

July Energy Trailblazer of the Month

Flora Tsui was one of the first residents in Town to get an energy audit. The study and kitchen were drafty and she was also concerned about the cost of her utilities and her impact on natural resources and the environment. With the help of Jim McKenna (now of Green Step) and neighbor Michael Whelan (Live Green, LLC), Flora was able to increase her insulation and seal the air leaks in her attic and basement and weatherize her windows and doors. She also replaced two windows that were in bad shape with high efficiency new windows. *“I have bought and installed several solar-powered lights in my backyard so I do not have to turn on my deck lights that much. We definitely turn off everything that is not in use and changed the light bulb (to CFLs)”*, said Flora. In addition she installed indoor and outdoor clotheslines to dry her clothes and some solar powered lights. Between 2008 and 2010, Flora’s gas bill dropped 9% while heating degree days stayed about steady. This saved her close to \$175 in 2010. Her electricity bill actually increased 20% but that was considerably less than the 38% increase in cooling degree days. Overall, Flora’s home’s carbon footprint (6.3 tons of CO₂ per year), is so extremely low that it will be hard to squeeze more energy out of her house. In 2010 her electricity usage was 35% of the pre-audit average of 71 town homes and her gas usage was 42%.

She also drives a hybrid car, saving more CO₂. Flora is a champion water saver as well. She keeps a bucket outside the backdoor and saves in it the entire kitchen gray water (without soap) such as the water used for soaking veggies and rinsing rice. Then she uses that water for her garden. The water from her dehumidifier goes into the washing machine and the cold water from the shower while waiting hot water is used to flush the toilet. The energy upgrades she made to her house reduced her utilities bills, made her home much more comfortable, and made her happier because she was helping the environment.

Thanks Flora!