



Larry Walsh  
County Executive

# ENVIRONEWS

Environmental News for Will County Schools  
From the Will County Land Use Department/Resource Recovery & Energy Division  
Fall 2013

## Plastic Bag Recycling Challenge Winners!



*St. Mary Nativity School Green Team*

Schools come in all shapes and sizes. In terms of the 2012-2013 Plastic Bag Recycling Challenge, St. Mary Nativity School in Joliet qualifies as the "Little School That Could." With the smallest student population (only 178 pupils), St. Mary Nativity School qualified to win the per-capita based contest this May. The school collected just under 76,000 plastic bags, averaging 426 bags per student. As the winner of the competition, the school was awarded a TREX bench made from recycled plastic bags.

Twenty-seven schools from Will County chose to participate in this year's competition. Between October and April, all schools together collected over 726,000 bags to be recycled into TREX plastic lumber.

St. Mary Nativity School had 24 dedicated members in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Team Green. The team members stressed that although members of the church parish also donated bags to the collection, it was the students, K-8, who were instrumental in the success of their collection.

Carole Frano, Team Green's teacher, reported that the younger students from the first floor learned that if they made the somewhat intimidating walk upstairs to deposit bags in the upper grade collection box, they would be rewarded with a recycling sticker.

Team Green students loaded Ms. Frano's car with filled collection bags before she made her twice-weekly trip to Wal-Mart to deliver the plastic.

Please do not lose the message that initially we all need to reduce our consumption of plastic bags and to use reusable cloth bags on a regular basis. Recycling of plastic bags is the next best solution for any bags that do happen to creep into our lives.

Are you interested in participating in the 2013-2014 Plastic Bag Collection challenge? Check our website at: [http://www.willcountygreen.com/education/plastic\\_bag\\_recycling\\_challenge2.aspx](http://www.willcountygreen.com/education/plastic_bag_recycling_challenge2.aspx) for information and the current school year's application.



*Sofia Santamaria, Nathan Nemanich, and Natalie Deters  
with the bench and award*

## This Class Has Worms!

*Plainfield Central High School students take the vermicomposting experience many steps further.*

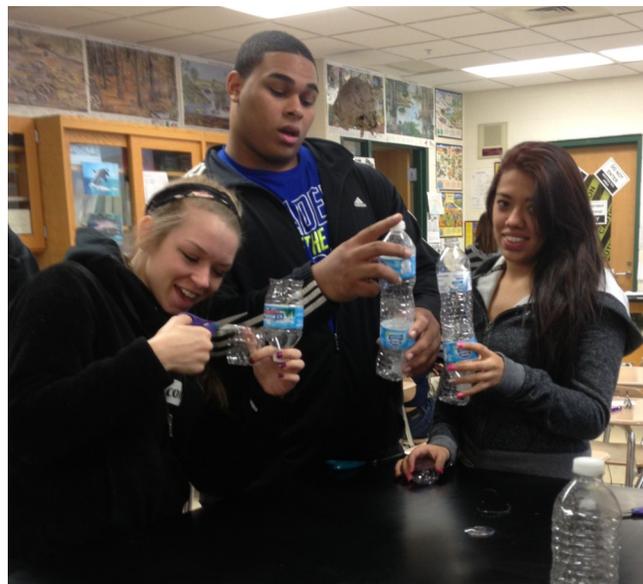
Plainfield Central High School was one of 17 recipients of a vermicomposting bin during the 2012-2013 school year. Students in Joseph Kamper's science classes quickly learned that the red wiggler worms inhabiting the bin would anxiously devour organic food scraps and turn them into nutrient-rich fertilizer. The lesson didn't end there, however.



Students kept decomposition logs and measured temperature levels in the bin. Under Mr. Kamper's instruction, samples of the soil were observed under dissection scopes and microscopes to observe the diversity of decomposers. Students created drawings of the organisms from the protist and animal kingdoms.

The class noticed that seeds from food scraps would occasionally germinate within the bin. These seedlings were transferred to reused plastic bottle planters using the rich compost from the bin.

Mr. Kamper relates that the classroom activities generated by the vermicomposting bin encompass a variety of scientific topics from chemistry decomposition to biological ecosystems to food chains.



*Abbey Partyka, Bryce Douglas, and Alandra Ruiz construct planters.*

When asked if he had encountered any problems with the bin, Mr. Kamper answered, "No problems! The worms have been happy ever since they got here. They are well fed and cared for by the students."



Are you interested in acquiring a bin for your classroom? For a 2013-2014 application, check on our site at [http://www.willcountygovern.com/education/composting\\_in\\_the\\_classroom.aspx](http://www.willcountygovern.com/education/composting_in_the_classroom.aspx).



# We Want to Be a Will County Earth Flag School!

(Schools are encouraged to reapply yearly)



### Complete 4 Earth Tasks:

**Recycle Paper** and one additional material (ink cartridges, cans, bottles, plastic bags, etc.)

Use **Both Sides** of photocopies or loose leaf paper; institute a double-sided policy.

**Invite Will County** to your school for a presentation to one grade level or environmental group.

- Students and faculty become environmental ambassadors to the remainder of the school.
- Follow-up report submitted to Will County related to information presented.

**Perform Two Activities of Your Choice** involving **one grade level or school club** by May 1, 2014.

- Host a collection event to save landfill space and give items a new purpose (shoes, clothing, books, etc.)
- Start an environmental club (meet at least monthly to discuss environmental topics);
- Compost organic food scraps at school (using outdoor compost bin or classroom vermi-composting bin);
- Perform at least 2 waste-free lunch days during the school year;
- Host a recycled art fair to showcase student projects;
- Join the TREX Plastic Bag Recycling Challenge (application on *willcountygreen.com* site)
- Become a Lights4Learning school;
- Entire school uses natural lighting one hour a month, eliminating overhead lights (Earth Hour);
- Join Will County's Better Buildings Challenge in partnership with the Department of Energy;
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

District# \_\_\_\_\_ School Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 School Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Grade level for Will Co. presentation \_\_\_\_\_

### Preferred date for presentation:

Choice #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Choice #2 \_\_\_\_\_ Choice #3 \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate number of students involved in presentation/presentations? \_\_\_\_\_ (maximum 40, per presentation)

Approximate number of adults involved in presentation/presentations? \_\_\_\_\_

*Presentations will be a minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of 45 minutes. If multiple presentations are in the same day, the representative will need 15 minutes between classes for set-up/ moving. Smaller groups are far more effective than large assemblies. We prefer to give several presentations in a school to groups with fewer than 40 students. In some buildings, this can mean that the presentations will be spread over two days.*

*During the 2013-2014 school year, the presentations will focus on energy conservation and alternate forms of energy, in addition to recycling.*

Principal's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please **fax** the form to: 815-722-3410, ATTN: Wyn Hyzer (any questions? *WHyzer@willcountygreen.com*)  
**OR** Mail to: Wyn Hyzer, Will County Land Use, Resource Recovery and Energy Division, 58 E. Clinton St., Joliet, IL 60432

## 2012-2013 School Earth Flag Award Recipients

*\* Denotes First Year Recipients*

A.Vito Martinez School, Romeoville  
A.O. Marshall School, Joliet  
Anna McDonald School, Manhattan  
Arbury Hills School, Mokena  
Arlene Welch Elementary School, Naperville  
Arnold Tyler School, New Lenox  
Brooks Middle School, Bolingbrook  
Carl Sandburg School, Joliet\*  
Caroline Bentley School, New Lenox\*  
Central School, Plainfield  
Chelsea Intermediate School, Frankfort  
Coretta Scott King Magnet School, University Park\*  
Creeside Elementary School, Plainfield  
Elwood School, Elwood  
Fairmont School, Lockport\*  
Farragut School, Joliet  
Frankfort Square School, Frankfort  
Gompers Junior High School, Joliet  
Grand Prairie Elementary School, Joliet  
Haines Elementary School, New Lenox  
Heritage Grove Middle School, Plainfield  
Hermansen School, Romeoville  
Hilda Walker School, Frankfort  
Holy Family School, Shorewood  
Hufford Junior High School, Joliet  
Independence Elementary School, Bolingbrook\*  
Joliet Central High School, Joliet  
Kelvin Grove Junior High School, Lockport  
Liberty Elementary School, Bolingbrook

Ludwig School, Lockport  
Meadow View Elementary School, Plainfield  
Melvin J. Larson Educ. Center-UCP of IL, Joliet\*  
Peotone Junior High School, Peotone  
Pioneer Path School, Channahon  
Plainfield Central High School, Plainfield\*  
Plainfield South High School, Plainfield  
R.C. Hill School, Romeoville  
Reed Custer Middle School, Braidwood  
Reed School, Homer Glen  
Richland Elementary School, Crest Hill\*  
Rockdale Public School, Rockdale  
Sator Sanchez School, Joliet  
Spencer Pointe School, New Lenox  
St. Dennis School, Lockport  
St. Joseph Academy, Joliet  
St. Joseph School, Manhattan  
St. Mary School, Mokena\*  
St. Mary Nativity School, Joliet  
St. Paul the Apostle School, Joliet  
St. Rose School, Wilmington  
Taft School, Joliet  
Thomas Jefferson School, Joliet  
Walker's Grove School, Plainfield  
William B. Orenic School, Plainfield  
William E. Young School, Homer Glen  
William J. Butler School, Lockport\*  
Wilton Center School, Manhattan

*Please POST for faculty or pass to Environmental Teacher/Club*

**FROM:**

**Will County**

**Land Use Department**

**Resource Recovery and Energy Division**

**58 East Clinton**

**Joliet IL, 60432**

**TO:**



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