



# Diversions

Spring 2009

A Publication of the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority

PH045

Authority Op-Ed

## Straight A's for School R's

In the current economy, investment decisions aren't easy. But one thing's for sure: Educating our youth will always yield a high return on investment. After all, today's kids will shape our communities tomorrow.

Seven years ago, the CCCSWA created the Wastebusters Program, helping schools throughout the jurisdiction set up waste reduction programs and teach students how to handle resources wisely.

As a result, local schools are keeping thousands of tons of trash out of the landfill and saving money. Most importantly, they're getting kids excited about reducing, reusing, recycling and composting waste (also known as "Rot", the fourth "R").

In this issue of *Diversions*, we invite you to catch a glimpse of the many wonderful "4R's" activities going on in our school districts. We would also like to acknowledge all the people making these programs a success: school administrators, teachers, students, parents, custodians and many others. We couldn't do it without you!



Paul Morsen  
Executive Director



CCCSWA Board Chairman Mike Shimansky presents students from Indian Valley Elementary with the \$2,000 Wastebusters award.

Win-Win for School and Environment

## Indian Valley Joins Wastebusters

Out of the 46 schools in the Authority's jurisdiction, 20 are currently certified Wastebusters schools, and the list keeps growing! One of the newest members is Indian Valley Elementary in Walnut Creek. In the 2007 school year they completed the first set of "4R's" requirements, earning the school the status of "Wastebusters" and a check for \$2,000. Mike Shimansky, Council Member from Danville and Chairman of the CCCSWA's Board of Directors, delivered the reward personally during a school assembly.

"It was wonderful to see hundreds of kids so enthusiastic about reducing waste," he remembers. "Getting our young people involved, that's where we have to start."

To keep the certification, Indian Valley has to step up their 4R's activities and reapply each year.

To find out more about the Wastebusters program, read the article on page 2, and visit [www.wastediversion.org/schools](http://www.wastediversion.org/schools) or call 925-906-1801.

## The Waste-Cutting Edge

As the Worm Turns

## Worms Recycle School Lunch Scraps

While most residential gardens lie fallow in winter, the beds at the Wastebusters Certified school, Camino Pablo Elementary, brim with hollyhocks, herbs, even big fat zuchinis.

How do the students keep their plots thriving year-round? A little TLC and lots of composting. Each Wednesday afternoon, when the enclosed garden is open to student volunteers, the kids take turns dumping vegetable and fruit scraps into the resident worm bin. The worms chow down on the leftovers from school lunches and produce rich "castings" that make amazing fertilizer.

"It's wonderful to see how our lunches first feed us, and then the leftovers feed the garden," gushes third grader Lauren Granlund.

Camino Pablo isn't the only school in CCCSWA's service area that collects food waste, but it is one of the few that recycles them at an on-site garden using a worm bin.

The students love the process. On a recent December day, dozens of eager volunteers dropped by to weed the garden or feed the worm bin. Come spring, the kids will experience the fruits (and vegetables) of their labor when they enjoy their harvests right out of the garden.

"When kids see the circle of life—school lunch to garden, and back to their plates—they learn about the importance of recycling," explains parent volunteer Kim Winter.



Lauren Granlund and Roman Bober deliver tasty lunch scrap morsels to the Camino Pablo Elementary school garden worm bin, as parent volunteer Kim Winter supervises.

## Free Composting Classes

Inspired by schools that compost? You too can turn kitchen scraps into rich fertilizer for your garden.

To learn how, sign up for a free composting class this spring. For a list of dates and locations, visit [www.wastediversion.org](http://www.wastediversion.org) and select the "composting" tab.

Michael's Top 10

## Cool Green Things Kids Can Do

Michael Williams is a third grader at Happy Valley Elementary in Lafayette. He is on his school's Recycling Team, but his "green" enthusiasm goes way beyond the classroom. "There are many things kids can do," Williams declares. "We can make a huge difference!"



Here are Michael's Top 10 green tips:

1. Turn off the lights when everybody has left the room.
2. Remind your parents when they forget their reusable shopping bag.
3. Pack your school lunch in reusable containers and a reusable lunch bag.
4. Recycle in the classroom, at lunchtime and out on the sports fields on weekends.
5. Turn off the water while you brush your teeth.
6. Help take out the recycling at home.
7. Use a reusable water bottle instead of disposable plastic.
8. Carpool to school with a buddy, or if it's close enough, walk, bike, skate or pogo!
9. Grow some of your own food.
10. Tell everybody that helping the environment is fun!

# Field Trips Inform and Inspire

Everyone knows how to recycle, but how many know what happens to that soda can after the collection truck leaves the curb? Some Central Contra Costa students have discovered the answer — after visiting Pacific Rim Recycling's Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Benicia where recyclables are processed.

Three classes have already taken the field trip, which begins with a snappy jingle sung by Pacific Rim's owner Steve Moore. A video\* made by students from Earth Team, a local youth environmental group, introduces the recycling process. Then students actually experience the dizzying sights and crashing sounds of the sorting and baling machines, as they watch tons of paper, plastic, metal and glass



Students from Rheem Elementary visited the Pacific Rim Materials Recovery Facility in Benicia to see firsthand how recycling happens.

being prepared for shipment to recycling plants.

"We show kids how recycling happens, and this inspires them to recycle more," says Moore. In fact, after the trip, visitors are eager to sign Pacific Rim's "We the People" pledge, a wall-sized commitment to participate in local recycling programs. Students also receive a green 4R's bracelet for taking the tour.

Special thanks to principal Elaine Frank and kindergarten teacher Bess Inzeo, both at Rheem Elementary, who helped develop the field trip program.

\*To watch the video, visit [www.pacificrimrecycling.com](http://www.pacificrimrecycling.com) and click on Photos/Videos. For information on field trips, contact Lois Humphreys at [lois@trgandassociates.com](mailto:lois@trgandassociates.com).

More than Pushing a Broom

## Custodian Is Key to Success

As custodian at Murwood Elementary School in Walnut Creek, Mike Ward does far more than sweep classrooms and keep the grounds tidy. About half his job consists of helping to run the school's five-year-old recycling program.



Murwood Elementary School students Lucy Shaw and Brian Adams assist custodian Mike Ward in adding food scraps to the compost drum in the school garden.

"I like knowing that I'm a small part of the solution in helping the environment," says Ward.

Ward's recycling duties include helping students sort their trash into the proper containers after lunch every day. Last spring, Murwood, a first-time Wastebuster school, expanded its recycling program by adding a scrap pail for fruits and vegetables. Ward takes the food pail to the school garden where, several times a week, parent volunteers add the discarded scraps to a compost drum and four black, plastic compost bins.

Every six to eight weeks, the volunteers transfer the decomposed contents of the compost piles to the garden, where the organic material boosts the growth of herbs, bulbs, vegetables, lettuce, radishes and cucumbers. Ward figures the school will compost over 600 pounds of food scraps this year!

## ASK THE AUTHORITY

Dear "Junior" Authority,

At school we have a compost bin, and I really want to try composting at home, but my parents think it's messy. What should I do?

*Longing for Compost in Lafayette*

Dear Longing,

Composting is great! A ton of worms and other little soil bugs eating away at our leftovers, and making great plant food ... all for free! Maybe you could bring your parents to the school garden and let them taste the delicious vegetables we kids grow with compost. I'm sure they'll love it!

And with your help, composting doesn't have to get messy. You can offer to be in charge of taking the kitchen scraps out to the compost bin every other day. After that, make sure you cover the fresh food scraps with some dry material like leaves, just like in the school garden.

Now you're ready to teach your parents the basics. You can also go to a free composting class with them or borrow a video to watch. To find out more, call the "Senior" Authority at 925-901-1801 or go to [www.wastediversions.org](http://www.wastediversions.org). Good luck!

The "Junior" Authority

This issue's Junior Authorities are Lauren Carr (13) and Ashley Yu (12), who attend Stanley Middle School in Lafayette.

Do you have a question for us? Please send it to [authority@wastediversion.org](mailto:authority@wastediversion.org).

## Spring Reuse and Cleanup Day Schedule

Community	Date
Unincorporated County	February & August
Danville	March & September
Walnut Creek	April & October
Orinda/Moraga	May & November
Lafayette	June & December

More information will be mailed two weeks prior to your Reuse and Cleanup Day. If you have questions, call Allied Waste Services at 925-603-1144.

Busting Waste the Fun Way

## Welcome, Greenhorns!



Green Valley Elementary in Danville is getting greener by the minute. All you have to do is take one look at the school's website, ([www.gves.grvusd.k12.ca.us](http://www.gves.grvusd.k12.ca.us)) and you'll see that the "4R's" are an integral part of the culture. Their motto: "You have the power today, to change tomorrow, Please Recycle."

"We've really ramped our recycling program up," enthuses second grade Green Valley teacher Jill Montana. "We're selling T-shirts to support the program to give us more tools to be a greener school."

Starting last July, every K-12 school within CCCSWA's jurisdiction became eligible to be a Wastebusters Winner or Leadership Circle member. To qualify as a "Winner," schools must participate in a list of mandatory activities and can choose from a longer list of other 4R's activities. To be a member of the Leadership Circle, a school must have been certified as a Wastebusters Winner for at least three years and have reduced its trash while increasing recycling. There are cash rewards as well as a host of other benefits to both types of certification.

Applications can be downloaded at [www.wastediversion.org/SchoolWastebusters.htm](http://www.wastediversion.org/SchoolWastebusters.htm). If you're just getting started, check out our School Recycling Guide: How to Make It Happen on our website.

## Contact information

CCCSWA . . . . . 925-906-1801  
 fax: 925-906-1805 . . . . . web: [www.wastediversion.org](http://www.wastediversion.org)  
 email: [authority@wastediversion.org](mailto:authority@wastediversion.org)

**GARBAGE:**  
**ALLIED WASTE SERVICES . . . . . 925-603-1144**  
 fax: 925-685-8153 . . . . . web: [www.awsgcc.com](http://www.awsgcc.com)  
 For questions concerning billing, special cleanups, vacation hold requests, computer & TV collection, new service or your blue garbage cart.

**RECYCLING:**  
**VALLEY WASTE MANAGEMENT . . . . . 925-935-8900**  
 fax: 925-935-1617 . . . . . web: [www.valleywaste.com](http://www.valleywaste.com)  
 For questions concerning the service of your burgundy recycling or green yard clippings carts, to request motor oil recycling containers, for recycling cleanups or information on the Walnut Creek Recycling Center.

**CONTRA COSTA RECYCLING HOTLINE . . 1-800-750-4096**  
**HOME COMPOSTING/GRASSCYCLING . . . 925-906-1806**  
**HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE . . . . 1-800-646-1431**  
**REUSE AND CLEANUP DAYS:**  
**Pacific Rim Recycling . . . . . 1-800-999-6067**



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