

## **Leanne Jablonski - 2010 EECO Finlay-Johnson Award**

**(Awarded – April, 2010)**

We are recognizing Leanne for her significant and outstanding contributions to EECO (Environmental Education Council of Ohio). Leanne is an ecologist (PhD plant physiological ecology/global climate change) and pastoral minister (MA, religious studies) and Marianist Sister. She serves as Director of the Marianist Environmental Education Center (MEEC) at Mount Saint John in Dayton (<http://meec.udayton.edu>.) She is also a part-time faculty member at the University of Dayton, working with the new Sustainability, Energy and Environment program and is Vice-Chair of the environmental justice section of the Ecological Society of America.

*Quote submitted by Leanne:*

*Each of us have a gift and special role that only we can do – it's our niche in the global community. I am inspired by Buechner who said that our vocation is where 'our gifts or passion meets the world's needs'. What a privilege for us as environmental educators to be at the service of helping people reconnect with the wonderfully diverse ecosystems and the critters (including the two-leggeds) of which we are inextricably connected.*

- Served on the EECO Board from 2001 – 2010 (3 terms)
- Served on Membership Committee (all that time) and succeeded Herb Broda as Chair of the committee (for the past 6 years).
- 2006 recipient of EECO President's Award

Leanne is a mover and shaker. As a board member, she kept us focused and on-task at meetings. She reminded us to stay true to EECO's mission and purpose, yet, as a visionary, encouraged us to look to the future for ways to grow EECO. She was good at utilizing resources, delegating tasks, investigating other organizations for successful practices, and exploring other avenues for growth. When asked "Why?", Leanne asks "Why not?"

As for the membership committee, Leanne truly believed that we must never lose sight of our members or their needs. She knew that members are the lifeline of EECO, and was committed to broadening our member base and meeting our members' needs. She was not afraid to set goals and work hard to meet those goals. She kept us honest and accountable, making sure we were staying the course and true to our tasks. She set an

organizational record for number of committee conference calls made! The dates, deadlines, and discussions were successful and they worked. She taught me that you can get a lot more accomplished when you put names next to the necessary tasks! ☺ Just some of the ways Leanne was instrumental in the progress of EECO's Membership efforts:

- She helped establish timeline for membership terms/expiration, and set a calendar for membership renewals.
- In the formation of member special interest sections (belonging to four sections herself!). She also fought hard to keep the identities of some sections, like *Environmental and Community-Based Organizations and Research*, understanding their unique and significant niche in EECO, despite the lower numbers to start.
- Section meetings are now a standard part of the EECO conferences.
- Sections are represented and showcased through articles in the EECO newsletters.

She knows that it takes hard work, persistence, and vision to get where you want to go. She inspires us with her commitment and determination. She reminds us to not be afraid to speak our minds or follow our hearts or think outside the box. She reminds us to have faith, and that together we can move forward, despite the challenges that lie ahead.