Campus Green Party hopes to captivate voters

By Gale M. Delco
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Creating a stir of social justice and political recognition at Ohio State has long been a quick way to get the campus community involved in world issues.

A group of students had a fresh idea to form a campus Green Party to attract non-registered voters and discussions on political topics Wednesday.

"Voter registration is a big thing, no matter who they might vote for," said Jeremy Keeton, a senior communications major and member of the campus Green Party.

The motivation to organize a Green Party on campus arose in light of a visit, July 21, from Green Party nominee for presidential candidate Ralph Nader, who came to discuss increasing voter turnout amongst younger populations and stressed involvement in citizen groups.

"After Nader spoke, we really became energized," Keeton said.

He said one of the campus Green Party's goals is to get as many people as possible in and around the campus area to become registered voters.

"The Green Party is based on daily democracy and citizen participation, the more who join, the more we can get accomplished," he said.

Originally, the Green Party, a third party organization, was founded on ten key values. Some include; grassroots democracy, non-violence, respect for diversity, social justice and equal opportunity.

Students will begin to see more exposure from the campus Green Party hitting the walkways after the group becomes rooted.

Keeton said the group has ideas to have sidewalk chalk campaigns, coalition building and networking with other campus activist groups such as the Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC) and the African Student Union.

To strengthen the party's wagon wheels, students elected an OSU faculty member to help sponsor their views.

Keith Johnson, Linguistics professor and campus Green Party sponsor, said he anticipates that the campus Green Party will receive support from many other progressive groups on campus.

"I hope that 10,000 students at OSU will become deeply active in this cause," Johnson said.

In addition to sparking interest in voting and democracy, other students believe that becoming involved in the organization can help students become re-connected with politics.

As an undergraduate student, a doctoral candidate in history, Heather Miller said she had an "awakening experience," in terms of political consciousness.

"It's (the campus Green Party's purpose) to find a new outlet about social justice and the environment," Miller said.