

askHRgreen.org Recycling & Beautification Subcommittee

Summary & Results for askHRgreen Mini-Grants Awarded in FY16

Total Projects Funded – 13

FY 16 Mini Grant Budget - \$6,000

Total Funds Awarded - \$5,476.00

| Name of Project | School/Facility | City/County | Awarded |
|---|--|----------------|-------------------|
| Carolyn Bernard Stadium Renewal Project | Grassfield High School Athletic Department | Chesapeake | \$250.00 |
| Boot the Bags EGBC | Emmanuel Grace Baptist Church | Hampton | \$400.00 |
| John Yeates Middle Recycling | John Yeates Middle School | Suffolk | \$500.00 |
| The Importance of Native Plants to Butterflies | Virginia Beach Middle School | Virginia Beach | \$410.00 |
| Paper Recycling Program | Willoughby Elementary School | Norfolk | \$417.00 |
| Water Bottle Refilling Station | York High School | York | \$250.00 |
| Compost Education Program | Norfolk Academy | Norfolk | \$499.00 |
| VBFS Recycling: Moving Toward a No Waste Campus | Virginia Beach Friends School | Virginia Beach | \$500.00 |
| Campus Cleanup | Grassfield High School | Chesapeake | \$500.00 |
| Lifecycle Garden | Barron Elementary School | Hampton | \$250.00 |
| Paradise Creek Nature Park Ambassadors After School Program | The Elizabeth River Project | Portsmouth | \$500.00 |
| Granby Go Green Garden & Club | Granby High School | Norfolk | \$500.00 |
| Newtown Elementary Learning Garden | Newtown Elementary School | Virginia Beach | \$500.00 |
| Total Funds Awarded FY16 | | | \$5,476.00 |

Carolyn Bernard Stadium Renewal – Grassfield High School, Chesapeake – \$250.00

Project Description: Create sustainable recycling program at high school football stadium and turn flower beds into green native Virginian plant memorial garden. Students will be engaged as volunteers for collecting recyclables during football games and collecting weight data and installing the gardens. Southern Branch Nursery will be assisting with the landscape design. Student groups will assume responsibility for upkeep of gardens.

Project Outcome:

The project had an outstanding outcome with two native plant gardens being planted and maintained at the front of the stadium. One garden is a Memorial Garden to Anne McKim, the first athletic trainer at the high school who died very suddenly at a young age. Native plants were chosen to enhance the beauty of the gardens and to provide a place for pollinators and for the sustainability aspect where low maintenance and water requirements would be needed to maintain them. Recycling was collected at all home football games and then weighed to be compared to the outgoing collection of trash. Although the recyclable material being collected was only around 20% of the trash waste, it still shows room for improvement in future football seasons. With the right exposure and advertisement, the amount of recyclable material that may actually end up being recycled will increase exponentially.

What did the students enjoy the most about this project?

The students that were involved really enjoyed knowing that they were making a difference in the recycling process. They became aware of the impact they had on not only the immediate community, but also the world. They gained immense satisfaction from being able to keep the community green and eco-friendly. The students also really enjoyed knowing they were making a living memory to a former staff member who meant so much to so many student athletes. They also were proud of the fact that they significantly enhanced the appearance of the front entry to the stadium.

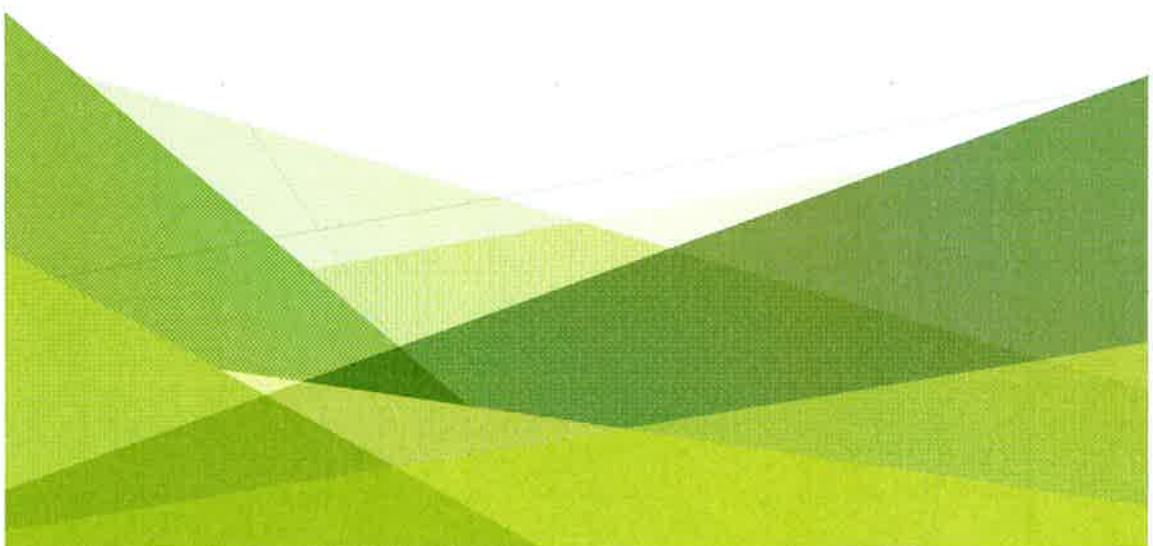
How could a similar project be improved?

Some lessons learned included maintenance about weeding and weed propagation. Also, plant selection and learning that some areas were easily trampled on by bystanders walking near the edges of the bed, so replacement plants that were larger and with different textures were chosen as replacements, specifically yucca filamentosa. Similar projects could be improved by the use of signs, announcements, and intense coverage of the recycling bins. The main problem during the time of the project was actually getting people to be aware of the recycling bins and use them. If one were to have several announcements throughout the course of the football game to remind people to recycle, it will raise awareness and prevent people from throwing recyclable material in the trash.

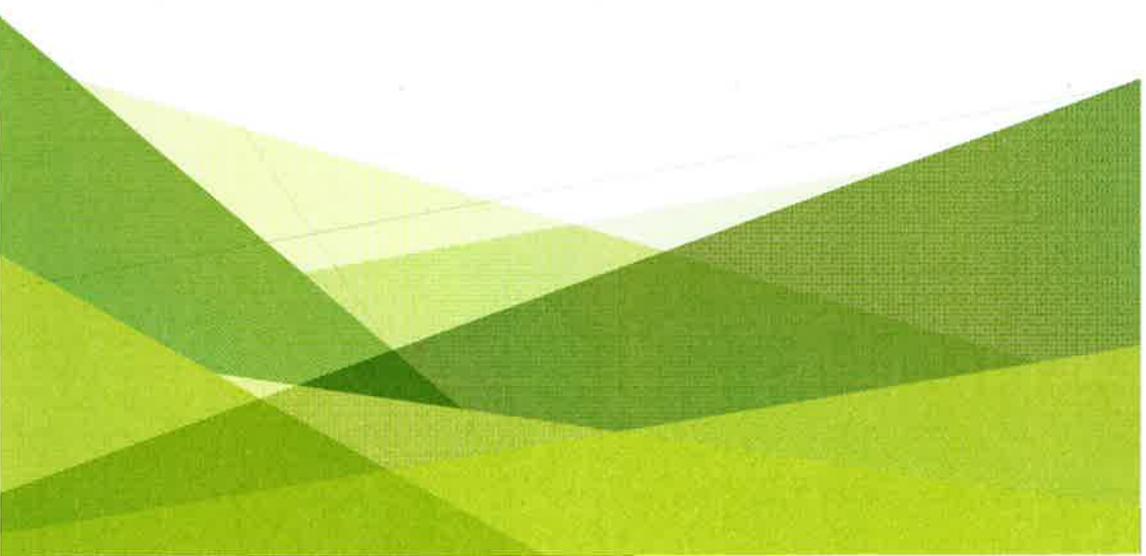
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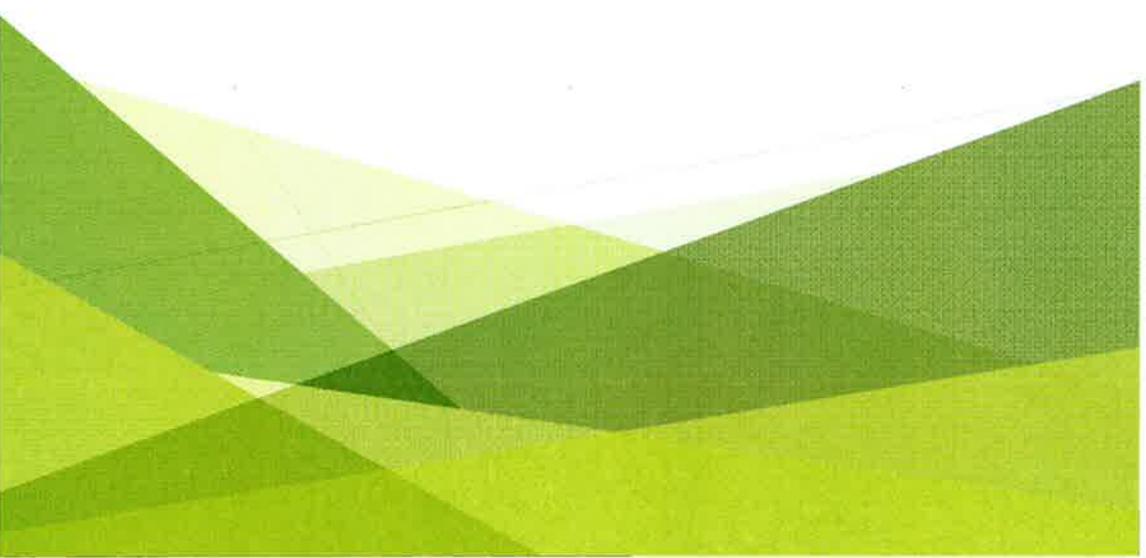
Anne E. McKim Memorial Garden - Planting Day August 2015



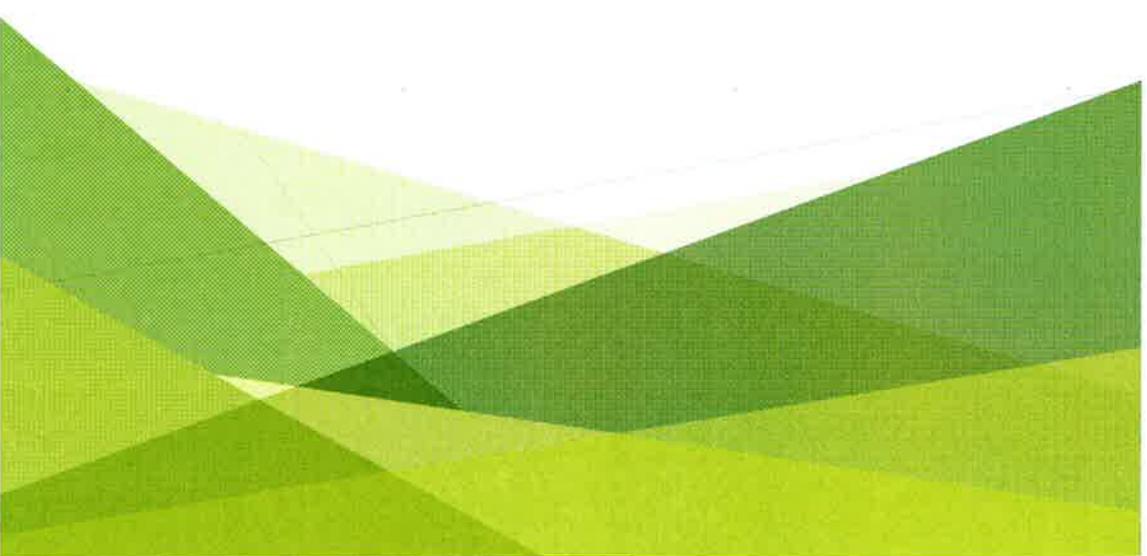
Anne E McKim Memorial Garden Planting Day August 2015



Anne E. McKim Memorial Garden The gardens in June 2016!

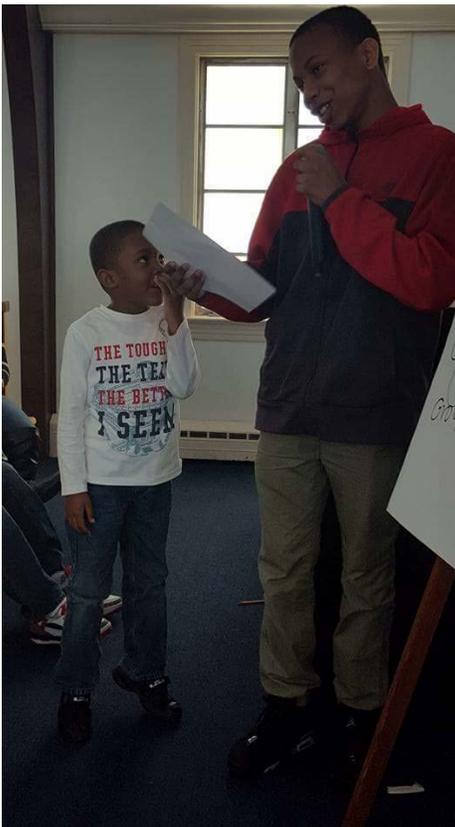
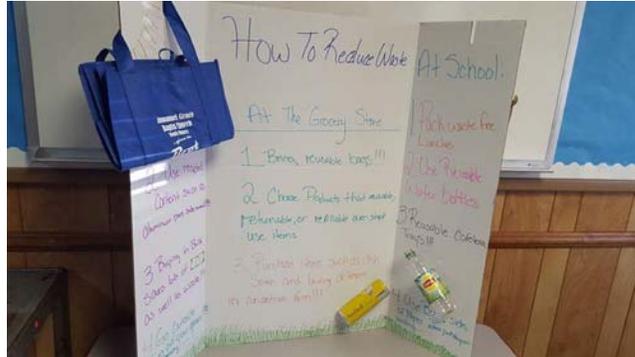


Anne E. McKim Memorial Garden
Garden Maintenance- remulching the beds
June 2016



Boot the Bags EGBC – Emmanuel Grace Baptist Church, Hampton – \$400.00

Project Description: To educate youth and elders in the church and community on the benefits of bringing their own bags to the grocery store. This will be a service learning project where youth will do the presentation and give reusable grocery bags to the families in the church. Education, cohesiveness, and goal setting as a group will be achieved. This would be phase I of a better living project involving youth/elder interactions. Will promote reuse in the community and encourage others as the bags will have the church information on them and a slogan the youth will come up with that relates to reuse.





Mini Grant Project Summary Form

Project title:

Teacher or Leader's Name:

Project Outcome: (Successes, results, how the project met SOL requirements, etc.)

Youth researched recycling benefits and presented to the church members and community. They did skits, posters, and power point presentations.

What did the students enjoy the most about this project?

They ran the project themselves. They gave out ~~recyclable~~ reusable bags @ the end.

How could a similar project be improved? (Lessons learned, etc.)

Offered more often.

Please check off that you have included the following with your submission:

- Copy of receipt(s)
- Digital photos of youth engaged in the project
- Completed summary form

Please email copy of receipts, digital photos and completed summary form to HRGreen@hrpdcva.gov or mail to Attention: askHRgreen Mini Grant Program, 723 Woodlake Drive, Chesapeake VA, 23320.

BOOT THE BAGS EGBC!



The Youth Ministry of Emmanuel Grace Baptist Church, with sponsorship from the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and askHR-green.org, will be doing a lunch and learn on recycling. Special guests include the Hampton Fire Department .

TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT PLEASE CALL EMMANUEL GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH 757-723-1062

FOR INFORMATION CALL DEENA FRANKLIN 757-685-1909

FEBRUARY 27, 2016

11AM-1PM

EMMANUEL GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH
3301 KECOUGHTAN RD HAMPTON, VA

- Lesson on Recycling by the Youth Ministry
- Fire Safety Demo by the Hampton Fire Department
- Light lunch provided
- Door prizes and fellowship
- Opportunity for the young and the young at heart to mingle and learn from each other
- **THIS EVENT IS FREE BUT SPACE IS LIMITED.**



John Yeates Middle Recycling – John Yeates Middle School, Suffolk – \$500.00

Project Description: We are in the process of establishing a school-wide recycling program here at John Yeates Middle School in Suffolk, VA. We use an enormous amount of recyclable items each day and would like to better serve our community and contribute to a healthier environment for our students. The goal of the program is to teach our students of the importance of caring for our environment and to allow them to experience and connect learning in the areas of math, science, history, social studies, and career & technical education to recycling. In order to make our program successful and sustainable, it is necessary for us to have a recycling bin on the school property that is picked up at least once a week. We are in need of this grant to cover the cost of having our bin and to offer project opportunities for our students.

Project Outcome:

The recycling initiative was quite successful as evidenced through student and teacher participation and support from community partners. Students participated in a recycling art contest where they created posters about recycling. The projects were judged by our art teacher, Ms. Williams, and Wayne Jones from Keep Suffolk Beautiful. Winners were selected and featured in an article in the Suffolk News Herald. The winning students were also hosted by Dan Curran, owner of Chick-fil-a on College Drive, to the restaurant to celebrate their success and recycling efforts. These students were joined by the winning students of another recycling contest held in the building. Teachers and students decorated their classroom door with a recycling theme and the winning homeroom (photo attached) was able to attend the Chick-fil-a celebration. Our recycling efforts were made possible by securing a recycling bin from TFC to collect our recycled items. Each teacher created or received a cardboard box that was decorated and used for classroom recycling. The classroom boxes were emptied

each Friday into our TC bin. We also purchased four large recycling cans that are placed in the hallways each morning during breakfast for each grade level. Students are able to place their recycle items from breakfast in the cans. Lastly the students and teachers participated in a school-wide recycling campaign where participants could choose between three slogans. The slogan that won the most votes was “Green for the Greater Good”. The students participating in the recycling club purchased t-shirts with the JYMS slogan. A few of the Sol’s that were met by the project activities were Science 6.7, Science 6.9, and World Geography 8.7.





Mini Grant Project Summary Form

Project title:

Teacher or Leader's Name:

Project Outcome: (Successes, results, how the project met SOL requirements, etc.)

What did the students enjoy the most about this project?

How could a similar project be improved? (Lessons learned, etc.)

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Class: The John Yeates Middle School recycling club shows off its winning promotional posters. Members include, front row, from left, Justin Harnell, Ian Shields and A'lauren Gilchrist; and back row, from left, Danna Beesley, Asia Day, Jayann Willis, Tania Holmes, McKinley Shields, Taylor Newton andigail Lockhart.

John Yeates' recycling kicks into gear

BY ALLISON T. WILLIAMS
STAFF WRITER

group of John Yeates Middle School students is saving the world — one plastic bottle or cardboard box at a time.

is working hard to promote its new recycling program among classmates and teachers.

"It's important we find a way we can reuse things," said sixth-grader A'lauren Gilchrist.

"We can change our future if we start recycling now ... and keep material off

the ground and out of the landfills.

"It's mostly about changing mindsets and making people realize that they can make a difference."

John Yeates didn't have a formal recycling program when she was transferred

See RECYCLING, 3

Recycling: At school

Continued from page 1

to the school last fall, said Assistant Principal Wendy VanHosen. Unless teachers took it upon themselves to haul their own recyclables home, everything — including scrap paper, plastic bottles and soda cans — was dumped with the trash.

"We have a lot of leftover paper here," VanHosen said. "That bothered me."

So VanHosen applied for and received two grants: one for \$500 from AskHRgreen.org, a green public awareness campaign administered by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, and one for \$150 from the John Yeates PTSA.

Most of the grant is being used to fund the mammoth green recycling bin that now sits behind the school, said VanHosen.

For \$50 a month, TFC Recycling — the Chesapeake company that handles residential recycling in Suffolk — empties the bin once a week. TFC staff has also done educational training about recycling with teach-

classes that custodians dump weekly, VanHosen said. The club has also bought four 95-gallon recycling collecting cans and placed them around the school for anyone to use, she said.

"The recycling club was created to educate and promote recycling; initially, it started with only a couple of students from each grade, VanHosen said.

"I joined because I figured it would be better for Earth ... if we take stuff and reuse it," sixth-grader Keagan Shields said. "If we don't do more recycling, we are going to use up all of our natural resources."

The club recently sponsored a school-wide poster contest for recycling. Contest winners include Taylor Newton, 11; Abigail Lockhart, 11; Tania Holmes, 13; Asia Day, 12; and Gilchrist.

Although details are still being ironed out, the club is also helping sponsor a community Earth Day event, VanHosen said.

Students said they



Importance of Native Plants to Butterflies – Virginia Beach Middle School – \$410.00

Project Description: The purpose of this grant consists of three parts: 1) to expand the native species of plants in and around the butterfly garden allowing for a greater diversity of butterfly caterpillar species. 2) to share with other schools the excess plants students will grow from the existing butterfly garden 3) to raise caterpillars in the classroom to be release back into the garden. General maintenance to be performed by the Environmental Club during the school year.

Project Outcome:

2 middle schools with butterfly gardens were overjoyed at the receiving of our plants. The common milkweed was by far the most popular as it is not available anywhere for purchase. We also had a 95% transplant survival rate. Other plants included senna, Joe-Pye weed, verbena, fennel, and Queen Anne’s lace. I’m looking forward to the fall to have a larger variety of species of caterpillars to raise in the classroom due to the newly planted native trees and vines. Our glass Exo-Terra containers worked perfectly as no moth caterpillars could

chew through. Students had several hands on experiences involving the VBMS butterfly garden. Students were able to take what was taught in the classroom and apply it to food chains and food webs. The students were able to see how quickly invasive plants can take over the butterfly garden after the winter. The perennial plants had a winter dormancy and had to be flagged as not to be weeded. We then flagged new plants to know what could be dug up and transplanted.

What did the students enjoy the most about this project?

Students spent several hours learning outside the classroom. Some just seemed to enjoy the simple task of mixing the soil with hand trowels. All activities were hands-on and there was total student engagement- no one could say they were bored! Of course watching the caterpillars grow, make a chrysalis or cocoon, and then emerge is the most exciting part.

How could a similar project be improved?

Constraints on the plants coming up from dormancy or reseeded late in the spring and then allowing for a good root system to form, makes the fall a better time to offer plants. Fall may prove to be best at digging and offering plants to other schools for student participation. I have plenty of soil left and will continue to transplant and offer more schools the opportunity to create or expand their butterfly gardens.



Paper Recycling Program – Willoughby Elementary School, Norfolk – \$417.00

Project Description: The goal of this project is to encourage students and staff to recycle materials used in the classroom and workspace. The second grade class is responsible for collecting the recycled materials from each classroom 2-3 times a week. Each class will receive a recycling container and an introduction to the importance of recycling and our school's recycling program. The recycled items will be collected, weighed and recorded weekly. The data will be displayed in the school's atrium. The grade or classroom that collects the most recycling materials will receive a prize for that month.

Project Outcomes:

The Classroom/Workspace Recycling Program was a huge success! Students in grades PK3-5th grade and staff were very conscientious and cognizant about recycling materials in the classroom and workspace. Second graders were in charge of collecting, weighing, and tallying weekly and monthly totals for each classroom. At the end of the program, the students graphed each classroom totals. (SOL: Math and Science) This effort taught the students not only the importance of the 3R's of recycling but it also taught teamwork and responsibility. One of the hoped outcomes of this grant was to encourage the students, staff and custodial team to continue recycling materials after the project ended. Evidence of this appeared during my travels through the hallways, classrooms and outside. Recycling bins in the classrooms and hallways were overflowing. The custodial staff were placing recycled materials in the big recycling bins and then transporting it to the large recycling dumpster outside. The results of this program proved that educating the students and staff about recycling can lead to great results.

What did students enjoy the most about this project?

The students enjoyed competing to collect the most materials for each month. Incentives were definitely a motivating factor to the success of the program. Presentations, awards, banners and Earth Day projects and games increased the excitement and awareness of the importance of reusing, reducing and recycling.

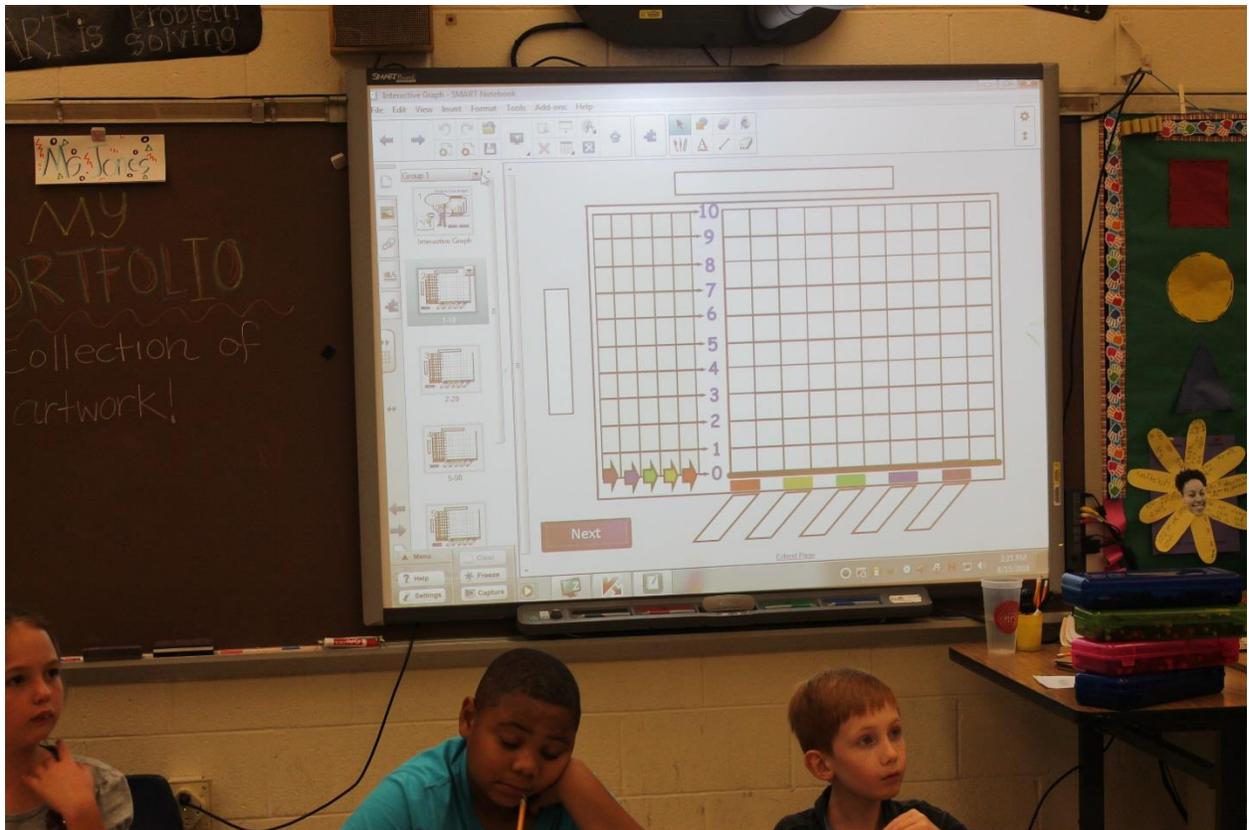
How could similar projects be improved?

Increase staff and student awareness of the project on the morning news show which is broadcast throughout the year with monthly updates and presentations of awards . Also, developing a program that would carryover into the home of the students and staff is the ultimate goal. Creating a method to document and verify the results is the challenge.



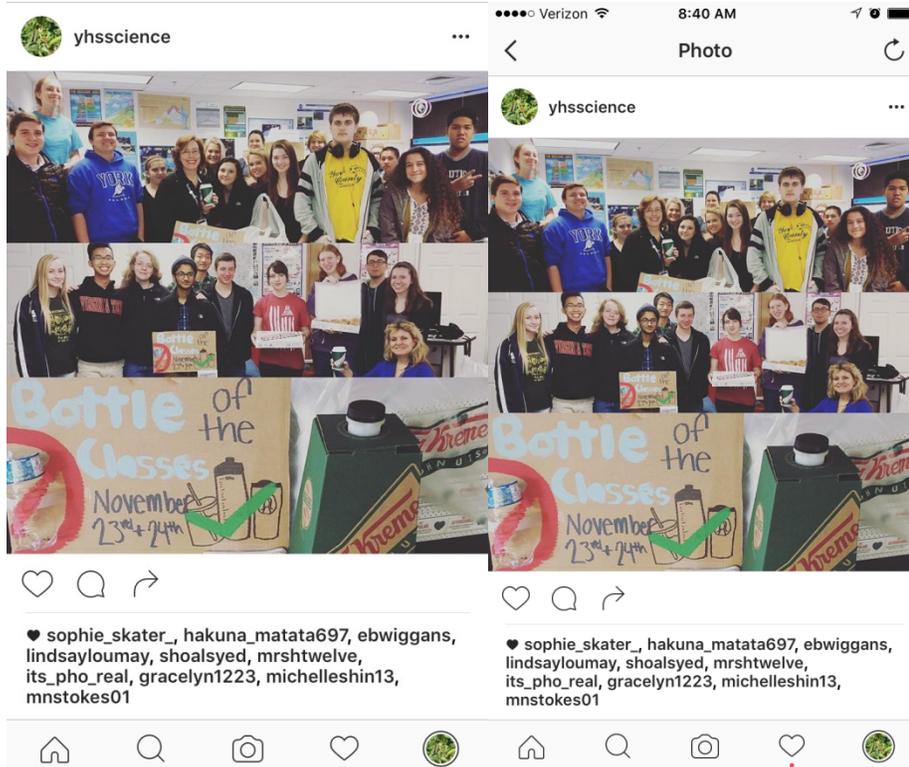






Water Bottle Refilling Station – York High School, York County – \$250.00

Project Description: We would like to promote the use of reusable water bottles by installing a water bottle filling station. This station would allow water bottles to be refilled quickly and efficiently. Refilling water bottles now at our mediocre water fountains takes a long time, and they do not fill to the top of the bottle. The ease of access will encourage more of the 1200 students to bring refillable bottles. By bringing more reusable water bottles to school, we can decrease the amount of plastic discarded, and encourage reusing through the use of these bottles.





Mini Grant Project Summary Form

Project title: Water Bottle Filling Station

Teacher or Leader's Name: Amber LaMonte

Project Outcome: (Successes, results, how the project met SOL requirements, etc.)

The students successfully collected data on water usage in the school, tested water quality in our fountains and raised awareness about water as a resource. It met SOLs as we conducted data collection and graphing. It met SOL ES 7.c and Bio 9.c

What did the students enjoy the most about this project?

Students enjoyed being an active part of improving the quality & availability of fresh drinking water. This has truly been a "Legacy Project".

How could a similar project be improved? (Lessons learned, etc.)

Honestly, this has been one of the best projects the Green Team has completed. The drawback we needed a second station! Thanks to the publicity it has now been ordered!

Please check that you have included the following with your submission:

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- Digital photos of youth engaged in the project
- Completed summary form

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Compost Education Program – Norfolk Academy, Norfolk –\$499.00

Project Description: The goal of the Compost Education Project is to teach my 170 4th and 5th grade students how composting works through a hands on, year-long composting project. We will fill the composter with food waste students bring from home, observe the composting process over time and monitor compost temperature, moisture level and pH. We will send bags of finished humus home with students until we begin our school organic garden in 2017.



The Norfolk Academy refectory (cafeteria) serves lunch to all 1,200 students and staff daily. The

refectory collects all food scraps, cuttings and leftovers. This material is picked up by a composting program based outside of Richmond. An average of between 3 and 4 tons of material per month is kept out of the wastestream and turned into compost humus. The lower school students are very good at separating their food scraps from recycling and garbage, however they do not understand what happens to the food scraps. I would use a large tumbler style compost unit to educate my 4th and 5th grade students how the composting process works and to demonstrate how they could compost at home. Large tumbler composting units are more expensive, but I have found that larger tumbling compost systems such as this work the best and are effective at keeping animals out which is very important in a school setting.





Mini Grant Project Summary Form

Project title:

Teacher or Leader's Name:

Project Outcome: (Successes, results, how the project met SOL requirements, etc.)

We purchased our new Mantis 55 bushel tumbling composter in Sept, 2016. I put it together in October, 2016. I began to prepare my 4th grade students about the composting process in early November while I gathered 250 pounds of 'browns' and fresh 'greens' from our school cafeteria. We began composting this material on November 15. The compost temperature had already reached 118 degrees F just 12 hours later as of 10 AM on November 16. We will continue to monitor the compost temperature, pH, moisture content, look, feel and make observations on any organisms we see. Students will make educational labels for our finished compost humus that we will give out to families. We will repeat this process in the spring.

What did the students enjoy the most about this project?

The Norfolk Academy Refectory (cafeteria) feeds between 1,200 - 1,300 people lunch every day. We separate compostable material and send it to an industrial composting facility. It is great to be able to teach the students about the composting process and why it's good for the environment in a hands on way to help reinforce students work in the Refectory. Students love shoving their hand in the pile when it's 'cooking' to feel the hot temperatures for themselves. They also enjoy observing the compost and searching for organisms that we then look at in our low power stereoscopes.

How could a similar project be improved? (Lessons learned, etc.)

We are slated for a new garden area to be constructed here at the Lower School withing the next one or two years. It will be great to use our finished compost on our raised bed vegetable gardens. This will really help 'close the loop' in the students experience with this project.

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- Completed summary form

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Moving Toward a No Waste Campus – Virginia Beach Friends School – \$500.00

Project Description: This project will build student and faculty enthusiasm and commitment to recycling and composting efforts through a three step program.

First, the school will roll out a strategic educational program to educate and excite a culture of recycling enthusiasm on campus. The school will do this by: inviting Christina Trapani to speak on campus, watching a documentary on trash and plastic, and by designating student recycling ambassadors from the school's Sustainability Class who will speak to each class individually about the three R's, recycling, reusing and reducing. These student ambassadors will lead their peers in the recycling efforts as they work together to research and identify innovative ways for our school to reduce its waste production as well as creative ways to recycle and upcycle waste.

Second, students in the Green Engineering class will design and build two new outdoor trash recyclables that will have bins for landfill, recyclable and compost waste. These new waste bins will be placed strategically outside where students eat their lunch and congregate on campus. The school will also ensure that there are available recycling and composting bins inside classrooms and offices as currently not all rooms have both a recycling and a regular trash bin.

Third, the school will host an all-school assembly where the recycling project will be announced as well as a school-wide goal to divert its current waste consumption by 50% in the first year and an additional 25% the second year of the program. Eventually Virginia Beach Friends School would like to become a zero-waste campus. Each classroom, PreK-12, will analyze and weigh their waste output before and throughout the recycling program in order to measure their progress in diverting waste. To track these goals a large sign will be displayed in the main school building highlighting the school's waste diversion milestones as well as each individual classroom's accomplishments for the purpose of motivation and celebration.

This project will ultimately grow excitement about recycling as well as school pride as the campus community works together to reduce waste, potential trash in local waterways and the school's carbon footprint.

This project was delayed due to circumstances outside the scope of the project. The teachers are relaunching the project for the 2016-17 school year and complete by June 2017.

Campus Cleanup – Grassfield High School, Chesapeake –\$500.00

Project Description: Every Spring GFHS promotes a "Grizzlies Giving Back" Service Week to encourage students to participate in altruistic endeavors in their community. Each club is asked to promote an event during this week. Dynamis would like to promote an event that gets as many people out to clean up campus and adjacent properties. The goal is promote environment stewardship and school pride.

Project Outcomes:

While the turnout was not as expected, a diverse group of twelve students came out after school on Wednesday 4/20/2016 to pick up litter around the campus. We focused our efforts on "Mama Griz" Stadium and adjacent parking lots. Students were amazed at not only how much litter accumulates on the Grassfield campus but the type of some items they picked up like a cat scratching post. We decided that the idea of getting everyone to come out in a community effort was ambitious. It was decided that smaller crews with more frequent pickups would be a best course of action. We decided that we would look into asking clubs to pick one day a month to perform this task. The grabbers purchase with the mini grant could be loaned out to these clubs with goal of ongoing frequent clean up events.

What did the students enjoy the most about this project?

Many had done litter clean ups in the past, picking litter up by hand. They enjoyed using grabbers and stayed on the job longer. One student is taking on the task of getting other clubs to schedule their clean ups and is excited about that endeavor.

How could a similar project be improved?

We decided that using garbage bags was difficult because of the breeze. It was proposed that 5 gallon buckets were the best receptacles to accompany grabbers. Another student whose father works as a contractor suggested that we could re-purpose plaster buckets from his job sites.



Lifecycle Garden – Barron Elementary School, Hampton –\$250.00

Project Description: The butterfly learning garden project will target our entire elementary school population. The focus for this project will center on project based learning. Project based learning is a high yield research based approach that allows students to master standards while engaged in a hands-on experience. The initial objectives will involve creation of the learning garden. Students will help in the process as we:

- Mark off area for garden and turn over soil and test for the proper mineral balance.
- Add soil and humus so that the soil is in top condition for plants to be added in the spring.
- Mark garden boundaries, and place rocks for water run-off/drainage.
- Research the types of flowers best suited for attracting a maintaining butterfly habitat.
- Create maps for placement of flowers.
- Order and purchase butterfly attracting flowers.
- Gradually plant all the flowers and plants for our butterfly garden.

We are hoping to accomplish many learning objectives through the creation and utilization of our butterfly learning garden. The following lists a few:

- Students will use the butterfly learning garden to investigate and understand that plants and animals undergo a series of orderly changes as they grow.
- Students will utilize features of the butterfly learning garden in order to apply the scientific method for investigating phenomena such as growth cycles, weather accumulation and changes, measures of change, and best approaches for optimal garden conditions.
- Students will investigate and understand the impact of human influences on plants and animal survival.
- Students will investigate and experiment with the various types and components of soil.
- Students will investigate and understand the basic plant anatomy and life processes.
- Students will investigate and understand how plant and animals, including humans interact with one another in an ecosystem.
- Students will investigate and understand how traits of organisms allow them to survive in their environment.
- Students will investigate and understand the lifecycle of the butterflies in the learning garden and research their migratory behavior and other adaptations.
- Students will research the location and climate of Mexico, the migratory wintertime destination of the Monarch butterflies that will be growing in our learning garden.
- Younger students will work with older students in the garden, in order to observe and record plant changes, weather changes, and butterfly metamorphosis.

This project was scheduled to be completed in June 2016. To date, no summary or pictures have been submitted for this project.

Ambassadors After School Program – The Elizabeth River Project, Portsmouth – \$500.00

Project Description: For the third year in a row, the non-profit Elizabeth River Project is teaming up with Hampton Roads Area Young Life and Cradock Middle School to offer a unique 7-week after school program for 8th graders at their neighborhood park, the 40-acre Paradise Creek Nature Park, in Portsmouth. For most students at Cradock Middle School, despite being less than a mile from the park, their interaction with the outdoors is limited to non-existent, both in and out of the classroom. Their low Standards of Learning science scores reflect this disconnect with nature. This transformative program brings students to the park for hands on learning and a place-based learning experience in nature. Students will work to design and build a new education feature at the park becoming engaged in the community as Park Ambassadors and stewards of the Elizabeth River. This year the proposed education feature is a bird blind which allows park visitors to observe birds in their native habitat without disturbance. Over 5,000 park visitors are estimated to experience the feature each year.

Project Outcomes:

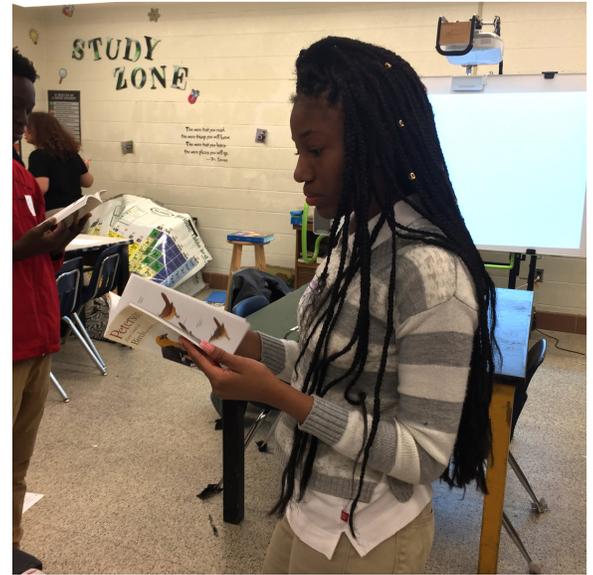
With HR Green's support 10 Cradock Middle School 8th graders were able to participate in the 7-week after school program combining environmental education, stewardship, community engagement, and hands on fun! For the third year in a row students became active stewards of the Elizabeth River learning positive stewardship actions, testing the water quality of the River's wetlands, and learning about the native and invasive plants found within our watershed. The theme for this year's programs was birds; during the 7-week program students researched native birds and painted images of the birds on wooden slats to act as a field guide for the park's brand new bird blind. The bird blind, placed along the park's wetland, provides a new learning and observation platform for visitors to the park with over 10,000 expected each year! The blind acts as a cover so onlookers can observe wildlife without disturbing them. Students also met local expert and birding guide, David Gibson, for a binocular led tour of the birds found at Paradise Creek Nature Park. Pre/post test results geared toward SOL requirements indicated a 100% gain in knowledge on the benefits wetland provide, the number of wetlands lost in the Elizabeth River since WWII and the number of residents living in our watershed and affecting the river's health.

What did the students enjoy the most about this project?

For these Park Ambassadors their new engagement with the natural world was the most rewarding experience. While a handful of these Cradock 8th graders have visited Paradise Creek Nature Park previously, none of them observed the park on a personal level. Their interaction with local birding expert David Gibson was an experience not forgotten throughout the duration of this program, with students even remember the names and key characteristics of noted birds throughout the weeks following at the park. Other notable experiences included: learning how and why wetlands are so important for a healthy river, testing water quality on our brand new canoe/kayak launch, discovering how each and every person living in the watershed makes small environmental impacts everyday without realizing it, how easy it can be to help clean up the Elizabeth River, and "eating like the birds" foraging on ripe mulberry's in the woods.

How could a similar project be improved? (Lessons learned, etc.)

The students at Cradock Middle School are excited and eager to participate in this program; however they also have many other extra-curricular after school activities that sometimes interfere. In future years we may consider altering the timing of this program so as not to overlap with after school sports or have students sign an agreement with their coaches allowing them to participate in this program throughout its short duration. Additionally, weather this year played a role in getting students to the park. The initial plan was to visit between the park and classroom, alternating locations each week. Due to rain and cold weather, all three park visits were pushed back until the final three meetings so a number of students weren't able to attend due to conflicting schedules with their after-school activities later in the year.

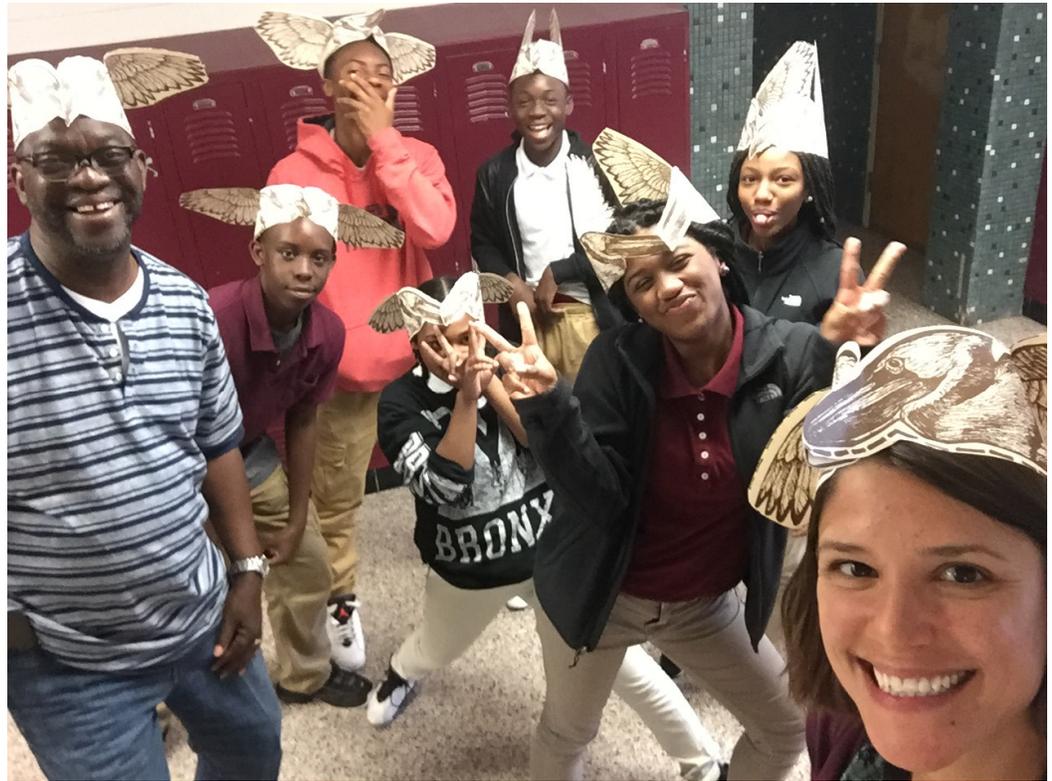


Top left: Students paint the images of their native birds onto wooden boards to attach to the bird blind.

Top right: Using bird field guides students complete a bird ID scavenger hunt to learn more about the project and native birds found at the park

Bottom right: Students trace images of birds they found online onto wooden boards which they then painted.

To study birds we have to act like birds! At right students wear Pelican hats to connect with the project; bottom left: Malachi Bellamy and Christopher Ruff taste fresh picked Mulberrys, a favorite food for birds at the park. Bottom right: Students use a map, a “birds eye view” of the Elizabeth River watershed to determine where Paradise Creek Nature Park is located along the river.





At top, students use binoculars to spot native birds with local expert David Gibson, wife Katie, and Elizabeth River Project staff member David Koubsky.

Below: The finished product! Students show off their completed bird blind and bird ID mural with Young Life leader Mike Burbach.



Granby Go Green Garden & Club – Granby High School, Norfolk – \$500.00

Project Description: To foster environmental stewardship by providing educational opportunities for students such as gardening, recycling, and composting. Our goal overall is to make Granby High School a more environmentally conscious area, take control of recycling efforts in our school, and to expand our garden, composting efforts, and club to new heights. Project will include improved recycling, implementing a compost system and expanding the garden.

This project was scheduled to be completed in June 2016. To date, no summary or pictures have been submitted for this project.

Learning Garden – Newtown Elementary School, Virginia Beach –\$500.00

Project Description: The gardens are being sectioned off so that different classes can “adopt a bed” and manage that portion of the garden, from the planting to the weeding and for the vegetables and herbs, harvesting. We want to create a learning environment in our enclosed courtyard where students can learn about the life cycles in a “natural” setting. We have built vegetable beds, a butterfly garden, a strawberry patch and more. BUT, up until now, most of the tools have been brought in by staff and then taken home. The students do not have a ready stock of tools to use in the garden and some work has been delayed waiting for staff to bring tools in. This grant would give our students independence and freedom to do the work needed to maintain the gardens when needed without waiting. This is a Title I school with 80 percent of the students on free or reduced lunches. Everyone of the SOLs listed below can be addressed in a series of lessons that span the entire school year for all 550 of our second and third graders. rowing Gardeners Club (which I am a co-sponsor of) have researched garden options. They also agreed that they would like to build one garden area made out of concrete cinder blocks and a second garden area made from vertical pallets. The students would decide on colors, in addition to painting the concrete blocks and pallets to brighten the courtyard. This grant would give our students independence and freedom to do the work needed to create the design of each garden, work together as a team to paint, plant, maintain, and observe plant growth. Beyond that, reading and writing objectives can be met through incorporation into the lessons as well.

This project was delayed due to circumstances outside the scope of the project. The teachers are relaunching the project for the 2016-17 school year and complete by June 2017.