

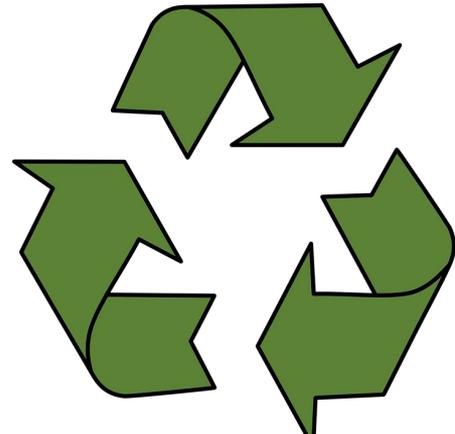


Make Everyday Earth Day!

General Franks Elementary

By: Maddi Phillips, Regan Blagg, Trinity
Cartwright, Ashtyn Healer, Lianely Portillo,
Andrea Molinar, Aidan Smith, and Nadia Olivas

Advisor: Cadi Gillette



What does it mean to make everyday Earth Day?

We set a goal this year to put a focus on recycling, conserving our resources, and reducing waste. Instead of striving for these goals only one day a year, we wondered what a difference we could make if we strived for this everyday. When we say conserve, we mean use less resources everyday such as shortening your showers and only turning the water on when you need to wet your toothbrush. We decided to not only recycle at school but to encourage the families at our school to recycle at home as well. We also wanted to come up with a solution to use the waste that we cannot recycle in our hometown. We also decided to put up a fight against the litter surrounding our community.



Goal #1: Maintain & Improve Our Recycling & Litter Prevention Program

- We run a campus wide recycling program that encourages every classroom to recycle by competing in a monthly competition. The classroom with the most recyclables receives an ice cream party. The students are encouraged to recycle at school as well as at home. If students bring recyclables from home, they also get to use those points towards their total.
- Our local Keep Midland Beautiful sponsors our efforts by providing us with recycling services with a local company. Our job is to collect all the recycling, tally each class's points, sort the recycling and get it ready for pickup on Mondays. We have a recycling shed that we use to store and sort all the paper, cardboard, plastic, and aluminum we collect. We give up recess twice a week to work together and reach our goals.



Recycling Projects

- Another goal of ours is to teach the younger students at our school about recycling because we love getting them involved. They have so many questions, and we have all of the answers! We have already taught them so much and we definitely want to continue.
- We visited each classroom on our campus and taught them the importance of recycling and how to identify the acceptable materials our city can recycle.
- We have monthly meetings with Keep Midland Beautiful to learn more ways to recycle and reuse everyday products.
- We collect plastic bottle caps and reuse them for other purposes because they are not recyclable in our community. We use them for crafts with our kindergarteners and art club. We are in the middle of designing a mural that will be made out of the bottle caps we've collected and sorted.



Litter Prevention

- We come together three times a year to pick up litter in an area of our community that needs it the most. This is one of our favorite things to do and we always have a huge turn out. We welcome the whole school and our families to join us.
- This year we have picked up 91 bags of trash at these events alone.



Litter Doesn't Stand a Chance Around the Clean Team!





GOAL #2: CREATE A GARDENING CLUB

We decided to create a gardening club this year, inspire the younger students to garden, and harvest food that can be used to feed students at our school.

- We learned how to use our school's hydroponic plant tower this year and had a successful batch of multiple fruits, vegetables, and herbs to share with others.
- Our job was to make sure the plant tower had the proper lighting, water level, and ideal pH level. We checked on our plants daily and collected data on their growth rates. Once our tomatoes took over, we learned how to pollinate them ourselves using an electric toothbrush. I guess you could say we were some busy bees!
- Once we got the hang of things, we decided to show the younger grades the magic of hydroponics!



This is an image of one of our beautiful tomato plants!



Green Thumbs At Work!

- This year we learned about the importance of soil health and how to save that precious resource. We were inspired by our plant tower and wanted to grow more plants without using soil.
- We discovered a simple hydroponic growth method using string, a water bottle, and cotton balls. We tested it out ourselves first and were amazed to see plants growing and roots flowing within a couple days!
- We visited many classrooms and helped them make their own hydroponic water bottle system.
- Our community has an annual Earth Day Festival and we were asked to bring our skills and showcase them at our very own booth. It is rare that an elementary school is asked to present and we were honored to be able share our passion with the public!



All Hands on Deck!

We love having the kids at our school interact with our Green Team. We are also teaching them how to grow new potatoes from sprouts on potatoes that are no longer in use. We want them to be able to visualize how easy conserving our resources can be!



Before & After!

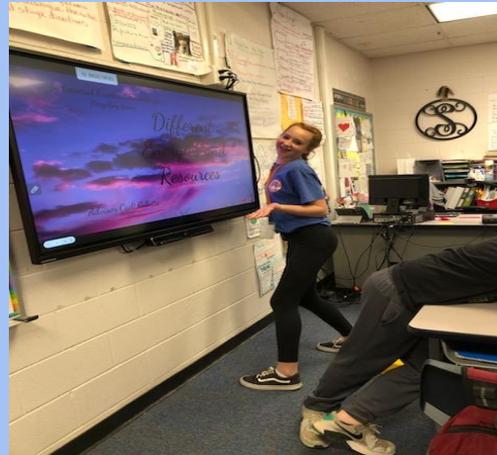
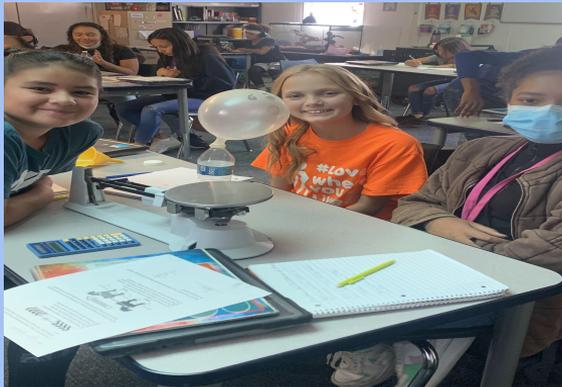


The “Gardeners in Training” couldn’t believe our potato plant had grown over a foot tall after only 1 week! Neither could we, now we are upgrading our growing space to meet demand of our growing plants.

Goal #3: Save Energy. Save the World.

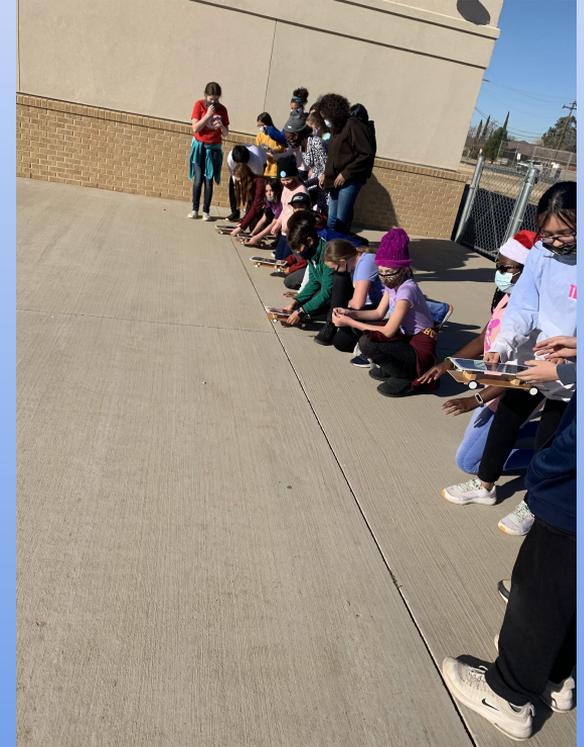
We wanted our fellow Cadets to be aware of all of the renewable and nonrenewable energy sources. Once they were familiar with them, we showed them tips and tricks on how to save energy and why it's important.

- We created lessons on the different types of energy and the advantages and disadvantages of each. We also demonstrated where our energy comes from and the resources that we need to conserve.
- We had our first group debate project and the showdown between renewable energies began!
- Once we were experts on energy, we taught other grade levels and had them compete in their own group challenges.
- We always ended our lesson by encouraging them to save energy and showing them simple ways to make a difference.



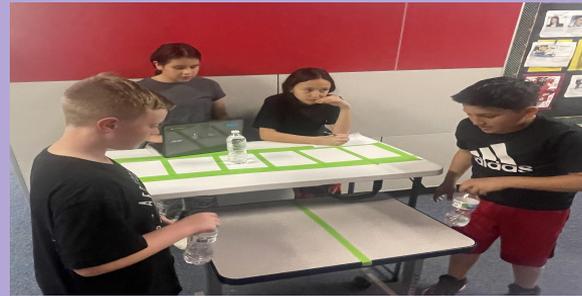
Solar Energy Derby!

We helped 1st Grade build solar cars and demonstrated how they worked. They couldn't wait to test them out!



Reaching Our Goals

Throughout this year we've had an incredible time teaching our younger generations the importance of recycling, conserving renewable and non-renewable resources, gardening, and litter prevention. We have grown closer, not just as a campus but a community. Our leadership skills have grown throughout this experience. We're not only helping out our school, but we're changing our environment everyday! We hope we inspire our younger Cadets, and we hope they follow in our footsteps!



Being the change we want to see in the world.



We discovered that no matter what we said or taught the other students, the only way to create change was to be an example to others. We made sure that we picked up trash, recycled, and conserved resources everyday. We are hoping that we are inspiring change and starting a movement in our community because everyday should be treated like Earth Day!

