

Save the Drop Entry Chase Street Elementary The Cougar Conservationists

Hello,

My name is Cynthia Gilmore. I am a second grade teacher at Chase Street Elementary School. I am the lead teacher for our entry into this contest. Second grade's idea is the one we are submitting.

Think about how many classrooms, districtwide, have water fountains. How many water faucets are turned on for 30 seconds every morning? How many water bottles are dumped out down the drain - wasted?

Our plan is a very simple, yet effective one. I don't have any fancy power points or posters to give you, but I do have an idea which has been tried and true. I have been doing this in my class for several years, since we started turning on the faucet for 30 seconds each morning. I noticed how much water was being wasted, so I had my students put a watering can under the faucet when they counted out 30 seconds. Then they take the watering can outside and water plants in the garden. If there are any water bottles that they aren't sure who they belong to, they also pour those out in the garden. Years ago, one child was about to pour out the water in a bottle and another child said, "NO, go pour it outside on a plant!" The other said, "But it's raining." To which the first student said, "So what, at least it wouldn't be wasted!" It became very clear that they were getting the message about conserving water.

I tell this story, because not only would this plan save water, but it would also help the students get real life experience and understanding about why and how it is important to conserve water.

As I said before, the plan is simple. We have 46 classrooms with water faucets. We also have 8 outside water drinking fountains. We are in the process of attempting to get 46 watering cans and some rain barrels to set near the outside water faucets.

I've talked to one of our maintenance men and he agrees that the water saved in water barrels could be used in a variety of ways. It could be used when they need to mop floors or wash something down. It could also be used in watering plants around the school. I had thought about possibly using some trash cans, but I am afraid that kids might put trash in them.

Another thing that we would like to do is compile a pamphlet with ideas from Chase Street kids about ways to save water at home. For instance, when I change my cats water at home, I don't dump it down the drain, I pour it out in the yard.

Other things that I foresee as present possibilities are students estimating how much water we are saving. This could be used as part of an integrated ongoing lesson on how to conserve water. Math, Social studies, environmental studies, reading can all be a part of this ongoing participation throughout the school.

We can have a contest to design the pamphlet, so Art would also be a part of this integrated ongoing lesson. Students and teachers could meet to share ideas on how to best present this.

I would also appreciate any input you would have.

Since we are The Chase Street Cougars, our team name will be "The Cougar Conservationists."

As I previously said, this is a simple, yet very effective plan. It is also something that could be implemented district wide.

We are still in the process of acquiring the watering cans and rain barrels. We are going to generate more ideas from the students and parents and put together water conservation practices.

Ideally, it would be nice to eventually have a website where we could have people, district wide, share water conservation ideas. Our water conservation plans need to be shared, because it's important.

When the children learn to be responsible about conserving water, they are empowered AND we save water. They can become problem solvers. Who knows, perhaps one or more of them will invent something someday that will change all of our lives.

Another additional part of the plan here would be to investigate the possibility of also using rain barrels to collect rain when it does rain.

We need to save every drop!