



# SERT Flash

School Energy and Recycling Team



## Keep it Green; Protect your Blue



Recycling monitors at Bethesda Elementary School remind and assist.

Do the recycling bins in your cafeteria get contaminated with straws, spoons, and other non-recyclables at lunchtime? The staff and students at Bethesda Elementary School are trying to prevent contamination in their recycling bins by assigning “recycling monitors” at each bin. Monitors are trained on what can and cannot be placed in their bin and to act accordingly.

While at these stations, monitors kindly assist and remind their classmates, advising them where they need to dispose of their items (paper bin, commingled bin, or trash can). Not only do the monitors provide recycling guidance and education, they “get their hands dirty” and make sure their bins are “clean.” Sometimes classmates forget to take their straws out of their drinks or remove their spoons from the yogurt cups, so the monitors will take them out and place them in the trash can. The pictures above demonstrate different monitors removing different items from their respective bins.

With this monitoring process, staff and students at Bethesda Elementary School are providing an atmosphere of learning and leading. By promoting recycling awareness, students gain a sense of accomplishment by taking on this responsibility. This is where leadership begins!

By having their bins monitored, staff and students at Bethesda Elementary School increase their recycling rates each month. These monitors exemplify sustainable practices—implementing environmental, social, and economic strategies to address our increasing solid waste concerns. The SERT office would like to thank students and staff at Bethesda Elementary School for their consistent recycling efforts.

“You can’t hide that Lion pride!”

Do you have a “SERT Flash” you would like to share regarding your SERT efforts? Please submit a photograph and paragraph about your team and you, too, can be featured in a future FLASH!

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## Broad Acres Elementary School 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Recycling Essay Contest



(L-R) Mr. Luis San Sebastian, AP; Douglas Enriquez, 5<sup>th</sup> grade student

Broad Acres Elementary School has just held their Fourth Annual Recycling Essay Contest and is pleased to announce that they received over 200 entries this year! Teachers make use of this essay contest to assist students in advancing their persuasive writing skills and often hold writing workshops with large groups of students during lunch/recess to help them with this process. The school wide annual essay contest is open to all students from kindergarten through fifth grade. Each year it has become more and more popular and demonstrates an increasing awareness of the importance of recycling. According to Assistant Principal, Mr. Luis San Sebastian, “The students get very excited to get their thoughts about recycling down on paper for this contest.

The 2011 first place winner, fifth grade student, Douglas Enriquez, wrote his winning essay to the question “*Why is Recycling Important to Me?*” In his essay, Douglas wrote, “Recycling saves space.....the less space we have the less oxygen we have because trees produce oxygen so they cut down trees to make space”, and “About 850,000,000 trees are cut down a year! So if we don’t recycle all that paper that we cut down the more we cut the existence of humankind.”

SERT would like to congratulate all of the students and staff at Broad Acres Elementary School for promoting recycling through this successful essay contest.” The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners all receive gift cards from a local vendor purchased with SERT funds that Broad Acres Elementary School has won.

Keep up the good work!!

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## Recycling in Action Cedar Grove Elementary School



Cedar Grove Elementary School has a School Energy & Recycling Team (SERT) team of students actively engaged in recycling, TerraCycling<sup>1</sup>, and energy conservation.

Each day at lunch students pass clearly marked containers from table to table to collect the different packaging items that are recycled through TerraCycling. The assigned team collects the containers with the help of a parent volunteer and places them on a cart for transport to the collection bins in the hallway next to the lunch room. Next, the sorting begins where the team separates the items and places them into clearly marked large bins for storage until they are shipped for processing.

At the same time another coordinated team of students moves throughout the school collecting the standard recycling items such as cans, bottles, and paper. These items are collected in blue rolling cans that students can easily manage down the halls while stopping at each classroom to collect the recyclables.

A third team is assigned to collect data on the lights that have been turned off in each unoccupied room. A large display in the hall shares information with the school on their progress and their mission. Cedar Grove Elementary School shows just how easy it is to meet the mission of SERT to reduce energy consumption and increase recycling rates.

<sup>1</sup> TerraCycles is a company whose goal is to eliminate the idea of waste by partnering with schools to create a collection program for non-recyclable material. <http://www.terracycle.net/>

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Captain James E. Daly, Jr Elementary School SERT Green Team

How many SERT Green Team students does it take to fill the stage at Captain James E. Daly, Jr. Elementary School?

There are sixty students on the SERT Green Team who work diligently with Mrs. Priscilla Borchardt, SERT leader and school counselor, to conserve resources and recycle properly – one of our largest teams. Mrs. Borchardt also communicates consistently with the SERT office to ask questions, bring new opportunities, and acquire resources to keep the green team actively engaged while fostering a culture of conservation in various ways:

- Students and staff participated in Annual Walk-to-School day, on Wednesday, October 5, 2011, with our new Superintendent, Dr. Starr, further reducing our carbon footprint one step at a time.
- Creating individual posters with a peer-to-peer message about energy conservation and recycling.
- Green team collection of school recycling: student recyclers don aprons with pockets, go from class to class and empty classroom recycling bins, and pull out non-recyclables (thus the pockets!). They leave messages for the class either telling them they are doing a good job, or they need to improve. They turn off lights in empty rooms.
- Promoting ideas such as font changes to reduce the use of printer toner.
- Quarterly recycling team meetings include lessons in conservation of energy and resources, issues with landfills, reuse of items, etc.
- Learning what new things can be recycled (such as juice boxes, foil juice pouches, and working with lunch room aides and building service to implement the program).
- Annual field trip to the Montgomery County Recycling Center

Your schools team, no matter what size, makes a difference each and every day. SERT would like to thank the team at Captain James Daly Elementary School for their efforts to conserve resources and make wise choices.

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# SERT Flash

School Energy and Recycling Team



## Diamond Elementary School reuses paper...



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle! It's all happening at Diamond Elementary School. The Student Government Association (SGA) at Diamond Elementary School keeps recycling on the minds of students and staff when planning events. During the month of January, the SGA sponsored an event called "The Snowman Challenge." Ms. Robin Strauss, counselor and green team leader, invited Mr. John Meyer, SERT recycling technician, to visit the school during the event. According to Mr. Meyer, the contents of paper recycling bins from the school were emptied on the floor and the students picked out paper for the project. The students were pleased to see that the paper recycling bins were contamination free, making it easier to pick out paper for their project. Each class created a snowman for the school's Winter Wonderland Collage made entirely by reusing paper from the recycling bins.

This project reinforced the importance of conservation and demonstrated how each of our actions can help to preserve the earth's natural resources, while at the same time, reducing the cost of purchasing new paper.

This event was a huge success. The SGA's objective of making it fun and earth friendly is evidenced by the picture above with members of the SGA standing proudly in front of the school's Winter Wonderland Collage.

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# SERT Flash

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## Natural Lighting Saves Energy!



Gaithersburg Elementary School:  
(L-R) Mr. Ruthven Cooper, Building Service Manager; Ms. Niki Hazel, Principal; Mr. Joseph Rowe, Assistant Principal

### Did you know that approximately one third of a buildings energy use comes from lighting?

Gaithersburg Elementary School saves energy by leaving hallway lighting off on sunny days! Taking advantage of natural day lighting from windows and existing emergency lighting provides enough illumination to meet the needs of the students and teachers at Gaithersburg Elementary School. These efforts are recognized and supported by their team including Principal, Ms. Niki Hazel, Assistant Principal, Mr. Joseph Rowe, and Building Service Manager, Mr. Ruthven Cooper. When visiting the school, SERT notices that on most days hallway lighting remains off. We appreciate Mr. Cooper who has been following this strategy for years which keeps their energy use down. Remember the best way to conserve is not to use.

Taking advantage of natural day lighting and assessing needs along with preferences allows most schools to adjust their lighting use. Mr. Dwight Brown, building service manager, at Sally K. Ride Elementary School practices lighting conservation strategies too.

Consider the lighting needs in your school while taking advantage of natural daylight. SERT can provide light meters for students and staff to explore the building. Adjusting lighting levels by measuring foot candles with these meters can save energy and be a fun educational activity for all who are involved.



Other opportunities for saving energy through lighting manipulation can be taken advantage of by simply delaying the time the lights are turned on in the morning.

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## Light Switch Signage Saves Energy!



Glenallan Elementary School  
Gator Green Team Students Turning Off the Lights

Did you know that approximately one-third of school buildings electricity use comes from lighting?

Encouraging students and staff to turn off lights in unoccupied rooms helps conserve energy and resources that can be redirected to educational initiatives. One way to encourage turning off the lights is to post student-created light switch covers.

The Glenallan Elementary School SERT/Green Team saves a significant amount of electricity through encouraging energy-aware behavior by posting handmade light switch covers. These colorful covers are fun for students to make and also remind others to turn off the lights when leaving the room. Remember, turning the overhead lights off even for a few seconds saves energy.

Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) has almost 8,000 classrooms. If classroom lights are left on accidentally for two hours each academic day this could cost the school system an average of \$400,000 per year. Imagine how much we can save if we each do our part to turn off the lights when they are not needed.

Making switch plate covers is a fun and rewarding activity for the SERT/Green Team. It is something that can be done during an indoor recess or even at home. Once completed, SERT recommends laminating the switch plate signage so it can be used more than one year.

If your SERT Team would prefer to post a readymade sign or use the SERT template to make your own, please visit the SERT [link](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/facilities/greenschoolsfocus/pdf/sertswitchcover.pdf) below and get creative.

SERT would like to thank the Glenallan ES SERT Team, Principal Miss. Ronnie Fields, Mr. Ronald Fox, Ms. Gloria Ralph, Mrs. Barbara Templin, and the Gator Green Team students for sharing their creative energy saving ideas.

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## Bulletin Boards Sharing Recycling & Energy Messages



Goshen Elementary School (Main Hall)

Students, staff, and school communities learn more about recycling and energy conservation through viewing creative bulletin board displays like the one pictured above at Goshen Elementary School. Way to go Grizzlies!

Take advantage of bulletin boards and turn them into three dimensional teaching tools. Creative displays can help promote a culture of conservation within the school and the local community. Everyone walking down the main hall at Goshen Elementary School benefit from the display showing items that need to be separated into recycling bins and/or need to be placed in the trash at school and at home. This clever artistic board also shares energy conservation tips and SERT contest information.

Please visit the [SERT web site](#) to view your school's energy and recycling data and start a bulletin board with your SERT data charts. Remember to download [Watt's Up?](#) poster contest information so your student's artwork can be displayed on bulletin boards throughout the county!

SERT is pleased to recognize Goshen Elementary School in this month's *Flash* for sharing the message in a creative way.

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## Recycling Rangers at Olney Elementary School Are Making Recycling Fun and Educational!



The Recycling Rangers from Olney Elementary School

How does Olney Elementary School (ES) integrate recycling into their day?

Ms. Heritage and her fourth grade class at Olney ES have developed a quick and efficient method for responsible recycling that gives instant feedback to other classrooms on how well they are doing while learning about the multiple benefits of recycling. Recycling Rangers are assigned a classroom to retrieve the paper recycle container. If there is contamination in the recycle container, the Recycle Ranger writes out a ticket indicating the type of contamination. If everything is perfect, the classroom gets an award ticket. They do this twice a week, and it only takes about 20 minutes!

On the day SERT was visiting Olney ES, only six tickets for contamination were passed out; and the contaminated materials were removed before reaching the recycling dumpster. The Recycling Rangers are busy creating a living bulletin board displaying data that reflects perfect recycling scores. This awareness activity inspires the school population to do a great job. After the recycling data is documented on the bulletin board it is added to a recycling performance matrix and distributed to all staff electronically avoiding paper waste too!

Ms. Heritage is teaching the students how they can be a positive force to help the environment, about the connections between human behavior and the environment, and math calculations and concepts.

If you would like to learn how you can set up a program similar to the Olney ES Recycle Rangers please contact the SERT Recycling office at [recycling@mcpsmd.org](mailto:recycling@mcpsmd.org)

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## Reduce-Reuse-Recycle



Mr. Jatin Patel, building service manager at Kensington Parkwood Elementary School receiving repurposed recycling bins.

Reduce, reuse or recycle! In an effort to conserve resources, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) prefers to reuse before recycling to demonstrate our commitment to the environment and our students.

Did you know that MCPS crews go to salvage items from schools which are slotted for demolition before each modernization project so they can be reused? Items in good working condition such as HVAC systems, backup generators, plumbing fixtures, electrical panels, circuit breakers, furniture, lamps, etc. are removed from school buildings prior to demolition to be reused in other MCPS schools.

The SERT office collects all reusable recycling bins from these schools and redistributes them to schools which are in need of additional recycling infrastructure. During the month of December 2011, the SERT office collected reusable recycling bins from Beverly Farms Elementary School, Glenallan Elementary School, and Weller Road Elementary School which were being relocated to holding centers due to modernization projects. Clarksburg High School (HS), Thomas Edison HS of Technology, Wheaton HS, Kensington Parkwood Elementary School (ES), Meadow Hall ES, Judith A. Resnik ES, and Viers Mill ES were among the recipients of the repurposed recycling bins to add to their existing infrastructure. Saving resources by reusing...

Please contact the SERT office at 240-314-1090 or place an order in MAXIMO if your school is in need of recycling bins.

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## **Innovative Thinking Inspires New Recycling Practices at Whetstone Elementary School**

Have you ever thought “It’s a shame to throw this out?”

Whetstone Elementary School started a unique pilot program in Montgomery County Public Schools. Susan Still, administrative secretary, realized that the cardboard copy plus boxes were being broken down and recycled after just one use. Her thinking was more along the lines of “Why can’t we reuse these boxes?” Instead of just thinking, Ms. Still took action.

Ms. Still created a pilot program with Department of Materials Management/Copy Plus. The copy plus boxes are collapsed, placed in the pony, and returned to the print shop for reuse. This innovation has economic and environmental benefits and models collaborative efforts that affect change and help make our system environmentally friendly, by reducing our use and extending the life of these useful boxes. The reuse part of the recycling equation is often overlooked. Remember to think before you recycle your boxes, maybe they can be reused.

Thank you.

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## “Take Me Out to Travilah Elementary School”



### **Mrs. Carol Knoblach, 4<sup>th</sup> grade Teacher and courtyard at Travilah Elementary School**

It's the bottom of the ninth inning; score is tied; two outs; bases are loaded; the count is 3 balls/ 2 strikes! Carol Knoblach is at the plate! The pitcher throws a low fast ball. “Pow” Carol Knoblach hits it out of the park!

Okay-okay, I'm not talking about baseball but, Carol Knoblach does knock it out of the park in terms of energy conservation and recycling at Travilah ES. Mrs. Knoblach is a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and a true “Greenie” at heart.

Mrs. Knoblach has 22 students on her SERT team. They meet as a group once a month and they do a variety of green activities in between their meetings like:

- collecting all the recycling from the building weekly
- collecting composting from lunch and using the compost for their organic flower bed
- implementing “No Trash Friday” in the cafeteria
- leaving friendly reminders to staff when lights are left on in classrooms and work rooms
- collecting all the aluminum foil covers from lunch trays for recycling

Mrs. Knoblach takes going “Green” to a whole new level. She is currently working on getting Travilah ES recertified as a” Maryland Green School.” One of her special projects included applying for a grant to install a pond in the courtyard.

Thank you Mrs. Knoblach for leading the “green” initiatives at Travilah Elementary School.

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## Awarding “Good Light Bulb” Behavior at Sally Ride Elementary School



(L-R) Ms. Katherine LoCurto, staff, Christman Schafer, 5<sup>th</sup> grade student, Ms. Renee Parks, staff

The School Energy & Recycling Team (SERT) Team at Sally Ride Elementary School is excited to continue their “Light Bulb Award” incentive program this school year to help save energy at their school. The Sally Ride ES students use their motto, “Eagles Recycle!” to promote outstanding resource conservation behavior among the students and staff.

The student members of the SERT team monitor the schools energy use by circulating through the building every day, checking on unoccupied rooms to make sure their classroom lights are off. If the students find an empty classroom with the lights off, they tape a laminated picture of a light bulb to the door. On Thursday afternoons, the students collect the light bulbs and record the room numbers on a spread sheet. The “Light Bulb Award” winners are announced, by 5<sup>th</sup> grade student, Christman Schafer, weekly and monthly on the morning TV program, “Eagles on the Air”. The winning classrooms also get an “Outstanding Light Bulb Award Winner” laminated light bulb picture to display in their classroom. This program is making a difference as Sally Ride ES is often awarded by the SERT Program for their energy savings.

The SERT Program wants to thank Christman Schafer, for stepping up and promoting this great program, and the entire SERT Team at Sally Ride ES, for being excellent energy conservation ambassadors and role models. At Sally Ride ES, students make the difference.

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## Olney ES Recycling Tee Shirt Contest

Winner



Student Voting



Entry Bulletin Board

**O**lney Elementary School 4th graders are committed to raising awareness about recycling. This Fall, fourth grade teacher, Carrie Heritage, with the support of her administration, building service staff, parents and students held a design contest for a recycling logo to appear on tee-shirts. Over half of Olney Elementary School fourth grade students participated. The whole student body voted for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners. The first place winner's design will appear on the 2013-14 Olney Elementary School Recycle Ranger tee-shirts. SERT celebrates efforts such as this contest to promote natural resource conservation and sustainability.

### MCPS SERT Program

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45 W. Gude Drive  
Suite 4000  
Rockville, MD 20850  
240-314-1090  
301-279-3005, fax

January, 2014  
Olney Elementary School



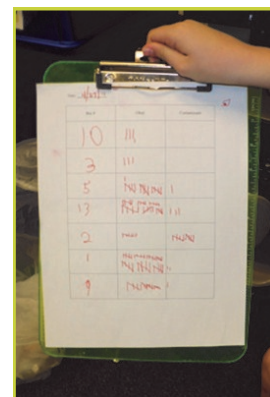
# SERT FLASH

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## Keeping it Green by Keeping it Clean – Ashburton Green Team Strives for Perfection

**E**nvironmental stewardship is not a new initiative at Ashburton Elementary School. Successfully certified as a MD Green School in 2010, and successfully recertified in 2014, the Green Team at Ashburton Elementary School constantly finds different ways to improve their sustainability efforts year after year.

The focus for this year’s Green Team is to reduce the contamination in their centralized recycling stations. To help build awareness of this problem, the Green Team collects weekly data on the number of recyclables and contaminants in the recycling bins throughout the school. Students analyze the data and post graphs by each bin to show how many recyclables and contaminants were found in specific bins. The Green Team found that some bins were more likely to be contaminated than others, so increased signage and awareness were brought to these locations.



By posting the graphs weekly, each student and staff member at Ashburton Elementary School is given an update on their progress as a school, bin by bin. SERT would like to say “thank you” to the Green Team at Ashburton Elementary School for being great recyclers and environmental stewards.



### MCPS SERT Program

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January, 2015

Ashburton Elementary School



# SERT FLASH

School Energy and Recycling Team

## Bells Mill ES hosts their Third Annual Bin Decorating Contest

**I**f you have ever walked the hallways of Bells Mill Elementary School, you would instantly realize that they take recycling very seriously. There are posters, bins, and labels throughout the building. Although recycling is an everyday routine for the Bells Mill Bears, they get extremely excited for the recycling contest that has taken place on Earth Day the past three years.



On Earth Day, April 22nd, every class designed and decorated their classroom recycling bins with recycled or reused materials. Each bin has a theme: some are decorated as minions from the movie "Despicable Me" while others are dressed up as a bear family .



Once the bins are designed and created, each class puts their bin in the hallway. Each class is allowed to take a tour of the school and admire the great artwork by their peers and classmates. A vote is taken and the winner is announced by the end of the day!

When asked how this contest aligns with Curriculum 2.0, SERT Team Leader and 2nd Grade Teacher, Lindsay Wilkes says, "This contest is completely student driven. They collect their materials throughout the month to use toward creating their bin. They problem solve and collaborate as they work together to plan and create! Often this takes trial and error – and a lot of creativity!" Unique and creative ideas like this help raise awareness on resource conservation and is one of the many reasons why Bells Mill ES became a 2014 Maryland Green School. Great job Bears!



### MCPS SERT Program

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Bells Mill ES