

Recycler's Digest

Newsletter of the Green Schools Project,

Carlton County's Recycling & Waste Reduction Grant Program

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Cloquet Middle School students create videos, posters about recycling

Throughout the month of January, sixth and seventh grade students at Cloquet Middle School (CMS) created educational materials to improve recycling.

Under the direction of Sixth Grade Teacher Ann Gustafson and Special Education Teacher Jennifer McInerney, the “Team Green” groups met during power-up time three days a week.

During those half-hour periods, students designed posters that included facts about why recycling is important. They also produced videos about how to recycle at CMS. Since food waste is collected in the cafeteria, information on composting was also included.

To begin, students had an outline to follow and questions to answer about recycling. In teams, they utilized iPads to gather photos and video shots. They incorporated information about the recycling and composting processes and followed the material from the classroom, hallway, or cafeteria, to the containers outside, to the pick-up by the hauler, and finally, to the landfill or composting site.

Students got creative when they put the videos together, as they used iMovie, recorded voiceovers, and learned what materials are not recyclable. Once complete, they uploaded the videos to the CMS Schoology page, where students and staff had access.

In addition, students helped hang recycling guides



The seventh grade Team Green created a video about how to recycle at Cloquet Middle School. They used the paper, mixed recyclables, and trash bins as props.

and signage above hallway substations. Bins at CMS are labeled for trash, mixed paper, and mixed recyclables.

To end the month on a high note, the two groups did an upcycling craft and turned worn-out T-shirts into reusable bags.

If your school needs assistance with recycling lessons or activities, please contact Green Schools Project coordinators.



Ann Finifrock (left) and Sandi Bird (right), both Barnum High School teachers, listen as Fond du Lac Environmental Outreach Coordinator Shannon Judd (center) explains the vermicomposting process.

Barnum High School explores starting vermicomposting program

In March, two Barnum High School teachers visited Fond du Lac Ojibwe School and Resource Management Building to learn more about vermicomposting.

Science Teacher Sandi Bird and DCD Teacher Ann Finifrock met with Shannon Judd, Fond du Lac environmental outreach coordinator, to talk about the vermicomposting process. In this process, a certain type of worm is used to convert organic waste into fertilizer.

Fond du Lac Ojibwe School composts food scraps from the kitchen. Second grade students help feed the worms on a weekly to bi-weekly basis. The food waste is transported to the designated shed, where the vermicomposting bins are kept in a temperature-controlled room.

Only fruits and vegetables are collected for vermicomposting.

Red Wiggler worms eat their way through a mix of food scraps, dirt, sand or ground-up egg shells, coffee grounds and filters. Dried leaves and a layer of plastic sit on top to keep the light out. After a while, nutrient-rich compost will be produced, as well as worm tea, the liquid that results from the mix.

The school's program, implemented in 2000, has reduced the amount of waste sent to the landfill and also promoted environmental stewardship among students.

Food waste left on students' plates is also collected, but it is picked up by their waste hauler to be composted at the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District in Duluth.

Prizes, books newly eligible purchases with Green Schools Project funds

New this year, Carlton County schools can use Green Schools Project funds to purchase prizes for students after waste reduction and/or recycling competitions or activities. The purchased prizes should be eco-friendly or made with post-consumer recycled content.

For example:

- Up to \$300 of the funds could be used on reusable water bottles. The bottles could be aluminum and even have your school logo on them. For this, we'd recommend hosting a challenge and giving the bottles as prizes, or pairing the prize with an educational activity.

In addition, up to \$300 of the funds can be used to purchase books and teacher resources for educating students on topics related to waste reduction and recycling.



Eco highlighter pencils, like the ones above, would be an eligible purchase with Green Schools Project funds. They have a natural wood finish and are not made with plastics or ink solvents.

Carlton High collecting food waste for composting

Carlton High School's YES! Team has been collecting food waste from the cafeteria, with about 5-10 pounds of fruits, vegetables, and grains collected in a single day. That's 835-1,670 pounds in a school year.

The group began collecting in December and January, off and on, and then more frequently in February and March.

Collected food waste will be composted at the school in small-scale composters. They hope to fill their barrel composter by the end of the year so they can use the product in the school garden.

When food waste is placed with trash, it heads straight to a land-



Vermicomposting towers were purchased with Green Schools Project grant funds in 2016.

fill. As the organic waste breaks down, methane, a greenhouse gas 30 percent more potent than carbon dioxide, is produced.

Composting food waste, on the other hand, means it is diverted from the landfill and given new life as nutrient-rich fertilizer.



What would you like to know?

Have questions about recycling and/or waste reduction? Want to learn more about a specific topic? Aren't sure if an item is recyclable? Ask away!

Email your questions to Josie Flatgard:

Josie.Flatgard@co.carlton.mn.us

Find us on social media



Follow Carlton County Zoning & Environmental Services on Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/carltonco/.

Get ideas for classroom teaching, learn how to lower your carbon footprint, and find countless other resources.

You can also like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/.CarltonCountyZoning/



Does your school have recycling set up for indoor, outdoor sporting events?

Make recycling available for your community and out-of-town visitors with conveniently located and labeled bins. Consider sorter stations made with a high percentage of recycled content, like the one pictured above. Doing so lets the public know your school is committed to the environment.