

Extraordinary Earth Girl
By David C. Weeks

Starting from a spark of inspiration imbedded in a combustible bed of support, GCS Junior Devika Jaipurjar persistently blew on her Earth Girl vision until it burst into an illuminating flame revealing the earth saving potential of her imagined character. Devika has brought Earth Girl to life in presentations she has made to primary school children and in the development of her illustrated story promoting Earth Girl's messages to be kind, to support others, and to love Nature.

Devika's creation started in the fall of her ninth grade year. After recognizing her literary talent from an assignment she wrote for her Freshman Expedition, Mr. David Weeks encouraged Devika to develop a story. With his guidance Devika created an environmental story around her principal character - Earth Girl. Seeking funds for the development of her story, Devika approached the Washington DC based Fund for the Future of Our Children for a micro-leadership grant. After evaluating her proposal, the Fund for the Future of Our Children awarded Devika a \$1000.00 grant trusting in the potential of the Earth Girl story to serve as a valuable vehicle for planting seeds of responsible environmental stewardship in impressionable young children. Furthermore it challenged Devika with a matching grant of \$1000.00 if she could raise an additional \$1000.00 in a five month period. Devika successfully met the challenge and with \$3000.00 she and Mr. Weeks contracted with a professional illustrator – K. Michael Crawford to develop drawings of her character and her adventures. Additionally Devika used some of the funds to develop an Earth Girl outfit which she could eventually wear in presenting her character to young audiences. She collaborated with classmate Lauren Walters in the design for this outfit and the fabrics to be used in its making. Another classmate, Stacy Hand, used her expertise in sewing to construct the costume.

After completing the story and having a costume made, Devika was ready to promote Earth Girl's positive social and environmental messages to a young audience. Ms. Lynda Rotter, Head of GCS's Primary Division, extended an invitation to Devika to bring her Earth Girl presentation to her students as part of this year's celebration of Earth Day. With anxious excitement and engaging story telling, Devika captivated her audience as Earth Girl. Encouraged by the impact of Earth Girl's messages on the young students, Devika was eager to perform before another audience. Soon thereafter the Principal of Running Brook Elementary School invited Devika to perform her Earth Girl presentation to his school's kindergarten classes. To demonstrate their appreciation for Earth Girl's coming to their school the students hugged Earth Girl as they departed the classroom.

Devika's Earth Girl story has been printed and this summer she and Mr. Weeks will travel to India to discuss the development of Earth Girl to the high school students of the Ryan International School in Delhi. Of course, the young children of this school will also gain the benefit of Earth Girl's messages to be kind, to support others and to love Nature. What once was a small illuminating flame has grown to be a self sustaining fire of goodness promoting healthy social living and environmental protection.