



In The Loop



Please share newsletter with other teachers & staff

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Earth Flag Award

Three schools received the Berrien County Earth Flag Award in May 2009:

Three Oaks Elementary School
Chikaming Elementary School in Sawyer
Trinity Lutheran School in Berrien Springs

Congratulations to each of these schools for their hard work and dedication to waste reduction and recycling. Learn about what these schools did to earn the Earth Flag Award on page 3.

School Recycling Grant

Is your school or district interested in starting or improving recycling? The School Recycling Grant is available to provide monetary support for school waste reduction and recycling projects. Projects should provide new or expanded in-school opportunities in the **4R's; reduce, reuse, recycle, and re-buy** (buying recycled products). The 2009/10 School Recycling Grant application is inside this newsletter. The application can also be obtained at www.berriencounty.org/recycle. Click on "School Recycling Grant" on the left side of the screen.

Grant deadline is November 13, 2009.



Members of the Andrews University Village Green Preservation Society (VGPS) pose for a picture with the new dorm recycling bins. The bins were placed in the trash rooms of 3 campus dorms and are intended to be used to recycle plastic, glass, cardboard and aluminum. These bins were funded through the 2008/09 School Recycling Grant.

Newsletter Survey

Please take a moment to send me an email and answer a few questions. I'd like to get a better understanding of how the "In The Loop" newsletter is being received and how to make it better. All teachers who email me with answers to the following questions will receive a recycled-content surprise for their classroom. My email address is jadams@berriencounty.org. 1. Teacher Name, grade level and school. 2. Has the "In The Loop" newsletter been helpful to you in the past? If yes, is there something specific that you used? 3. What environmental or recycling related topics would you like to see in the "In The Loop" newsletter? 4. Currently, the newsletter is mailed out to teachers. There are a growing number of teachers on the email list, as well. We are considering switching to email only for the newsletter. Do you prefer receiving educational materials in the mail, by email, or either? 5. Would you like to switch to receiving the newsletter by email only at this time? If so, please provide your preferred email address(s). Thank you for your time and input.

Walk To School Day



International *Walk To School Day* is October 7, 2009. The Walk to School website outlines reasons to participate in this event, such as:

- Enhance kids' health & promote physical activity and good habits
- Improve air quality & the environment
- Bring light to the issue of safety when walking and biking to school

For more information, check out www.walktoschool-usa.org. The website will help with event organization and activity ideas. Your school can also register for the International Walk To School Program.

Trunk-O-Fun

The 4R Treasure Trunk is a portable collection of environmental education materials designed for use in K-12 classrooms. The 4 R's stand for: reduce, reuse, recycle, & rebuy. Educators in Berrien County can reserve the 4R Treasure Trunk, free, for approximately 2 weeks at a time.

4R Treasure Trunk materials include recycling related videos, curriculum, books, classroom activities, hands-on project ideas, and a collection of products that are made from recycled materials.

Reserve the 4R Treasure Trunk, by calling **Charlotte** at Berrien Regional Education Service Agency (RESA), 471-7725 ext. 1166. The items will be delivered to your school through Berrien RESA delivery system & can be returned in the same manner.



Climate Change Kit

Check out a new student toolkit that helps teach about climate change impacts on wildlife and habitats at www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/school. The kit is called "Climate Change, Wildlife, and Wildlands Toolkit for Formal and Informal Educators". This toolkit is geared toward middle school students and breaks down information on each eco-region throughout the US.

Electronics Recycling



The final 2009 Electronics Recycling Event will be Saturday, October 3 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Bertrand Township Fire Dept. This event is open to Berrien County schools, residents, and businesses.

Accepted items include computer monitors and laptops (\$3 per monitor and laptop fee), CPUs, keyboards & mice, cords, desktop printers, fax machines, scanners, radios, stereos, speakers, cell phones, telephones, VCRs, DVD players, video game players, cameras, microwave ovens, and televisions (\$3 per TV 27" and smaller, \$8 per TV over 27" and console TVs). Other large items are subject to a fee. The fee is due at the time of the collection – payment by cash or check. Checks can be made to "Berrien County".

The Bertrand Twp. Fire Department is located on Route 12, south of Buchanan, west of the Route 12/Bakertown Road intersection on the south side of Route 12.

Healthy Schools

Celebrate National Healthy Schools Day on April 26, 2010. Recycling, waste reduction, and toxics reduction are just a part of the program when working toward a healthier school. The following website gives many ideas how to make a school healthier, www.nationalhealthyschoolsday.org.

Get your students directly involved with making your school healthier. The "Green Squad Kids' Page" teaches students what to look for when researching healthy schools. Younger students could take a look around their classroom to find ways to make their room healthier. Older students could research healthy schools and take a tour with the Maintenance staff to learn areas for improving overall environmental health in the building. What a great, hands-on, real-world project that the students can work on during the school year.

Start now and celebrate your healthy school on April 26, 2010 on National Healthy Schools Day. Be sure to check out the Waste-Less Classroom Parties article in this newsletter when planning any classroom celebration!



...Earth Flag Award

Three Oaks Elementary and Chikaming Elementary Schools, in the River Valley School District, took stock of their schools' waste and made many changes to reduce and recycle more this school year. Each school increased their collection of paper and cardboard from classrooms for recycling and incorporated glass, plastic, and aluminum recycling in the teachers' lounges. The school staff volunteers to take the materials to a recycling center. Another project involved replacing some disposable plastic eating utensils with reusable utensils that the schools owned but were not being used. Each grade level had a different recycling project they worked on, from using plastic bottle caps in math lessons to making bird feeders from 2-liter pop bottles.

Trinity Lutheran School in Berrien Springs upped their recycling game this school year, getting all the staff and students involved in the day-to-day collection of paper and cardboard. Parent volunteers stepped in to help take materials to the recycling center. Some of the other projects that earned Trinity Lutheran School the Earth Flag Award include holding an all-school assembly to highlight the improved recycling program; using products made from recycled materials such as classroom recycling bins obtained through the School Recycling Grant; incorporating waste reduction and recycling messages in morning announcements and school newsletters; and donating used books to the Twin Cities Children's Free Book Fair. "It's amazing what students can do with just a little motivation," said Michelle Kay, Trinity Lutheran School Teacher and Star Recycler.



Calling All 5th Graders

All 5th graders in Berrien County are invited to the 2010 5th Grade Natural Resource Day. The event will take place on Wednesday, April 21st at the Berrien County Youth Fair Grounds in Berrien Springs.

Natural Resource Day is a free, ½ day event where 5th graders learn about Michigan wildlife, recycling, soil and water conservation, sustainability, and the great outdoors from environmental professionals who work in surrounding communities.

The invitation will be sent to all 5th grade teachers at the beginning of October. The invitation will also be posted at the county recycling website, www.berriencounty.org/recycle, click on "5th Grade Natural Resource Day" on the left side of the screen. Because of the extensive planning, schools must sign up by the event deadline, November 20, 2009.



Students learn how & why to protect our groundwater at NR Day 2009 from Ken, an Environmental Health Department professional.

Reduce Toxicity of Your Waste

Reducing waste is important. Reducing the toxicity of your waste is just as important. Residents of Berrien County can reduce the toxicity of their waste by participating in the county's Household Hazardous Waste Collections. Many household products are safe when used properly around the home, but some of these products should not go in the trash or down the drain. Examples include used motor oil & gasoline, oil-based paint & stain, leftover cleaners, pesticides, mercury items such as thermometers, outdated medicine, and compact fluorescent light bulbs. Your students can reduce the toxicity of their waste at home by telling their parents about the following collection events (final 3 collection events for 2009):

September 16, Wednesday, 3-7pm: COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPT, 2106 M-139, corner of M-139 and Starlite Dr., Benton Twp.

September 26, Saturday, 9am-1pm: NEW BUFFALO CITY FIRE DEPT on North Harrison Street.

October 17, Saturday, 8am-12 Noon: S.E. BERRIEN COUNTY LANDFILL, 3200 Chamberlain Rd., same entrance as Recycling Station, Buchanan (Bertrand Twp.)

These collections are open to Berrien County residents only. There is a separate, special collection for school chemicals. The School Chemical Clean-Out Program will occur in June 2010. Keep this in mind if your school has lab chemicals, cleaners, or other items to safely dispose of or recycle.

Berrien County Resource Recovery

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Environmental Specialist

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TO:

Please share newsletter with other teachers & staff

Waste-Less Classroom Parties

Teachers and students often celebrate occasions throughout the school year such as birthdays, holidays, good behavior, or the last day of school. Parties can be tons of fun, but they can also create a lot of trash. Here are a few suggestions on how to throw a Waste-Less Party this school year.



- Use inexpensive, washable picnic plates and forks. If using disposable tableware, look for products made from recycled materials.
- Invest in a washable, reusable juice cup for each student.
- Reduce individual servings or drink pack waste by using lemonade or juice mix that is added to water, making more while creating less waste.
- Make party decorations from scrap paper and colorful recyclables.
- Get creative with natural items for decorating such as flowers from the garden, plants, and pine cones. Tie on a reusable ribbon for added beauty.
- Construct student card mail boxes from old shoe boxes and decorate with scrap paper.
- Collect used newspapers and turn them into birthday hats.
- Sew a classroom set of cloth napkins – the students will learn to sew and have napkins to use all year long.
- Cut off the cover from used greeting cards and make new ones to give to teachers and classmates.
- Start an e-vite list at the beginning of school. Send party information and tips to parents using email instead of printing out the instructions on paper.

- Recycle pizza boxes, 2-liter bottles, grocery bags, and whatever other type of waste that might be created from the party.
- Set up a recycling bin next to the trash bin if there is something that should be recycled at a party making it easier for people to do the right thing.
- Challenge the students to brainstorm ideas how to reduce waste at parties.
- When the party is over and the fun has been had, ask the students to help clean up the classroom using environmentally friendly cleaning products made with non-toxic items such as baking soda, water, soap, borax, or vinegar. Find eco-friendly cleaning product “recipes” on the internet.
- Celebrate any occasion with the reward of simply going outside. A great way to teach kids about environmental health is showing them why this earth is worth protecting. Walk around the school yard and find out what kind of birds and plants live on the school grounds. Take a walk in the woods to identify trees, wildlife, and insects and learn about their habitats. Walk along the beach and talk about the natural resources that are conserved when the students recycle.

These ideas are small but meaningful changes to party planning. If you have a plan for Waste-Less Parties for your classroom this school year but need some funding for the supplies, keep the School Recycling Grant in mind. The grant application is included with this newsletter. The grant deadline is Nov. 13, 2009.

