



START-UP KIT

Helping you make your school
healthy and safe
through investigation, education,
innovation, and action.

Welcome to the Green Flag Program

Description of the Start-Up Kit Contents

The Green Flag Start-Up Kit will help you and your school community learn about the Green Flag Program. Its materials describe how you form a team to work on environmental issues affecting your school. It will tell you why these issues are important, and how students' education and school performance can be improved by participating in the program.

The Start-Up Kit contains:

1. **The Green Flag Program:** A brief program description that can be used to explain and publicize the program at your school.
2. **Green Flag for Kids:** A brief program description written for elementary and middle schools students.
3. **Helpful Hints for Coordinators:** Lists the expectations and responsibilities of the Green Flag School Coordinator(s)/individuals who agree to promote the program at a school and be its primary contacts to the Green Flag Program.
4. **Educational Benefits of The Green Flag Program:** A brief explanation of the program's educational philosophy and the benefits of student participation and performance.
5. **About the Green Flag Program/Green Flag Promotional Poster:** Explains by whom and how the program was created and what its goals and mission are. On the other side is a 17 x 22" poster to promote the program in your school.
6. **Children's Environmental Health Flyer:** Produced by the Environmental Health Alliance, and the Child Proofing Our Communities Campaign, which are both coordinated by the Center for Health, Environment and Justice. This material raises awareness of children's environmental health issues.
7. **Fact Sheets:** Produced as part of the Green Squad website, which is a project of the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Healthy Schools Network. These fact sheets provide information on nine environmental issues affecting schools. For more information see <http://www.nrdc.org/greensquad/intro/about.asp>
8. **Success Stories:** The accounts of three schools that have received the initial Green Flag awards for their previous accomplishments on environmental issues.
9. **How to Submit Your Documentation to the Green Flag Program:** Instructions on how to send material to us.
10. **Sample Letter to Parents:** A model to work from to send letters to parents and inform them about the program.
11. **The Green Flag School Environment Survey:** A 30-question form to help you evaluate environmental issues in your school and choose an issue area to work on. The survey also helps you promote the program to parents, educators, and students.



Level 1 - Getting Started: How to Become a Green Flag School

1. Build Your Adult-Student Green Flag Team (GFT)

- Ask your school Principal for permission to introduce the program in your school, and show him or her a copy of the Green Flag Program flyer and Educational Benefits flyer. Once you get approval, you must work to form a group of dedicated students, staff, faculty, parents, PTA/O chapters and community members. The GFT should include at least several students and at least one adult member, but it is better if a whole team of adults is involved. The adult team will ideally include at least one faculty member, one parent and one school staff member, e.g., school nurse, and facility- or maintenance personnel.
- To form your group, make a list of people you think might be interested, and contact them or speak to them at a school event. If your school already has an environmental group or club, they can become a Green Flag team.
- If necessary, once you have a few committed people, meet with your principal and decide what school groups you want to work with, such as an after- or in- school environmental club, individual classes, grades, or the entire school.

2. Conduct the Green Flag School Environment Survey

- Complete the survey in the Green Flag Start-Up Kit. This survey will help you evaluate your school and its awareness of issues affecting the school environment. It will also help the Green Flag Program Coordinator assist your team in choosing the program area(s) on which you want to work.
- It is crucial to work on the survey with facility and maintenance staff, who will have important knowledge on conditions in your school and whose support you will need to implement the program.
- If possible, involve students in filling out the survey.

It will be easier to engage them throughout the program if they become familiar with the issue through this experience. The Green Flag Program Coordinator can help you engage students in completing the survey. (See the teachers' resources section of <http://www.greenflagschools.org/> for a list of classroom activities other schools have completed in working with the survey during our pilot period.

- Once you have completed your survey, talk with the Green Flag Program Coordinator about what program area you want to focus on.

3. Submit your survey to the Green Flag Program

- After the Green Flag Program staff reviews your survey, the Green Flag Program Coordinator will contact you to discuss which program areas you should take on.
- Once you have chosen a program area, the Green Flag Program Coordinator will connect you with a mentor with expertise in the issue area you have chosen. Your team and mentor and the program coordinator will meet on a conference call, where you can make a plan of action that turns your knowledge from the survey into action. You can also set up a time to have your mentor meet with your group and talk to them about the action plan.
- Hold a meeting to educate people about the Green Flag Program and get them involved. Invite the members of your school community, including students, parents, teachers, and school staff and administrators, using email, phone calls, flyers, and community newsletters. This meeting can be focused only on the Green Flag Program, or it can be part of a larger gathering, such as a PTA meeting. Make an agenda, and give several people roles in the meeting, such as facilitator, note taker, greeter, attendance taker, and timekeeper, who will help the meeting, run smoothly and get people involved.
- Your team may also want to hold a student-only kickoff meeting, to raise awareness about your project, recruit participants, and get people excited about the work ahead.



**A Project of the Child Proofing Our Communities Campaign,
coordinated by the Center for Health, Environment and Justice**

P.O. Box 6806 • Falls Church, VA 22040-6806
Phone 703.237.2249 • Email: childproofing@chej.org • www.greenflagschools.org





The Green Flag Program is a new project of the national Child Proofing Our Communities Campaign coordinated by the Center for Health Environment and Justice. The program will encourage environmental leadership in schools, and is designed to help communities make their schools healthier places to learn, and to educate students about environmental issues. The program involves students and adults in investigating issues, identifying problems, finding solutions and promoting positive environmental programs in schools.

With each positive step that school communities take, the Green Flag Program presents awards to the school and students, culminating in the presentation of the Green Flag Award of Environmental Leadership.

The Four Issue Areas

Schools can get a Green Flag Award for completing improvements in one or more of the following four issue areas:

Integrated Pest Management (IPM):

Pesticides and herbicides used to kill insects, rodents, and weeds are not just bad for pests. They are bad for people too and especially kids and have been linked to cancer and developmental delays in children. This program helps schools switch to non-toxic methods of pest management, following the model of many successful school IPM programs nationwide.



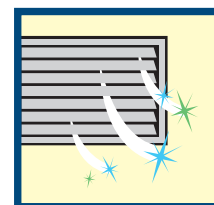
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle:

Everyone talks about the importance of recycling, but few schools do all they can and many schools no longer maintain programs. With forest loss increasing at an alarming rate and only 5% of our country's forests left intact, it is urgent that we educate students about the value of conservation and recycling. This program will help schools establish better systems of conservation and recycling.



Indoor Air Quality (IAQ):

Many schools have poor indoor air quality, and suffer from serious problems including toxic mold. Exposure to airborne pollutants is dramatically increased by poor IAQ and can cause health problems including asthma, allergic reactions, headaches, rashes, and more serious illnesses. These problems can be reduced by improving ventilation systems and building maintenance. This program helps schools find out if they have serious indoor air quality problems, and helps them to find and promote solutions.



Non-Toxic Products:

Many everyday products you find in schools are actually unhealthy for children, such as industrial-strength cleaning products and some art supplies. This program helps schools identify which products in their school are toxic, and replace them with non-toxic, cost-effective alternatives.



How to Earn the Green Flag

No matter the issue area, each school must complete a three-step process before receiving the Green Flag Award. To provide incentive and recognition, there are awards for each level of achievement.

1. **Getting Started:** In level one, schools take the needed steps to evaluate their situation and pick an issue area, communicate with the Green Flag Program Coordinator and a program area mentor for their region, form a Green Flag team, and have a meeting to kick off their project.
2. **Finding and Sharing Information:** In level two, students and adults assess the problems and alternatives in their issue area more extensively. Adults make a presentation to educate students with scientific information to help them understand the issue. Students make a presentation to their peers about their efforts and what needs to get done to motivate their school community to get involved.
3. **Creating a Policy Change:** In level three, students and adults must work with their schools to approve a policy or program that will improve environmental conditions at their school. Once the administration has approved the policy, participants must find resources in the community and conduct activities in the school to help the policy succeed. The Green Flag team must document that the new program or policy change has been carried out for at least three months and publicize their success. When level three is completed, the school receives the Green Flag Award for Environmental Leadership for its program area.

Green Flag Resources

The Green Flag Program has several resources to help schools succeed. Leaders of a school's Green Flag effort will have access to regional mentors as well as to the Green Flag Program Coordinator, both of whom can give advice, information, and support as needed. In addition, the program provides the following resource materials:

- **The Green Flag Start-Up Kit:** This resource provides basic information about the program, advice on how to get started, and a School Environment survey to assess what problems and resources the school has.
- **The Green Flag Detective Kit:** This resource provides information, advice and creative project ideas for students, and will come in elementary, intermediate, and high school versions.
- **The Green Flag Program Guide:** This resource will provide detailed instructions for adults on how to facilitate the project, curriculum ideas, and comprehensive information and references to assist students in the program.
- **The Issue Area Resource Packet:** This packet will give extensive information about the issue area the school chooses.

For more information visit our website at www.greenflagschools.org. Or, contact the Green Flag Program Coordinator, at email childproofing@chej.org, or call 703-237-2249 ext. 21 or 27.



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Green Flag for Kids

What is the Green Flag Program?

The Green Flag Program helps schools become healthier places, and teaches students about their school's environment. In the program, parents, teachers, and kids work together to investigate environmental issues in schools, identify problems, create solutions, and put new programs into place. When a school improves its environmental policies or programs, it wins the Green Flag Award for Environmental Leadership.

What kind of environmental issues does the Green Flag Program educate kids about, and why are they important?

The Green Flag Program helps you improve your school environment in four issue areas:

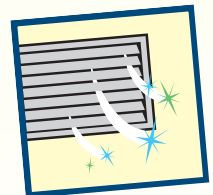
Integrated Pest Management: Pesticides and herbicides kill bothersome insects, rodents and weeds, but scientists have found that they hurt people too, especially kids. The program helps your school with "Integrated Pest Management," which keeps away the pests but is healthier for kids and the environment.



Non-Toxic Products: This program helps you learn if your school's cleaning products have toxic (poisonous) chemicals in them. It also helps you find non-toxic products that are safe for humans and the environment.



Indoor Air Quality: Many schools have bad indoor air quality. When the indoor air is polluted with mildew, dust, or mold, it can make kids sick. This part of the program will help you investigate whether your school has indoor air quality problems and help you fix them if you do.



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Everyone knows that reducing waste is a good idea but is your school doing all it can? This program helps your school reduce its waste, which helps protect our natural resources and limits the amount of garbage we put in landfills.



What do kids have to do to earn the award?

There are three levels to the Green Flag Program, and you must work with the adults in your school and community to complete each of them to win. The levels are:

1. **Getting Started:** In level one, you must complete the Green Flag School Environment Survey, to learn about your school environment and choose an issue area to work on.
2. **Share What You've Learned:** In level two, you will focus your investigation on one issue area and identify where you can make improvements and learn more. Adults will teach you about your issue, and you will make a presentation to other kids about your work.
3. **Make Your School Better:** In level three, you and the adults will work with your school to improve your school's environment. Once your school has followed your plan for environmental improvement for three months, you must publicize your accomplishments, and document your work. When you complete level three, your school receives a special Green Flag Award for Environmental Leadership for its program area!

What do you get when you win?

Here are some of the awards.

Level One: Green Flag and posters

Level Two: T-shirts and stickers

Level Three: A patch about your issue that goes on your flag, and an award ceremony

How do I get more information?

The best way to get more information is to talk to the Green Flag School Coordinator at your school. You can also look at the Web Resources for Kids sheet, and check out our website at www.greenflagschools.org.



The Green Flag Program was developed by the
Child Proofing Our Communities Campaign, which is
coordinated by the Center for Health, Environment and Justice.

www.greenflagschools.org



Helpful Hints for Green Flag School Coordinators



Overview

As a Green Flag School Coordinator, you serve a vital role in the Green Flag Program.

You help by:

1. Motivating teachers, parents, and students to get involved in the Green Flag Program.
2. Developing student, teacher, and parent leaders who will help you implement the program.
3. Referring your school community to your program mentor and to Green Flag resources.
4. Working with the Green Flag Program Coordinator to provide leadership in the school, give feedback on the program and help to improve it.

Tips

- When talking to an individual or group, spend at least one third of the time connecting with them on a personal level to build your relationship.
- Try to balance the conversation so that they talk 50% of the time.
- When the group needs advice, not information, ask them questions that help them figure out the answer; don't just tell them right away. This helps their problem solving skills.
- When talking to the group about the Green Flag Program, make sure to talk about the context of why the program is important, and how they are making a difference. This will help the group stay focused on the goals of the program and not simply on the award.
- Keep the students active in thinking through the Green Flag process, even when it would be easier for adults just to take charge of certain activities themselves.
- Delegate! Even if getting other people to do the work takes more time at the beginning, it will help more people become invested and help the program grow.
- For questions relating to your program area or to local resources, contact your mentor.

CONTACT INFORMATION

To contact the Green Flag Program Coordinator :email
Margie@chej.org or call 703-237-2249, ext. 27.

Educational Benefits of the Green Flag Program



Green Flag Overview

The Green Flag Program is a new project of the national Child Proofing Our Communities Campaign, coordinated by the Center for Health, Environment and Justice. The program's goal is to help communities make their schools healthier places, and to educate students about environmental issues. The program engages students and adults in researching questions and finding answers by educating peers and advocating positive environmental practices in schools.

With each positive step that school communities take, the Green Flag Program presents awards to the school and students, culminating in the presentation of the Green Flag Award of Environmental Leadership.

Educational Features of the Green Flag Program

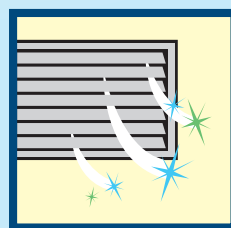
- The program's educational philosophy draws from the well known State Environmental and Educational Roundtable (SEER) report. The report described the "Environment as an Integrated Context" approaches taken by the 40 schools that were surveyed.
- The Green Flag Program provides students with an opportunity to conduct investigation through hands on exploration of issues affecting their school and community.
- It is flexibly designed to function at all primary school grades and is ideal to fulfill high-school service learning requirements.
- The program educates students about the sciences, social studies and public policy, by engagement in a process of promoting and implementing environmental activities and programs. These programs can be applied to curricula in accordance with the National Science Curriculum Standards.
- The program teaches students how to employ methodical research towards making oral and written presentations, and towards achieving a tangible goal with obvious benefits.
- The program teaches cooperative learning by encouraging a team approach to problem solving, by employing organizational skills and public speaking, and by requiring students to form a group, recruit peers, and hold meetings.
- The program provides free guidance from issue experts and educators to assist students as needed, which both enhances the students' educational opportunities in specific fields and also connects them with local community organizations.
- The program promotes an interdisciplinary educational process that can involve teachers, community members, school facility and administrative staff.

Positive Results

- The (SEER) report concluded that the learning programs described as "Environment as an Integrated Context" produce improved standardized test scores in several disciplines, reduce classroom management problems, and promote a greater engagement in learning. For more information on the report see: <http://www.seer.org/pages/GAP.html>
- The Preliminary Report of the Maryland Green School Executive Summary indicates that the program's "Green Schools" have a higher science achievement than other schools.

Poster Inside!

About the Green Flag Program



The Green Flag Program for Environmental Leadership

is a project of the Child Proofing Our Communities Campaign, which is coordinated by the Center for Health, Environment and Justice (CHEJ). Through the Green Flag Program, CHEJ extends its long tradition of community organizing assistance to individual schools. We connect local, statewide and national groups to school communities in an effort to create effective environmental programs in schools and educate those communities about advocacy and problem solving in the process.

About CHEJ

Lois Gibbs, community leader at Love Canal, founded the Center for Health, Environment and Justice (CHEJ) in 1981, as the Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste (CCHW). CHEJ believes people have the right to a clean and healthy environment, and that the most effective way to achieve change is through community organizing and empowerment.

Since 1981, CHEJ has coordinated several important national campaigns that have shaped the grassroots environmental health movement and contributed to numerous grassroots victories. Today, along with the Alliance for Safe Alternatives and the Environmental Health Alliance, CHEJ coordinates the Child Proofing Our Communities Campaign, which focuses entirely on raising awareness of children's environmental health issues and promoting better environmental policies and programs for schools. For more information see: <http://www.chej.org/>



About The Child Proofing our Communities Campaign

CHEJ launched the Child Proofing Campaign in 2000 in response to the increasing requests for assistance by community groups, parents, teachers, school administrators and activists alarmed by toxics in school buildings or on school grounds. Since that time, the campaign has coordinated the work of dozens of community, state and national groups to release three reports, testify before the Senate's Environment and Public Works committee and raise awareness of environmental health issues. The Child Proofing Campaign advocates for improved environmental laws, regulations, policies and practices to prevent schools from being built on or near contaminated sites and eliminate children's and school personnel's exposure to mold, toxic chemicals and other health hazards in schools.



The Child Proofing Campaign also responds directly to the requests of individual parents, teachers and community groups that are facing exposure to environmental health hazards in schools. We receive hundreds of calls and emails each year asking for information, support and organizing assistance. For more information see <http://www.childproofing.org/>

The Green Flag Program

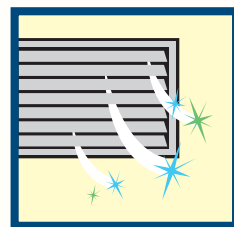
Many of those who contacted us for community organizing assistance commented that they knew nothing about the environmental hazards that affected them and their children, and they would have acted sooner, if only they had known more. In response to the need to raise awareness of environmental health issues, CHEJ Executive Director and Child Proofing Campaign founder Lois Gibbs envisioned an environmental awards program that would be proactive and positive and involve students in environmental investigation, which would turn knowledge into action. The first meetings about the Green Flag Program began in May 2002.

The program goals quickly emerged:

1. The program must involve students, parents, teachers, administrators, staff, and other school personnel working together, so that every school would have its own environmental club or "Green Flag team."
2. There must be a tiered award system, so that the program is accessible and provides incentive to achieve further and more significant goals.
3. The program must integrate environmental issues into the context of school programs and concerns.

A Green Flag committee of parents, educators, community activists and professional children's environmental health advocates was formed. It soon became five committees, one for each of the four program areas in which awards can be earned: Indoor Air Quality, use of Non-Toxic Products, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle and Integrated Pest Management, along with an Educational Review committee.

These committees are primarily responsible for designing the program criteria, guidelines, surveys and educational materials. The campaign and CHEJ is deeply indebted to their hard work and determined efforts through dozens of conference calls and requests for material reviews. (See a full list of the organizations and individuals that make up the Green Flag Committee on the following page. Links to these organizations are available on the Green Flag website: www.greenflagschools.org/



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Unfold for poster!

Green Flag Committees

Educational Review Committee

Rebecca Bell-Maryland State Dept. of Education
Angelo Bellomo-Office of Environmental Health and Safety-
Los Angeles Unified School District
Cindy Craig-Youth Count
Amanda Fisher-Teachers College at Columbia University
Steve Heacock- Maryland Governor's Green School Program
Sheila Lewis-Girl Scouts USA
Maria Minno-Florida PTA

Indoor Air Quality

Jessica Coleman and Nsedu Obot-Children's Environmental Health
Network
Cindy Craig-Youth Count
Margaret Fitzgerald-Huckleberry Hill Elementary School
Sue Hughes-Lockport, NY
Louella Hung-Illinois Healthy Schools Campaign
Jane Laping-Mothers for Clean Air
Kim Phillips-Fayetteville, AR
Jayne Mardock-National Religious Partnership for the Environment
Denise Robinette-Karpinia-HealthyLiving Foundation
Athena Thompson-Homes that Heal

Integrated Pest Management

Lyn Brabend- NYS Community IPM Program at Cornell University
Julie Dick-Safer Pest Control Project
Tom Green-IPM Institute of North America
Pam Hadad-Hurst-NY Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides
Debra Martin-Jordan Institute
Suzanne Miller-Vermont PIRG
Jane Nogaki-New Jersey Work Environment Council
Kagan Owens-Beyond Pesticides
Marty Reiner and Charles Irvine-Texans for Alternatives to Pesticides
Robina Suwol-California Safe Schools
Angela Storey-Washington Toxics Coalition
Ellen Weininger-Westchester County, NY

Non-toxic products

Lisa Arkin-Oregon Toxics Alliance
Stephen Ashkin-The Ashkin Group
Bobbi Chase-Citizens' Environmental Council
Doug Fishman-Burgundy Farm Country Day School
Liberty Goodwin-Toxics Information Project
Kathy Koumoutseas-Capitol Hill Region Cluster Group
Mark Petruzzi-Green Seal
Mary Scarpa-North Country Union High School
William F. Smith-Denver Public Schools
Robina Suwol-California Safe Schools
Amy Todisco-Consumers' Healthy Home Center

Reduce, Reuse, Recycling

Angie Barger-Association of Vermont Recyclers
Dewayne Johnson-Iowa Recycling Association
Gary Gepford-Herndon High School
Holly Kingsley-Summit Recycling Project
Annette Mills-City of Falls Church Recycling Office
Anne Morse-Winona County Recycling Association
Victoria Wiedel-Solid Waste Agency of Lake County
Christine Woods-Kids Against Pollution
Cassie Wyss-Grassroots Recycling Network

Other individuals and organizations that devoted time and energy to reviewing the program's materials:

Claire Barnett-Healthy Schools Network
Diane Ethier-Connecticut Foundation for Environmentally Safe
Schools
Ellie Goldberg-Healthy Kids: the Key to Basics
Jake Lubarsky-Thornton Middle School
Mickey Maheu-Southeast Elementary School
Freda Sherburne-Oregon Green Schools
Larry Swain-Michigan Dept. of Agriculture
Virginia Walton-Mansfield CT Recycling Coordinator

The program would also not have come into existence without the support and generosity of the following foundations whose grants fund the Green Flag Program:

Bauman Foundation
Beldon Fund
Educational Foundation of America
CS Fund/Warsh-Mott Legacy
Mitchell Kapor Foundation
Alida R. Messinger
New York Community Trust
The David H. Smith Foundation
Winslow Foundation
Wallace Genetic Foundation

The Campaign also received generous donations of award materials from Patagonia Beneficial T's Inc.

All the materials for the program were excellently and thoughtfully designed by Kieran Daly of KDaddy Design.

The Green Flag Program is coordinated by Margie Klein, Child Proofing Our Communities Campaign Organizer and Paul Ruther, Child Proofing Our Communities Campaign Coordinator. Campaign interns were Sarah Brooks and Janell Smith

The Green Flag program would not be possible without the tireless support, energy and talents of the staff of the Center for Health, Environment and Justice.

Success Stories



Is it hard to imagine making real improvements in the environmental programs at your school? Here are three schools that did amazing work, learned a lot, and created significant positive change at their schools. They are living proof that you can make a difference at your school. The Green Flag Program congratulates them on their efforts, and encourages others to follow their example.

The Green Thumbs Club

Southeast Elementary School, Mansfield Center, CT

Over the past twelve years, the Southeast Elementary School in Mansfield, CT has created a recycling program that does more than reduce waste – the program puts the waste to good use, educates the community, and develops strong student leaders.

The program began in 1991, when the school committed itself to recycling its cans, glass, and paper. In 1997, Southeast was awarded a Toyota Tapestry grant, which allowed the school to purchase a commercial composter. Southeast could now compost its food waste – as well as the food waste from two other nearby schools.

By 2000, the school formed an after-school environmental club called Green Thumbs. Third grade teacher Mickey Maheu coordinates the club with the help of 40 third and fourth graders, who lead many recycling activities at the school. Some of their activities include: composting all cafeteria food waste, and monitoring the composting and recycling buckets at lunchtime, planting gardens on the school grounds with the compost, and recycling printer and ink cartridges. They also use their knowledge to teach others, by holding events like “Zero-Waste Lunch Day,” where the club members go to each classroom to educate their peers.

In addition to reducing waste, the students have created a system to put the waste to good use. The students use the soil from the compost for their greenhouse, and raise money through an annual plant sale. By taking an active role in their school’s reduce, reuse, recycle activities, educating other students, and constantly finding ways to improve on their program, the Green Thumbs club members have learned what it takes to be leaders.

Southeast Elementary School received one of the initial Green Flag Awards this fall for its reduce, reuse and recycling efforts, and the students will be implementing the Green Flag Program in other areas to continue their role as environmental leaders. Green Thumbs is hoping to win the Green Flag award in all four areas, and if they keep up the good work, there is nothing holding them back.

Students Against Global Abuse (SAGA) Herndon High School, Herndon, VA

Students Against Global Abuse (SAGA) at Herndon High School are a literal example of how doing the right thing pays off. The students not only do an amazing job saving trees and reducing waste, but while doing so, they have managed to raise \$250,000 for college scholarships and school environmental programs.

How is SAGA so successful? The group began 13 years ago, recycling paper and cans and coming together to learn about environmental issues. Under the coordination of Spanish teacher Gary Gepford, the group grew to 60 members and the students got the idea that their recycling services were useful not just for their school, but also for the larger community. With support from the Chamber of Commerce, SAGA now recycles waste from 150 businesses and 8 nearby schools.

The scholarship money is earned almost entirely through selling recyclables. Last year alone, SAGA students estimated they recycled approximately 110 tons of office paper, mixed paper, cardboard and aluminum cans all of which was collected and sold. Last year they began recycling plants, trees and shrubs from closed businesses and maintaining a greenhouse that helps beautify their school.

"The best part of SAGA is knowing that Mother Nature is always taking care of you, and you're doing something to take care of her too," says sophomore class officer Nawrin Ahmed.

For their great work, SAGA students won the Green Flag Level Three Award for Reduce, Reuse and Recycling activities in September 2003. Not content to rest on their laurels, SAGA is continuing their work with the Green Flag Program, this time tackling indoor air quality problems at their school.

The Roach Patrol Lewis Cass Technical High, Detroit, MI

Adapted from an article published in *Safer Schools: A report by the School Pesticide Reform Coalition* by Kate Webber, Program Development Coordinator, and Betsy Dance of Local Motion, Ann Arbor, MI.

Students at Cass Tech faced serious problems with roaches, mice, and rats, and they decided to do something about it when they met Larry Swain. Swain, Pesticide Certification/Integrated Pest Management (IPM) manager with the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA), had been looking for a school to pilot his idea for an IPM program. Inspired by Swain, the students formed "The Roach Patrol," a student run IPM program to rid Cass Tech of unwanted pests.

"I wanted to prove that pesticides alone were not doing the job. I also wanted the kids to learn about environmental issues and about taking control...things they could apply in life," Swain said. "And I wanted to prove that IPM works."

Swain trained the students in pest identification and showed them how to perform inspections of the building. Students received further technical training at a non-toxic pest control company called Praxis. Praxis is the developer of the Bio Tool Kit™, a complete pest control program including training and biological controls for pests.

Five years later the IPM Team is going strong. Michael Jones, Cass Tech science teacher coordinates the Roach Patrol's efforts but pest control at Cass Tech is up to the students. For each pest problem, the Team, comprised of approximately 20 students, uses an appropriate pest management strategy from their superior bag of tricks.

"When we catch a mouse," said student Justin Watson, "we look at how it is and can tell where it came from. Then we backtrack and, more times than not, we find a hole. A mouse can get through a hole the size of a dime. For a rat it's the size of a quarter. We report it. We write a letter to the engineer to get good support."

There is nothing haphazard about the students' approach. The students keep close accounts of pest sightings, and keep maps of problem areas. They also keep track of which strategies they used where, and take the time to evaluate which strategies were most effective. With the Roach Patrol's work, teachers have come to rely on its members to come to the rescue. Mr. Jones explains that Cass Tech's program is not strictly about rats and roaches. "The students learn a higher order of thinking. They see the problems, put a plan together, analyze it and decide what to do based on scientific knowledge. It's a process they can use in the real world."

Cass Tech and the Roach Patrol received the inaugural Green Flag Level Three award for their IPM program.



How to Submit Your Documentation to The Green Flag Program

This flyer will tell you what you must do to communicate to the Green Flag Program when you have completed steps of the program, and how to reach the program if you have questions or concerns.

How to reach the Green Flag Program:

Primary Contact: Green Flag Program Coordinator
Phone: 703-237-2249, Fax: 703-237-8389
Email: childproofing@chej.org
Mailing address:
Green Flag Program
C/o CHEJ
Box 6806
Falls Church, VA 22040-6806

How to earn the Level One Award:

1. Submit the Green Flag School Environment Survey (you may complete this form online and email it back to us) with its Green Flag team application information.
2. Call the Program Coordinator, and choose a program area to focus on. Once you have chosen your issue, you will be assigned a mentor who has expertise in your issue and, ideally, who is located in your state or region.
3. Participate in a conference call with the Green Flag Program Coordinator and your mentor to develop a plan of action.

The Award

When you complete level one, you will win a Green Flag, which has a designated area where you can place a Green Flag award decal for your program area when you have fulfilled the level three criteria. You will also receive the Green Flag Detective Kit (elementary/middle school) and the Green Flag Program Guide (high school/adult mentors).

General Guidelines for Levels Two and Three:

- Send all documentation to the Green Flag Program Coordinator in the box provided in the Green Flag Program Guide (available winter, 2003-04).
- You may submit documentation any time after you have completed the previous level, but no later than one year after the described activities were completed.
- Within two weeks after the Green Flag Program receives your work, the Program Coordinator and/or your Green Flag mentor will review all the documentation and contact you for a phone interview.
- After your phone interview, you will receive your award within one month.

How to earn the Level Two Award:

- Completed Level Two Survey on your issue
- Submit documentation about your adult-to-student presentation of the issue and your student-to-student meeting.
- Submit documentation of lesson plans, assignments, class presentations, or public programs. This can include materials, such as fliers or fact sheets. Also, if you have them, submit any articles, photos, or video footage of your work. Label which Green Flag requirement you intend them to fulfill.
- Any written school policies and other written documentation required for your program area.
- MSDS sheets for products in use (For NTP teams only)

How to earn the Level Three Award:

- Submit lesson plans, assignments, class presentations, public programs, field trips, or other relevant projects. This can include materials such as flyers or fact sheets, as well as articles, photographs, and video footage documenting the activities of the Green Flag Program, if available. Label which Green Flag requirement you intend them to fulfill.

- Submit documentation of the new school policies or policy improvements that have occurred as a result of a school's involvement in the Green Flag Program.
- Call the Green Flag Program Coordinator to discuss your progress and plan an event to receive your level three award.
- Perform one activity to publicize the event and or the new program/policy change you have enacted.

Level three documentation must be submitted by March 1, 2004 to be considered for an award. Any documentation submitted after March 1st will be considered for an award for the following year. Level Three Awards will be announced by April 10th, and presented around April 22nd (Earth Day of 2004), at a time convenient for both your Green Flag team and your program mentor.



**A Project of the Child Proofing Our Communities Campaign,
coordinated by the Center for Health, Environment and Justice**

P.O. Box 6806 • Falls Church, VA 22040-6806
Phone 703.237.2249 • Email: childproofing@chej.org • www.greenflagschools.org



Sample Letter to Parents

Dear Parents:

(Your school) has recently joined the Green Flag Program for Environmental Leadership in Schools. The program's purpose is to educate students from grades K-12 on environmental issues that commonly effect schools. With each positive step that your school takes, the program gives awards to the school and students, culminating in the presentation of the Green Flag Award for Environmental Leadership in a specific program area.



The program allows students—working with parents, teachers and school administrators—the opportunity to learn about their school environment by investigating a school's programs in areas such as: indoor air quality, recycling, use of non-toxic products and pest management without use of toxic chemicals.

The Green Flag Program was created by educators, health and safety officials, children's health advocates, parents and others, through the national Child Proofing Our Communities Campaign see <http://www.childproofing.org/index.html>. The campaign has worked with many school communities since its founding in 2000 and has learned that well-run school programs in these areas have positive environmental results and can improve health conditions for the entire school community. The Green Flag Program seeks to recognize schools that have successful environmental education programs and environmental policies, and encourage other schools to follow their example through participation in the program.

The program provides students with opportunities to conduct investigation through hands on exploration of issues affecting their school and community. It also teaches students how to employ methodical research skills to develop and make oral and written presentations, which achieve a tangible goal with obvious benefits. The program teaches cooperative learning by encouraging a team approach to problem solving. Students are required to form a group, make presentations to peers and work with adults through an interdisciplinary educational process that involves teachers, community members, school facility and administrative staff.

At (your school), the program will be coordinated by (Green Flag School Coordinator's name) who will be happy to answer any questions about the program. We encourage parental and other community members' participation in the Green Flag Program. To learn more about the national Green Flag Program for Environmental Leadership, please see <http://www.greenflagschools.org/> or phone the Green Flag Program Coordinator at 703-237-2249 ext 27.

Thank you for your interest in the Green Flag Program.

Sincerely,

The School Environment Survey

What is a school environment survey? It is a survey that looks at how healthy your school's environment is. The environment includes not only nature but also everything that makes up our surroundings - the air, water, plants, things inside buildings, and even the building materials themselves. All buildings have their own environments, including schools. Though most people don't know it, school environments can be polluted. Fortunately, the causes of this pollution are often pretty easy to fix.

Through your detective work, you and your Green Flag team will be able to uncover facts about what your school does well and what your school can improve. If your school does something especially well or if it has environmental problems that you can help your school fix, you can win the Green Flag Award for Environmental Leadership. You and your Green Flag team can work with the Green Flag Program Coordinator and a mentor to pick an area to work on, find ways to make improvements, and make your school a healthier place to learn.

This survey asks you to investigate what cleaning products your school uses and how your school makes sure they are used safely. It also asks: how does your school control pests? What does your school reuse and/or recycle, and what does it throw away? You may have never thought about the air you breathe at school and what makes it clean or dirty, but there are ways the air quality can be improved. You need to find out your school's programs and policies in the four program areas of this survey, so you can choose an issue to work on, and you can only find out by asking.

So, where should you turn to get the answers? You will probably need to contact and interview your principal, facility manager, maintenance staff, teachers, and maybe even someone else hired by your school or employed by the school district. These are the people with the answers about your school's programs, and by talking to all of them you can find out the facts you need.

There are two general information sections (A and B) and four further sections addressing each of the four program areas in which your school is eligible to earn the Green Flag award (C, D, E, F). Please fill out the survey as best you can and do not hesitate to contact the Green Flag Program Coordinator if you need assistance.

Best of luck with your investigation!



A. Information about the individual Green Flag team members completing the survey:

Enter the names and titles (for example, administrator, teacher, student, parent) of those completing the survey, including the person we should contact for more information about the survey results.

1. Primary Contact Name: _____
2. Title (if applicable) _____
3. Primary Contact Phone: (_____) _____ Fax: (_____) _____
4. Email address: _____
5. Green Flag team members, including students (If you need more space, attach an additional sheet.)
 1. Name: _____ Title: _____
 2. Name: _____ Title: _____
 3. Name: _____ Title: _____
 4. Name: _____ Title: _____
 5. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 6. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 7. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 8. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 9. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 10. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 11. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 12. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 13. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 14. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 15. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 16. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 17. Name: _____ Grade: _____
 18. Name: _____ Grade: _____

B. Information about your school:

1. Name of Your School District: _____
2. Name of Your School: _____
3. School Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: (_____) _____ Fax (_____) _____
Email Address: _____
Web Site: _____
4. Is there a building or facility manager at your school? ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. What is their name/title? _____
6. Does your school or school district have a maintenance plan? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
7. Approximately how many students attend your school? _____
8. Does your school have an environmental group/club? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 8a. What is its name? _____
- 8b. What issues does the group/club work on?

10. Are there courses on environmental issues taught at your school? ☐ Yes ☐ No
11. What are the course titles and to what grades are these courses taught?

12. What environmental activities were undertaken in those courses in the past year (attach more sheets if needed)?

C. Pest Management Activities

Does your school use chemical pesticides to keep insects, rodents, and weeds out of your school and school grounds? Or does it use Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which focuses on the prevention of pest problems, through routine housekeeping and maintenance that eliminates pest attractions and habitats and prevent pest access. Schools with IPM programs never apply pesticides on a regular basis throughout entire buildings or grounds — which means that kids and teachers are healthier. These survey questions can help you determine if your school could benefit from implementing an IPM program.

Questions about Pest Management

1. Does your school or school district have a written policy that covers any areas of pest management? The policy may be called an IPM policy, a pest management policy, or it may be a part of a larger school buildings and/or grounds maintenance policy. The policy might cover issues such as who is in charge of managing pests and responding to problems, what methods are used to manage pests, which pesticides may be used and where, when and how staff and students are to be notified of pesticide applications, etc. Your school principal should be able to help you answer this question and locate a copy of the policy if it exists.

	School has policy		School district has policy	
Indoor pest management:	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
Outdoor pest management:	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
Outdoor grounds management:	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
Staff, students, parents are notified of pesticide use prior to its application:	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No

If yes to any of these, please attach a copy of the policy (ies).

2. Does your school use any pesticides in school buildings? ☐ Yes ☐ No

On school grounds? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please attach a list of pesticides used. Remember, pesticides can be insecticides, fungicides, herbicides and rodenticides. (See IPM Resource Packet available at www.greenflagschools.org for definitions of these pesticides. You may have to get this list from a central office at your school district).

3. If yes, who applies pesticides in your school or on schools grounds?

☐ Teachers ☐ Custodial staff ☐ Trained and licensed professional applicators on school staff
☐ Contractors ☐ Other (list) _____

4. What pest problems does your school have? Please place an "I" for indoor and/or an "O" for outdoor.

____ Cockroaches ____ Spiders ____ Stinging Insects ____ Ants ____ Flies ____ Moths
____ Rodents ____ Mold/Fungus ____ Head Lice ____ Aphids ____ Weeds ____ Moss
____ Plant diseases ____ Birds ____ Wood-destroying Insects (e.g., carpenter ants, termites)

Other: _____

D. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Activities

Many schools engage in reduction, reuse, and recycling activities. What does your school do? Reduction, reuse, and recycling (RRR) activities help limit waste and preserve our planet's valuable resources. There are many types of recycling activities which include sorting out newspapers, cans, and bottles and much more. Your school can also purchase recycled content materials. Your school can reduce waste by composting food scraps, and using washable tableware, cafeteria trays and mugs instead of disposable items. Your school can also reduce waste by reusing single-sided paper, or making double-sided copies. These actions improve the environment by reducing what is often considered trash and converting it to resources. Completing this survey will help you learn about your school's current RRR practices and determine what you can do to improve them and help reduce the amount of waste disposed of at your school.

Questions about Reduction, Reuse and Recycling

1. Does your school already have a recycling program? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What products (for example, glass bottles, computer printer cartridges, paper) do you recycle and how is this accomplished?

2. Does your school have waste reduction programs already in place? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please describe any waste reduction activities your school has conducted during the past year: for example, composting, waste free lunches, art projects using objects normally discarded as trash:

3. Does your school have reuse programs already in place? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please describe any reuse activities at your school (please describe the reuse — for example, using the blank side of scrap paper, reusable tableware in the cafeteria, donating items from locker clean outs, etc.):

If the school has any written policies related to recycling, reusing, and/or reducing, please attach a copy to this survey or fax it to the Green Flag program coordinator at 703-237-8389.

-
4. What company (ies) pick/s up the school's trash and/or recycling?

Trash: _____

Recycling: _____

5. Who is responsible for recycling at your school and what does that person do?

School maintenance or facility staff: _____

Recycling coordinator: (Is this person a volunteer? What else do they do?): _____

Teachers: _____

Students: _____

Parents or other volunteers: _____

E. Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Activities

How can you learn more about the air you breathe? Everyone knows the air can be wet or dry. It can also be clean or dirty. How does your school keep the air you breathe fresh and clean? By looking at things that pollute your school's air in your neighborhood and in your school you can learn how to prevent some of those things from happening and ensure fresh, clean air.

The next series of survey questions will help you determine what your school is doing or could do better to improve the air you breathe at school. If there are problems, your school can receive a Green Flag award for implementing the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Tools for Schools program, which can help your school improve indoor air quality with activities that everyone at the school can participate in.

Questions about Indoor Air Quality

Water Damage

1. Does your school have any unusual, stale, or unpleasant odors? Such odors could be signs of mold or mildew. Are there any places where you hear the sound of dripping water? This could be a sign of water damage, which can lead to mold or mildew. Walk through your entire school and summarize your investigation.

- 1a. Do any of the following areas show signs of water damage/moisture problems, including mold growth? (Are they wet to the touch or brownish in color?)

Floor tiles ____ Ceiling tiles ____ Walls ____ Carpets ____ By outside exits ____ Around windows ____

Other: _____

2. Fresh Air

How does each classroom get fresh air? List possible sources and if they are different for different classrooms, these should include operable windows and air vents:

3. Ventilation

Do all vents (ceiling, wall, mounted units) appear clean and unblocked? ☐ Yes ☐ No
List places where air vents are blocked and what is blocking them.

4. Health Check

Ask the school nurse which health problems from the following list students most commonly report.

Asthma _____

Allergies _____

Headaches _____

Other _____

Have any particular health problems been noticed recently (please provide general information if exact figures are not readily available)?

5. EPA's Tools for School

Does your school currently use or has it ever used the EPA's Tools for Schools Indoor Air Quality program or done any type of school environmental audit? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, how long has your school been doing the program? _____

If you no longer maintain the program, when and why did you stop?

F. Non-toxic Product Activities

Many cleaning products used by schools are called "green" products because they are less dangerous to human health and cause less damage to the natural environment. "Green" products are non-toxic, which means they are not poisonous and don't harm humans, animals or the environment. Does your school use non-toxic products? Does your school have safe-use policies? Who buys the cleaning products at your school?

How do you find out? This part of the survey will help you answer these questions. All products that clean your school have to be used carefully. You can learn about the ingredients in these products and how they should be used properly by reading the product labels and Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) required by the Occupational Safety and Health Act. Finding out more information about these products helps protect us from the toxic chemicals they contain and their improper use.

Questions about Cleaning and Maintenance Products Used at Your School

1. Does your school have a policy prohibiting or limiting the use of products containing toxic ingredients, such as hazardous (dangerous) chemicals, pesticides, etc? Does that policy include the purchasing of environmentally preferable or "green" products? (Please fax or attach the policy) ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. If so, what products are included in the policy? _____

3. Does your school keep Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) on file for all products containing chemicals, for example cleaning products, paints and pesticides? See school building manager or custodian.
☐ Yes ☐ No Please list products for which there are MSDS sheets: (fax or attach)

For information on what a Material Safety Data Sheets is and what they are used for see:

- MSDS.com is a site produced by the Interactive Learning Paradigms, Incorporated:
<http://www.ilpi.com/msds/faq/parta.html#whatis>
- University of Vermont Safety Information Resources has a website that allows you to search for MSDS by manufacturers: <http://siri.uvm.edu/>

- 3a. If your school uses retail cleaning products (like the ones your family buys at the store) that do not require an MSDS, please indicate here. ☐

4. Many products, especially those used in cleaning, contain dangerous chemicals. What, if any, health and safety precautions do your school personnel take when using such products?

-
- 4a. Are these safety precautions written down in the form of guidelines or a policy? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Are they available to teachers and parents for review? ☐ Yes ☐ No (If so, please submit a copy.)

5. Who does your school's purchasing of cleaning and maintenance products? _____

Are products purchased through a central source, such as the school district, or bought only by someone in your school?



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