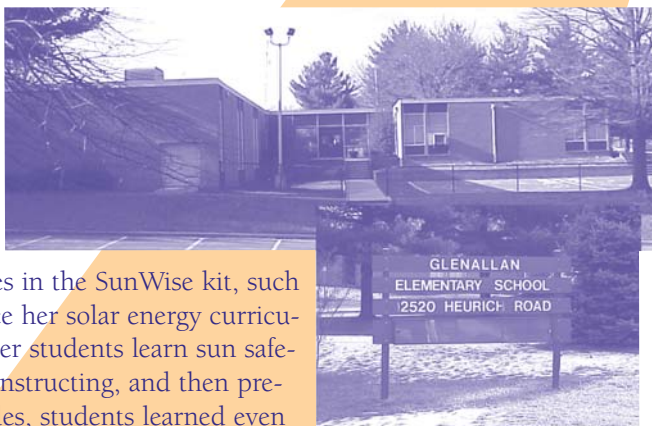
How can we teach sun safety to every student in a school? That was a question fifth grade teacher Kristi Cameron asked her students at Glenallan Elementary School in Silver Spring, Maryland. The students responded by working in teams to first learn about sun safety themselves, then produce PowerPoint presentations to teach the younger students in the school about sun safety.

Based on a short pre-assessment discussion at the beginning of the process, Cameron was surprised by her students' overall lack of knowledge about sun safety.

But by using various activities in the SunWise kit, such as the UV Frisbee, to enhance her solar energy curriculum unit, Cameron helped her students learn sun safety basics. By researching, constructing, and then presenting their PowerPoint slides, students learned even more about sun safety and practiced their organizational and public speaking skills.

Other teachers in the school gave positive feedback to Cameron's students, commending them on their attentiveness to detail and good coverage of information presented. The effort clearly had an effect on all the students' behavior, as more hats, sunglasses, and sun block began to show up during recess. "Hats on" to this creative teacher and her students!

The SunWise staff is eager to hear what is happening in your classroom. Please contact us by using the "contact us" link from our Web site at <[www.epa.gov/sunwise](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise)>.



## Why It's Wise to be SunWise!

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States—more than 1 million cases of nonmelanoma skin cancer are found in this country each year.

## Featured SunWise Activity

# "The Talk Show"

**Grades:** 6-8

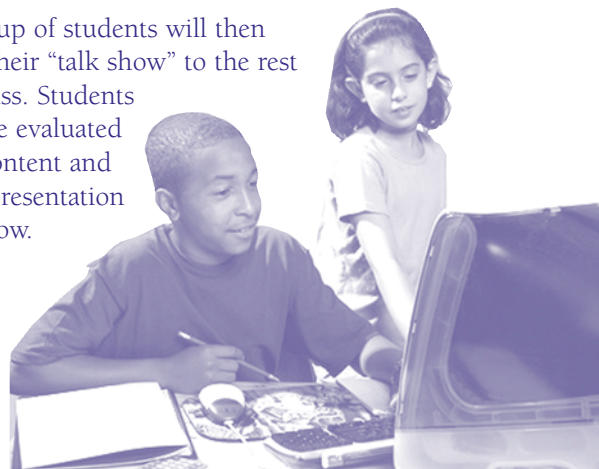
**Subjects:** Language Arts, Science, Health

**Suggested Time Allowance:** 45 minutes to 2 hours (with presentations)

In this activity, students will set up a "talk show," then research and play-act guests. First, the class will develop criteria for guests and generate a possible guest list. Guests should be individuals or organizations that have made a significant contribution to the protection of the ozone layer or have been a positive role model for sun protection behaviors. Some suggestions are: scientists who developed sunscreen, the organizations/people responsible for developing the UV Index, legislators who have set positive policies for youth sun protection, or schools with active community involvement in providing shade structures for students.

Next, working in groups of three or four, students will select an appropriate number of guests and a time limit for their show. Students will research the contributions their specific guests have made and then develop engaging and factual dialogue for the show. The show should include an introduction, a description of each guest and their contribution to the protection of the ozone layer or their work as a positive role model for sun protection behaviors, as well as dialogue, which can take a question-and-answer format. Dialogue should probe deeper into the work of each guest.

Each group of students will then present their "talk show" to the rest of the class. Students should be evaluated on the content and general presentation of the show.



# Nominate Your School For an Award

**Deadline: March 30, 2004**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is pleased to announce a call for nominations for the second annual SunWise Recognition Program. The awards recognize schools at two levels:

- The Shining Star Schools and Educators Award is presented to 10 schools nationally, one in each EPA region. This designation recognizes partner schools and educators who are enthusiastically implementing the program in a variety of different ways. Shining Star schools and educators have shown a lasting commitment to sun safety education by either adapting the SunWise program in new and effective ways, discovering unique ways to share the SunWise message in the community, or by implementing the program in multiple classrooms or grade levels.
- The Helios Leadership Award is presented to schools making outstanding contributions to promoting sun safety. Schools must meet all of the eligibility criteria for the Shining Star Award and have shown leadership in school-based sun safety education either by: instituting a policy to address sun safety that can

serve as a model to other schools/districts; erecting a shade structure; or addressing the issue of sun safety in a way that sets them apart from the Shining Star Schools.

Anyone may nominate a school for a SunWise award. Awardees may receive the following: a letter of congratulations from EPA, a plaque or framed certificate, additional UV Frisbees, media attention from your local press, recognition from EPA on the Agency's Web site, a free pass to a national teachers conference, or other exciting prizes.

For complete information on how to nominate a school and specific award information, visit [www.epa.gov/sunwise/recognition](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/recognition). Award nominations must be received by March 30, 2004, to be eligible for consideration this school year.



## Schools Receive National Recognition From EPA

EPA's SunWise Program recently recognized 14 schools for their superior efforts in sun safety education.

EPA presented the Helios Leadership Award to those schools that made changes to school policy or influenced district policies regarding sun safety. The winners were:

- Merryhill School in Davis, California
- Bryon A. Barry Elementary in Phoenix, Arizona
- Center for Creative Learning in St Louis, Missouri
- Schools that implemented the SunWise Program in an exemplary way by reaching a large number of students, reporting UV data to EPA's Web site, sponsoring poster contests, or developing curriculum received the Shining Star Schools and Educators Award. Award winners were:
  - Larson Middle School in Troy, Michigan
  - North Catholic High School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
  - Sacred Heart in Louisville, Kentucky
  - Harrington Elementary School in Denver, Colorado
- Geneva Elementary School in Bellingham, Washington
- George School in Westwood, New Jersey
- Charlotte A. Dunning Elementary School in Framingham, Massachusetts
- Marin County Office of Education in San Rafael, California
- San Simon School in San Simon, Arizona
- Gus Garcia Middle School in San Antonio, Texas
- Goddard Middle School in Glendora, California

Congratulations to all!

For more information about the SunWise Program, visit [www.epa.gov/sunwise](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise) or contact Paula Selzer at (202) 343-9361.



Students at the George School

# Frequently Asked Questions

**I have very little “free” teaching time to use the SunWise Program with my class. What can I do?**

Flexibility is key to the SunWise Program. You can use as much time as you have available to impart important lessons about sun safety. The following are some helpful hints received from educators across the country for incorporating the SunWise Program into the classroom.

- Use the newspaper weather page as a “scavenger hunt” for the UV Index readings, cloud cover, and other meteorological information.
- Use SunWise activities for “testing day” activities. The SunWise activities are the perfect informative and fun solution for the teachers and students on these statewide or districtwide days. The activities are challenging and will allow teachers to maintain the same “theme” throughout the entire testing time frame. Small group and individual activities require a minimal amount of teacher preparation and are of high interest to students.
- Use the SunWise fact sheets as part of field trip permission forms and as inserts for PTA newsletters. These tips will provide valuable information to parents, who will be better informed to protect students during field days and outdoor field trips.

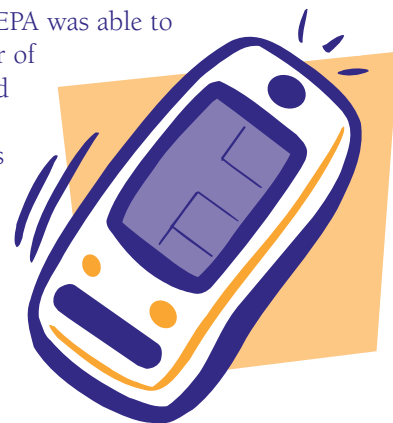
- Use the SunWise activities as part of a unit on outdoor education.
- Use the SunWise activities as part of student service-learning or family involvement nights. Organize activities that involve the community.

**How can I purchase another UV meter?**

For the past several years, EPA was able to distribute a limited number of UV meters to educators and meteorologists. Due to resource constraints, EPA is phasing out the free distribution of these meters. EPA procured the meters through a competitive process in which two vendors were selected. They are:

- The Safesun personal UV meter from Optix Tech, Inc., <[www.safesun.com](http://www.safesun.com)>
- The UV Index solarmeter from Solartech, Inc., <[www.solarmeter.com](http://www.solarmeter.com)>

If you would like to obtain a UV meter, you may contact one of the vendors above, or select any of the other suppliers of these meters in the open market. We urge you to check the open market for price, quality, and delivery terms before purchasing UV meters. EPA cannot endorse the products and services of these vendors.



## SunWise Video

**D**esigned for teachers, school nurses, parents, and school administrators, *SunWise: A Sun Safety Program for Grades K-8* is a free, 12-minute video for those who would like to learn more about the easy-to-use SunWise program. The video describes the SunWise program by:

- Using classroom footage and interviews.
- Outlining sun safe behaviors to prevent long-term illness.
- Illustrating the historical context in which Americans developed risky sun behaviors.

Call the National Service Center for Environmental Publications at (800) 490-9198 for a free copy of the video.




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**The SunWise Tool Kit is now available in Spanish!**

**Las materias de SunWise están disponibles en español!**

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# School Health Policy Guide Issued by NASBE

The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) recently released a new chapter of its popular publication, *Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn: A School Health Policy Guide*. Entitled *Part II: Policies to Promote Sun Safety and Prevent Skin Cancer*, this new section helps state and local decisionmakers develop policies to help students adopt lifelong healthy sun safety practices. The chapter was created in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National School Boards Association.

The new material provides information about the five important parts of a comprehensive school sun safety policy, such as the importance of developing an efficient statement of purpose and a series of goals. It also advocates sun safety education and behavior among both students and staff. In addition, the book introduces ways to implement sun safety practices during outdoor activities and emphasizes the importance of family and community involvement. Also included are recommendations for easy and inexpensive prevention measures to integrate the information into academic, health, and physical education programs. Finally, the guide contains several state and local “best practices,” relevant scientific data, and a list of key resources.

According to NASBE’s Executive Director Brenda Welburn, “Schools have an absolutely critical role to play in protecting children under their care from too much sun exposure in the short-term and instilling in them the knowledge they need to make informed, healthy lifestyle decisions to reduce their risk of skin cancer in the long-term.”

*Part II: Policies to Promote Sun Safety and Prevent Skin Cancer* can be ordered for \$12 (plus shipping and handling). Contact NASBE at (800) 220-5183 or visit <[www.nasbe.org/Merchant2/merchant.mvc](http://www.nasbe.org/Merchant2/merchant.mvc)> and click on “Safe and Healthy Schools.”



## SunWise Online

Looking for engaging online activities for your students? Send them to the SunWise Web page at <[www.epa.gov/sunwise](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise)> (click on the “KIDS” tab). Selecting activities in three levels of difficulty, students can practice their mouse skills while making SunWise clothing choices, find hidden SunWise vocabulary words, solve word puzzles, answer SunWise trivia questions, and play with a SunWise slide puzzle.



## Why It's Wise to be SunWise:

- Effective sun protection is practiced by less than one-third of U.S. youth.
- In 1935, the lifetime risk of someone in the United States developing melanoma was one in 1,500. In 2001, the risk was one in 71, and by 2010 it is projected that the risk will rise to one in 50.

# SunWise Forms New Partnerships

As part of a long-term strategy to make sun safety a sustainable and community-based effort, the SunWise Program has expanded from a traditional K-8 classroom audience to include a number of informal education, sports, and non-profit sun protection organizations. By forming partnerships, SunWise is able to pursue a more comprehensive approach to teaching children and caregivers about sun safety. New partners include:

- **Meteorologists.** SunWise, in partnership with the National Weather Service and the American Meteorological Society, has developed a tool kit specifically for meteorologists. The kit is intended to assist meteorologists in educating children about UV radiation and sun protection.
- **Science Museums.** With the help of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), SunWise is expanding its reach to science centers and other informal institutions nationwide. Through programming such as summer camps, planetarium shows, children's theater, and special events, kids learn about the importance of sun safe behaviors with an emphasis on science.



In spring 2004, EPA and AAAS will host workshops to recruit science centers in Los Angeles, Tampa, and Chicago. In addition, the Capital Children's Museum in Washington, DC, and the McWane Center in Birmingham, Alabama, will host Teacher Training Workshops. EPA is also working with the New England Science Center Collaborative to introduce SunWise to New England science centers this spring. EPA's goal is to reach 50 science centers by the end of 2004.

- **U.S. Soccer Foundation.** SunWise is partnering with the U.S. Soccer Foundation on the Make Sun Safety Your Goal campaign. Through this partnership, SunWise promoted sun safe behaviors by sponsoring game-day events and promotions such as give-aways (e.g., sun safety posters, a bookmark, lip balm). This past season, sun safety game days were held in five cities. In spring 2004, SunWise will expand this outreach to include youth soccer leagues and coaches and a pilot pledge program. Look for more details on this initiative in the months to come.



## Events

### "Check Your Insides Out" Tour Features SunWise

The "Check Your Insides Out—From Top to Bottom" tour, featuring the SunWise Program, is designed to teach people of all ages about the prevention, early detection, and treatment of skin, breast, prostate, lung, oral, and colorectal cancers. Hands-on activities make this unique exhibit educational and enjoyable. The tour will be brought to cities around the country by the Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation, who also brought you the Colossal Colon Tour.

For information on the tour schedule, visit [www.checkyourinsidesout.org](http://www.checkyourinsidesout.org).

### Skin Cancer Prevention Workshop

SunWise is exploring the possibility of hosting a free one-day workshop in Washington, DC, for those interested in skin cancer prevention education. The goal of this event is to bring together organizations with similar goals to learn about each other's work, examine ways to pool resources, and become an effective force in promoting skin cancer prevention education. Specifically, SunWise would like to discuss what resources EPA can provide to these organizations to help support SunWise at the local level.

For more information, contact SunWise at [sunwise@epa.gov](mailto:sunwise@epa.gov).

## New SunWise Lesson Examines Tanning Culture

The purpose of the new lesson, "Historical and Cultural Influences on Tanning," is to educate students about society's relationship with the sun over the centuries, to stimulate thought about the role of the sun in their own lives, and encourage sun safe behavior.

Available to teachers and school nurses,

this new lesson includes a teachers guide, a set of questions for discussion, and three sets of questions for classroom group work. In addition, the lesson includes an interactive classroom game that addresses the conflict between health and beauty, societal impacts on what is perceived as attractive, and conformity in regard to physical appear-

ance. The goal is to encourage students to think about the historical, social, and cultural forces behind sun tanning.

This lesson, developed at the Boston University School of Medicine and performed under an EPA contract, is available by contacting Linda Rutsch at <rusch.linda@epa.gov> or Alan Geller at <ageller@bu.edu>.



### SunWise on the Road in 2004

- March 20-21: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), New Orleans, LA
  - April 1-4: National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), Atlanta, GA
  - April 17-19: National Association of Elementary School Principles (NAESP), San Francisco, CA
  - April 21-24: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), Philadelphia, PA
  - July 11-14: National Association of School Nurses (NASN), Seattle, WA
  - November 4-6: National Middle School Association (NMSA), Minneapolis, MN
- \* Check the conference program to attend a SunWise workshop session.

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