

How much paper can McKinley Elementary students recycle?

By Kristina Hernandez, Redlands Daily Facts

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(REDLANDS) Students at McKinley Elementary are doing their part to help Mother Earth.

On Friday, the campus kicked off its 100 percent paper recycling program to help save trees by reducing the amount of paper that goes into landfills. The school's leadership group, which gives back to the community through various endeavors, spearheaded the project.

"We think this is important because trees help us grow, and we will be recycling and saving Earth," said Julia Tolstova, 11, a McKinley fifth-grader and student leader.

Leadership students researched the importance of recycling in preparation for Friday's program launch, the day before Earth Day today. Students visited every McKinley classroom to present their research about what can and can't be recycled.

Recyclable items such as paper with no staples and cardboard can be placed in blue-colored bins in each classroom. Once a week, student leaders will collect the tubs and waste for recycling.

According to Julia, the project had been in the works since she was a student in Kelly Napoletano's third-grade class. Napoletano is one of the advisers to the fifth-grade leadership group.

"Mrs. Napoletano thought this year would work because the students in her class then are now in student leadership," Julia said. "And if people aren't recycling it's really bad because they are using so many trees. And if we keep wasting paper there will be no more trees and animals will die."

According to the students, recycling one ton of paper can save 17 trees, 7,000 gallons of water, two barrels of oil and 4,000 kilowatts of electricity, or enough energy to power one home for five months. Through the school's recycling effort, the students hope recyclables will be recycled into new paper products, Napoletano said.

“This is really important,” she said. “And I think it’s every teacher’s responsibility to make their kids aware of what’s going on in our global environment and give them these problem-solving tools, so they can help save the planet when they are older.”

In preparation for the program, student leaders created posters and hung them around campus, and also wrote letters to President Donald Trump to share their concerns and ask for ways to help reverse damage to the planet, Napoletano said.

“The coolest part about this is saving the Earth,” said Zoey Lushinsky, 10.