



Recycling bins collected at the end of the school day are sometimes analyzed for content and used as a learning tool to brainstorm new ideas for reusing waste materials and encouraging entrepreneurial ideas.

Smyrna School District Wastes Not

BY TAYLOR KEEGAN

WHEN 12-YEAR-OLD Brynn Rifino came to Principal David Paltrineri of Clayton Intermediate School with an idea about a school recycling program, she had no idea that it would change the way every school in the Smyrna school district recycled. Brynn's vision involved partnering the school with the community recycling business Delaware Waste Industry (DWI). Principal Paltrineri got Brynn in touch with the DWI, where she spoke with Corey Sheldon about her plan to improve waste management at her school. Impressed with the young lady's confidence and inspiring idea, Corey called Paltrineri to inquire about teaming up with the school to forge a new partnership.

The program was declared as a "War on Waste" (WOW) and officially began two years ago. Students from the student council visited classes and talked to their peers about recycling and its benefits. Additionally, separate waste bins were placed in each classroom specifically for recycling paper. After the overwhelming compliance and

excitement that came from installing paper-specific baskets in classrooms, larger recycling bins were later placed into the cafeteria.

"It was at this point that the program really took off. Corey donated enough bins to the school that we were able to place them in offices and copier rooms, where there is a lot of excess paper," says Paltrineri. "Students, teachers, and even custodians got involved! From a cost standpoint, we saw a dramatic positive change. Before the program was initiated, the school had to have its trash picked up five days a week, and each of those days cost us money. Pick-up days have now been reduced to four days a week. Now our goal is three."

Furthermore, the advisor of the War on Waste program, Mark DegliObizzi, meets with students once a month and teaches them other forms of recycling, such as repurposing milk jugs by making them into bird feeders. Most recently, Clayton Intermediate purchased a can crusher from Infinity Recycling in Millington, Maryland. The can crusher allows students to collect cans and

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donate them to an aluminum School Buy Back Fundraiser, where cans are purchased back for 30 cents per pound. According to Paltrineri, students have had the biggest role in making the program what it is today. “The kids are seeing the results and feeling very encouraged by it. About once a month now, the kids complete worksheets to find out how much money the school is saving overall, which is very exciting for them.”

The program has proven so successful that last year Paltrineri was given the opportunity to present WOW to the entire school district. Now every school in the district is using the program. “At Clayton Intermediate School, the three primary goals of the program are the three R’s: reduce, reuse, and recycle. However, the overall goals of the program are: community involvement, great teamwork, and student empowerment – I think we’ve achieved that.”

Paltrineri would like to give a special thanks to Brynn Rifino, Debbie Wicks, the superintendent of Clayton Intermediate School, Corey Sheldon of Waste Industries, and Mark DegliObizzi, the advisor of WOW program, for making the program what it is today. “Clayton Intermediate School is very honored to be recognized as the first Superstars in Education award recipient in the history of the Smyrna School District. We are very proud to be awarded such a prestigious award, very proud of our students and the CIS family, and very proud to be Smyrna Eagles.” ■

Students use a can crusher to consolidate aluminum waste after lunch at the school, which is then sold by weight and turned into cash for the program.



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