

The First Day of the Rest of Our Movement

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Since starting at USGBC four years ago, I have encountered a lot of firsts: my first experience working in a LEED certified space (and my first cubicle!), earning my first professional credential, my first Greenbuild; and that milestone of many young professionals – my first business trip. It also happened to be my first tornado.

I had the opportunity to visit our friends in the Ohio School Facilities Commission office in Columbus, the team hard at work on Ohio's more than 200 LEED for Schools projects – [the first state to reach this milestone!](#) I awoke around midnight that night to the sound of sirens blaring through the hallways, directing guests to the hotel's basement to wait out a twister that had touched down a couple of miles from downtown Columbus. All was well in under an hour, and I felt I'd really been welcomed to the Midwest in style.

Since that trip I've logged a lot more miles, and a lot more firsts. There was the first time I attended [CEFPI's annual High Performance Schools Symposium](#), which in 2009 coincided with Tampa's annual Gasparilla Pirate Festival! The first time I met my colleague and friend [Anisa Baldwin Metzger](#) was just before she started as USGBC's first [Green Schools Fellow](#) in New Orleans's Recovery School District. It was also the first time I had been to that city since Hurricane Katrina had hit three years prior. It was an eye opening and inspiring visit, seeing firsthand the region's commitment to rebuild itself healthier and stronger than ever.

Each experience on the road brings new perspectives to the work we're doing at the Center for Green Schools. These meetings, conferences and conversations – as well as those taking place over the phone, via email and in person here in D.C. – have led us to pose the question, "what if we got all these communities together on one day to do something good?" [Green Apple Day of Service](#) is our answer, with more than 200 communities already joining a global conversation about what they can do to improve their schools.

With projects being planned in 18 countries and counting, it's clear that [Green Apple Day of Service](#) will be more than a one-day commitment. The [events we'll see take place on Sept. 29](#) will mark a turning point in our movement, a celebration of the firsts we've each been a part of in transforming school environments, and serve as a point in time at which we will come together to turn and face our future. This future is one where communities everywhere – from Albuquerque to Columbus, from Bangalore to Barbados - are committed to giving their students healthy, safe and sustainable places to learn. I hope you will [join us](#) on this new first – the first day of the rest of our movement.

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