

Tennessee Pollution Prevention Partnership Success Story



**Freedom Intermediate
School**
840 Glass Lane
Franklin, TN 37064
www.fssd.org/FISweb/



Empowering Students Makes a Difference in Recycling Program

The Member

Freedom Intermediate School, a part of the Franklin Special School District, enrolls about 630 fifth and sixth grade students. Originally constructed in 1972, we have recently completed extensive renovation and are enjoying our new and improved facility. A passion for recycling highlights FIS's waste reduction program and has resulted in Freedom Intermediate consistently being one of the top recycling programs in Williamson County.

The Story

FIS is a large school with a copious amount of paper waste. Reducing this waste has been a long term goal. In 2003 our environmental club, The Green Team, was formed. Under the guidance of science teacher, Barbara Orr, this group of about 20 students meets weekly to manage the recycling program. Two main objectives are environmental education and increasing the collection of recycled materials.

Our biggest obstacles have been lack of participation and improper items in the recycling bins. The Green Team continues to educate students and staff to overcome these issues through the use of commercials made by Green Team members, which are aired on the FIS morning news. All 6th grade students have a science unit that includes natural resource conservation and saving landfill space. In addition, JoAnn Jackson from Williamson Recycles provides educational programs.

The honors Science class Single-Stream Recycling Team entered the 2010 Siemens "We Can Change the World Challenge." The challenge gives students the opportunity, tools and inspiration to become agents of environmental change in their local community. By conducting a survey, the Single-Stream Team discovered that many people in the community were not recycling paper, plastic, tin, aluminum, cardboard, and glass because they felt recycling takes too much work and time and that the city has no free, curbside recycling pickup. The team decided to run a single-stream campaign in their school that modeled a citywide program to be instituted in the summer. Each homeroom was provided a bag to deposit their mixed recyclables. The classroom with the highest participation was rewarded. Through the program they showed school and community members the positive environmental impact of a program that makes recycling

convenient. A second group conducted an experiment to demonstrate the effect of toxins leaking out of cell phones in landfills on plants. They then held a contest to collect used cell phones at school; over one hundred pounds of phones were recycled.

This year the cafeteria staff joined in as part of the recycling team by rinsing and saving all tin cans and cardboard for the Green Team. Replacing Styrofoam lunch trays with reuseable plastic trays reduced the cafeteria waste. Blue bins for recycling plastic bottles were added throughout the building to make it more convenient to recycle.

The Success

FIS has a long-standing recycling program recognized locally and state-wide. We have been one of the top five recycling programs in Williamson County for the last three years. In October, our school was recognized as one of the top ten recycling schools in Tennessee with the 2009 Good Sports Always Recycle award. The Single-Stream Recycling Team won first place in the Siemens "We Can Change the World Challenge." The cell phone project received an honorable mention prize from Siemens. The key to our success is empowering the students to make a difference.

The Pollution Prevented

In 2009 FIS recycled 10.05 tons of paper, 1.49 tons of cardboard and one ton of plastic bottles. The 2010 data showed a vast improvement in school wide participation. In 2010, FIS recycled 20.7 tons of paper, and 6.84 tons of cardboard, plastic and tin. This recycling effort saved \$1489.95 over the past 2 years in landfill fees.

July 2010



The annual back-to-school picnic is a litter-free event.