



MCSEEP – caring to learn and learning to care.



Join the Green Side!

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When you're aware, it's hard not to care.

If you're like me, you go to throw something "away" and pause thinking, "Wait, is there a better place for this? How can I reuse this? Where or how can I recycle this? Can this be composted?" Then my husband rolls his eyes at the cans of paint drying in the garage or the mountains of plastic wrap waiting to get dropped off at the grocery store. But once you are aware, it's hard not to care. Just throwing something toward the landfill letting the earth or someone else "figure it out" doesn't seem like an option anymore. Alternatives to landfills are growing every-

day. While it might take a few extra steps to dispose of things properly it's with each of these steps that we reduce our global footprint.

Kids are naturally creative and inventive. Why not on a cold, indoor recess day, pull out some clean garbage and have them come up with a new invention with it. Or better yet, new packaging ideas that reduce all the extra wrapping. If you need ideas, give us a call or email.

Warmly,

Bethany Gola
MCSEEP director

Encourage Youth that the power of one is pretty significant. What they do DOES matter!

Check out the epa.gov website for kids and teachers. And try some carbon footprint calculators with your students.

www.epa.gov/climatechange/kids/calc/index.html **OR**

www.cooltheworld.com/kidscarboncalculator

Deicing in McHenry County

- Road salts can enter air, soil, groundwater, and surface water impacting human health, plants, and wildlife.
- McHenry County DOT and Division of Water Resource Management support alternatives to NaCl including beet juice and salt brine blend and high tech equipment in snow plows used to monitor efficient deicing.
- It takes four times more salt to remove snow and ice than to prevent it? **SHOVEL EARLY + OFTEN**
- Calcium Magnesium (CMA) and Potassium Acetate (KA) are alternatives to NaCl

MCSEEP Library—way more than books!

Looking for after school group projects? Trying to add "trending" hands on manipulatives to your lessons? Let us help you find engaging activities for your students. Our library was generously funded

by Siemens Industries and includes great tools like solar robots, animal pelts and track making kits, paper making screens, games, air wind and water physics kits, insect vacuums and habitat pods, kill-a-

watt and energy saving kits.

You may either go on our website and search the online database according to topics and resources or send us an email of what you are looking for.

STEM, NGSS, we've got you covered.

In January 2014 the state of Illinois will decide to adopt the Next Generation Science Standards. With all the changes, CORE, STEM, and NGSS, I'm sure there are reservations and feelings of being overwhelmed.

The good news is that many of the things you do already meet standards! Having MCSEEP out to present environmental lessons is one of them! We are working to align and adjust our lessons to satisfy standards for

each grade and list in the learning objectives the NGSS standards met.



Great Locker Clean Out

Prevent the single biggest waste day at your school.

Cleaning out a desk or locker is a great mid-year or end-of-the-year activity. It is easy to do, requires little preparation, is highly visible and saves good items from being thrown into the garbage. It promotes reduce, reuse, recycle and respect.

Having multiple clubs and groups in the school organizing and facilitating the event is a great way for students and staff to work together. Consider donating unused supplies to students in need or organizations in the community who help needy families.

“Wilmette Junior High School—students collected 36 trash bags of stuff. After sorting, redistributing or donating school supplies, library books and clothing only three bags were thrown away.”

Let’s share your school’s success story!

Last spring total pounds of plastic collected for participating McHenry County Schools was 2,596.6 pounds (over 1 ton). The winning school was Glacier Ridge !

TREX Plastic Bag Recycling Challenge

The company known as TREX is the nation’s largest manufacturer of wood-alternative products and is based in Virginia. They turn millions of pounds of recycled plastic and waste wood into products they sell each year. Most of these products come from recovered plastic grocery bags, plastic film, and waste wood fibers.

In 2006 the TREX plastic bag recycling challenge began, and since then their overall recycling volume has grown to over 3 million bags - amazing! By doing this activity in your school, you can help grow the plastic bag recycling effort and continue to educate your students on the importance of recycling. Schools registering

with MCSEEP and participating will compete to collect the most bags of plastic film to be recycled by TREX. Each school participating receives a special gift from TREX, as well as something very special for the winner. Last year’s gifts were birdhouses for each school and a bench for the winning school.



MCSEEP would be happy to help you facilitate these events and has many practical “to-do” lists to make these activities happen.

Please use the enclosed sign up sheet and send back into MCSEEP.

TREX challenge begins Jan. 6th but late registration will be taken. School totals are based on pounds per student.

TREX challenge January 6– April 22nd. Register Today!

Waste Free Lunch

Garbage reduction can help save your school some green - money that is - since garbage disposal is expensive. Here is a fun and rewarding idea to implement in your school this year.

The very first thing to do is to perform a “surprise” weigh in of all the lunch time garbage. Include trash from all school employees, as well as students. Send a note home with students letting parents know that lunchtime garbage was weighed

and the number of pounds recorded. Multiply the number of pounds per day by the total school days in the year— WOW! Next, let parents know upcoming dates set as no waste lunch days - i.e. pack lunches that produce no garbage. Tupperware, margarine tubs, and metal lunchboxes can be reused over and over again for sandwiches, etc., as well as refillable drink containers. Then, educate your students on how to put together a no waste

lunch. Maybe this could be taught by the student council or a recycling club at your school? Get your principal involved in this initiative too - the students will love to see him/her participating!

Periodically have lunch trash weigh ins throughout the year to see if your message was received.

Happy Packing!