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## Penthouse or fire pit, a good hour for a party

March 21, 2009

**JUDY GERSTEL**  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Dashiell Wallace, 4, is excited about his first Earth Hour party next Saturday.

It's an eco-dance in Dufferin Grove Park at the fire pit, with music supplied by a wind-up radio.

The party is for families with kids who will be attending Canada's first alternative public school focused on the environment and social justice, opening in September.

Dashiell's father, Max Wallace, was a founder of Grove Community School, approved this month by the Toronto District School Board and located in Alexander Muir/Gladstone School.

While Dashiell and his classmates are in the park looking up at the bright stars, Pat Koval will be looking down at the dimmed city from the 33rd floor of the Toronto-Dominion Centre.

She'll be sipping celery root shooters and dining on lobster, sashimi scallops, artisan cheeses and chocolate cream puffs prepared by eco-conscious chef Jamie Kennedy.

The senior partner at Torys law firm and chair of the board of World Wildlife Fund Canada is hosting a candlelit soiree at Torys for about 250, including Premier Dalton McGuinty and Mayor David Miller, who will first attend the public event at Nathan Phillips Square.

Between the down-to-earth party in nature for preschoolers and the



RICHARD LAUTENS/TORONTO STAR

Matthew McKenzie and eight of his most environmentally conscientious friends gathered at their brick bungalow for some PG-rated in-the-dark fun to celebrate Earth Hour 2008.

creampuff-in-the-sky party for VIPs, there'll be countless candlelit wine-and-cheese parties in homes all around the city.

Last year, Eva Ligeti and her husband uncorked a couple of bottles and invited friends for a low-key Earth Hour party at their home in Forest Hill.

"It was lots of fun, very cozy," says Ligeti, executive director of the Clean Air Partnership. "We turned off the lights, burned candles, had the gas fireplace on, had wine and cheese – and talked about how you can have a good life, especially in Toronto, without using a lot of energy."

The only downer, she says, was when "my boys looked up the street out of the window and were disgusted that there were still houses with electric lights on."

The Jewish observance of the Sabbath, says Jamie Kennedy, was his inspiration for the slow-cooked brisket of beef recipe he developed for Earth Hour parties. (Find it at [www.earthhourcanada.org](http://www.earthhourcanada.org).)

"They don't cook once the sun goes down Friday night," Kennedy explains. "This is a dish that's hands off, cooks in its own juice, is ready when the power goes off and will stay warm for hours. You just slice and eat at room temperature."

Scott Zakaib, a 21-year-old George Brown student, will be heading to an Earth Hour party on the TTC.

It's not a big deal to be without lights and music, he says.

"Party stuff for me is having friends around. The rest of it is extraneous luxuries that aren't entirely necessary, which is what the spirit of Earth Hour is, I guess."

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