



# Recycler's Digest

CARLTON COUNTY'S GREEN TEAM NEWSLETTER

**Volume 2, issue 1**

**NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR THE 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR!!**

## *Green Schools Project*

Hello fellow waste reducers and recyclers. My name is George Knutson (there's more information about me on page four) and I would like to announce the launch of the Green Schools Project for the 2016-2017 school year!

The 2015-2016 program year was very successful. Let's use the momentum from last year and accomplish even more this year!

## *School Spotlight: Washington Elementary*

Washington participated in the Green Schools Project last year and has re-applied for this school year. They used the grant to purchase new recycling bins for every classroom and four 50-gallon bins to create a paper recycling sub-station in the hallway. Teachers and students take paper from the classrooms and empty it at the paper recycling sub-station.

Why is recycling paper so important? It's important because paper is one of the top materials used in schools. In fact according to a MPCA study, 23% of school waste is recyclable paper materials. Not only is paper one of the top materials used by schools, it also is a great commodity for them. Certain kinds of paper materials can be collected and sold directly to paper mills, in this case, to Verso. Recycling paper benefits the environment and the school, and as you can see, Washington is doing a great job at it.

This year, the focus is on reducing waste in the cafeteria. To do this, Washington wants to purchase a water bottle filling station, make better signage for their recycling bins, and look into starting an organics recycling program.



Washington's clear and informative signs.



The paper recycling sub-station.



Washington's students are doing a great job recycling!

## Green Schools Project: The Process

The Green Schools Project is a grant program that aims to ensure waste in local schools is reduced and recyclables are diverted from the landfill. The first step is to fill out an application and the grant requirement documents for your school. Visit the [website](#) and print off both the application and grant requirements documents, or contact me and I will mail hardcopies to you. Once approved, the next steps required are:

1. Have a waste assessment completed and start a Green Team.
2. Complete a legal grant agreement with Carlton County to release funds.
3. Develop and implement a Recycling & Waste Reduction Policy.
4. Submit a final report detailing purchases.

I will be available throughout the entire process to assist schools with the program. If you have any questions regarding the program, please contact me at [George.Knutson@co.carlton.mn.us](mailto:George.Knutson@co.carlton.mn.us) or call 218-384-9592.

# Green Schools Project: 2015-2016 Recap

Here are the eight schools that took part in the Green Schools Project last year and what each purchased with the grant:

## **Washington Elementary**

- Purchased recycling bins for classrooms.
- Purchased reusable silverware for the cafeteria.

## **Queen of Peace**

- Purchased recycling bins for every classroom, office, and the lunchroom.
- Purchased 50-gallon carts for recycling collection in the hallway.
- Purchased a water bottle filling station.

## **Cloquet Middle School**

- Purchased recycling bins and labels for every classroom and office.
- Purchased larger bins for the school's substations in the hallway.
- Purchased reusable silverware for the cafeteria.

## **Cloquet High School**

- Purchased recycling bins for every classroom.
- Purchased recycling bins for the hallway.

## **Moose Lake K-12**

- Purchased recycling bins for hallways and classrooms.
- Purchased outdoor collection carts.

## **Cromwell K-12**

- Purchased recycling bins for hallways and classrooms.
- Purchased a water bottle filling station.

## **Carlton High School**

- Purchase materials to build recycling centers around the school.
- Purchased a cart to aid the emptying of recycling centers.
- Purchased identical blue bins for every teacher's room, office areas, and the library.
- Purchased two worm composting towers.
- Purchased a water bottle filling station.

## **Wrenshall K-12**

- Purchased recycling collection kits for every classroom.

Bins were the most common item purchased by schools, but as you can see, some schools did purchase other items; these include: reusable silverware, worm composting towers, carts to aid recycling, and water bottle filling stations.

## What do you want to know?

Is there something that you find confusing about recycling? Are you curious about what goes on behind-the-scenes with garbage haulers? Would you like tips, tricks, or ideas on how to educate your students to recycle properly? Let us know! Email your questions to George Knutson at [George.Knutson@co.carlton.mn.us](mailto:George.Knutson@co.carlton.mn.us) •

## About George

Everywhere I go people ask me, “Who are you?” and “What is a GreenCorp member?” Both answers are a little complicated. However, in these few paragraphs, I will try to answer both as best as I can.

I grew up in Maplewood, Minnesota – about a 10 minute drive northeast of St. Paul. I lived in a pretty full house. It consisted of my mom, dad, sister, sister, brother, dog, cat, and me. In my spare time I enjoy many different hobbies including disc golf, basketball, football, anime, videogames, movies, music, podcasts, hiking, fishing, swimming, and biking.

I attended North St. Paul High School and then the University of Minnesota Duluth – Go dogs! I graduated from UMD in May 2016 with a Bachelor of Arts in Environment & Sustainability, as well as a GIS certificate – Geographic Information System/Science. People always ask me what GIS is, and simply put, it’s a powerful mapping tool that allows us to analyze all kinds of data in amazing ways. One cool thing I did during college was work on UMD’s SAP farm – also known as the Sustainable Agriculture Project. It was a lot of work, but really fun and rewarding!

After graduation, I didn’t know what career field I wanted to pursue, so I spent a lot of time searching for jobs. One day, I came across the Minnesota GreenCorps program. I had the same question that I’m sure most of you are asking yourselves, “What is the Minnesota GreenCorps?” Minnesota GreenCorps is a statewide program that aims to preserve Minnesota’s environment and enhance human health. Sites are picked from hundreds of applicants to host a Minnesota GreenCorps member. Each member serves for 11 months to gain experience in their field and to work on projects related to air quality, water quality, energy conservation, local foods, green living, green transportation, invasive species, and waste reduction and recycling.

I was placed here – Carlton County Zoning & Environmental Services – to assist with the Green Schools Project that was launched last year. It’s a fulltime position, and while most of my time will be spent helping schools improve their waste reduction, I will also be working in other topic areas like Aquatic Invasive Species. Feel free to contact me anytime with questions or comments on the Green Schools Project. My email is [George.Knutson@co.carlton.mn.us](mailto:George.Knutson@co.carlton.mn.us) and my phone number is 218-384-959.

