My Footprint on Earth

We were given no spare planet, so we must protect the one we have. Each year, people pollute the environment through cars, houses, and factories. I thought my family was doing well in our responsibility to protect the environment. After researching the subject, I have learned that my family and I are a large portion of the problem. For example, the 11,688 kWh of electricity that we use every year produces 3.6 tons of carbon-dioxide, which is more than the average world citizen uses on food, goods and services combined. My family's total of 24.0 tons of carbon-dioxide is triple the world average. I realize that the my family detrimentally impacts the environment much more than we think we do.

If we continue at the current rate of emissions, we will kill our planet. One of the major contributors to carbon emissions is utility usage. A simple way to lower electricity use is to change incandescent light bulbs to compact fluorescent light bulbs. I can do this in my home, but it will make a much larger impact if I encourage all those I know to change their bulbs. Compact fluorescent light bulbs use 75 percent less energy than normal incandescent bulbs. For example, producing 800 lumens with an incandescent bulb requires 60 watts of electricity; a compact fluorescent light bulb that same 800 lumens can be produced using only 14 watts. Replacing just two incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs keeps one ton of carbon-dioxide out of the atmosphere. Replacing 48 bulbs would completely offset my family's carbon emissions. In order to make a distinct impact on the world, I want to convince my school and community to change 5,000 incandescent bulbs to compact fluorescent light bulbs, thereby preventing 2,500 tons of carbon-dioxide emissions.

To achieve this goal of 5,000 bulbs, I plan a three-prong attack. First, I will work with the administration of my school to plan an event to promote compact fluorescent light bulbs. Not only will I provide information to my classmates, but I will also purchase a bulk quantity of compact fluorescent light bulbs to have available for students to purchase for their own homes immediately. Secondly, I plan to speak to my neighbors about changing their light bulbs. When I present the information, I plan to have compact fluorescent light bulbs available for purchase. Lastly, I will talk to local businesses about using compact fluorescent light bulbs. I also hope to convince a local hardware store to help subsidize or even donate compact fluorescent light bulbs. Because I will make the compact fluorescent bulbs more accessible, it will be easier for my community to convert to these energy saving tools.

At the conclusion of my research, I was astonished by the facts and statistics I had discovered. I know that we need to start now to make a difference. Although changing light bulbs may seem insignificant, together our communities can change the planet.