

Earth Day events draw thousands

Displays, music provide a full day

More than 5,000 people attended an Earth Day festival yesterday at the Loudon Nelson Center in Santa Cruz, but by nightfall the place was all cleaned up, said Mike Arenson, one of the organizers of Earth Day Santa Cruz.

The quick cleanup was just one indicator that people are taking environmental issues seriously, Arenson said this morning.

Earth Day successfully got across the message that "you can do something to make a difference," Arenson said. "The public is a lot better informed" than in the past, he said.

Yesterday's festival ended a week of Earth Day activities in Santa Cruz County. There were 80 booths, with everything from toilet tissue made of recycled paper to plants grown by school children.

"The kids had a fabulous time," said Arenson, adding that every school in the county marked Earth Day in one way or another.

Between 2 and 4 p.m., Arenson said the booths were so busy there wasn't time to write receipts. Arenson said there were three of four booths selling paper products made with recycled paper.

The rains that hit at 4 p.m. drove half the crowd away, Arenson said, but when the festival ended at 8 p.m. "there were still 300 or 400 people there," Arenson said.

Above, students from E.A. Hall Middle School in Watsonville gathered at Sunset Beach Saturday for a beach cleanup. Neil Warren, below right, of Santa Cruz, provided a comfortable spot for his son, 20-month-old Erin, to nap during festivities in Santa Cruz. Below left, 3-year-old Sophie Schatan has her face painted by CiCi Fleming of Boulder Creek at the main festival in Santa Cruz.

