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A newsletter published by
the School Energy and
Recycling Team

SERT Spotlight

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

THE SCHOOL ENERGY AND RECYCLING TEAM (SERT)

program monitors the energy use and recycling participation of all Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) on a regular basis. Keeping track of our energy use and recycling performance and providing this information to schools increases awareness about the importance of conservation. [This data](#) helps schools analyze their individual school performance and, when necessary, take corrective actions to maximize conservation.

All MCPS schools are required to participate in the SERT program and to have staff who lead the school-based SERT teams. Through the continuous efforts of our students and staff, MCPS can significantly reduce energy use and increase recycling. Some schools take the challenge to conserve very seriously and create their own initiatives to raise awareness and promote conservation. These schools **LEAD BY EXAMPLE**, showing others how to effectively promote and practice environmental stewardship.

Our middle and high schools are invited to participate in the **LEAD BY EXAMPLE** campaign by creating a model resource conservation plan that includes energy conservation and responsible recycling initiatives. Entries can include energy calculations, behavioral strategies, energy-efficiency projects, awareness campaigns, presentations to the staff and community, posters and videos created by students, social media strategies, etc.

Submissions are due on March 22, 2019 and will be judged on their clarity and content; opportunities for leadership and teamwork; community involvement; usefulness, and how activities raise conservation awareness. SERT awards will be granted to the winning middle and high school, and all participants will receive certificates of participation. Students may earn SSL hours for activities.

To receive support, guidance, and/or an in-school visit, contact the SERT program by phone (240-314-1090) or email (SERT@mcpsmd.org). Find more [information](#), [entry forms](#), and a helpful [matrix](#) on our website. 🌱



Think Globally, Act Locally

A World Problem with a SERT Solution

BY JIM STUFFT
SERT FACILITATOR

I OFTEN SEE THE “Think Globally, Act Locally” bumper sticker. It always makes me think about the many things I can do in my daily life to make a difference in the world. It also makes me think about our school-based SERT teams, and how they can act locally with regard to saving energy, conserving water, and actively recycling to help contribute to solving a global problem. The impact of these actions can have a local and global effect – they can, in fact, have a butterfly effect.

The butterfly effect is defined as the practical realization that you have to start somewhere, even in small steps. As Edward N. Lorenz discovered in [his research](#), a very small change in initial conditions can create a significantly different outcome. The little changes we make in our small neighborhoods can have a widespread effect on the world.

The “think globally, act locally” concept has two equally important parts.

PART 1: THINK GLOBALLY

In the first part, have your students research and discuss the global impacts of wasted energy, excess solid waste, and wasted water as a world problem. How do the earth, the environment, the local community, our schools, and individuals benefit from natural resource conservation and recycling? How would it make a difference in the world if everyone did their part to conserve locally? Get students more involved by having them record the discussion in writing or create display boards and posters.

PART 2: ACT LOCALLY

I believe that acting locally is both necessary and pragmatic. In the second part, students can create an actionable item – something they can do within their school or local community. Using the [SERT website](#) and other resources, students can find ways to save energy, conserve water, and increase recycling participation within their local school and community. Increase student involvement by documenting the action plan, then add that plan to your global display.

So, what can you do to help solve the ecological problems of the world? You can do a lot! And you start by turning off overhead lights and using natural or task lighting when possible; unplugging unused electronics; reducing water use; and recycling everything you can. You can rest assured that the actions you take here in Montgomery County will indeed have a beautiful butterfly effect on the rest of the world. 🌱



#ButterflyEffect

What’s your school doing to conserve natural resources?

How are you raising awareness about the importance of recycling?

Send an email to SERT@mcpsmd.org or tag [@MCPSsert](https://twitter.com/MCPSsert) in a tweet.

We’d love to know how your students and staff are thinking globally and acting locally!

#SERTshutdown

Here’s a simple local action:

Complete the [shutdown checklist](#) for the upcoming long MLK holiday weekend!



SERT Restructures its Recycling Awards

STARTING WITH THE 2009-2010 SCHOOL YEAR, SERT began recognizing schools that had the best overall recycling performance for the school year by giving an annual award. In an effort to continuously improve in recognizing schools for their top recycling performance, we found that the recycling award structure had room for improvement. Over the past year, SERT has been working diligently to revamp the recycling awards so that more schools can be incentivized to improve their performance and be recognized for their remarkable recycling efforts.

The annual award is now a thing of the past. Instead, SERT will give recycling awards on a quarterly basis (like the energy awards). This gives schools more opportunities to earn an award by implementing changes that will improve their school’s recycling program. Awards will be given to the 25 schools (15 elementary, 5 middle, and 5 high) with the highest pounds per person (PPP) recycling rates for the first three quarters of the school year. The funds for these awards will be deposited into the IAF accounts of the winning schools.

The annual [Got Paper? contest](#), which runs throughout June, has been very successful in capturing the end-of-the-school-year paper recyclables. This contest will continue and be enhanced. Beginning this summer, we’re adding a second *Got Paper?* contest which will run throughout August, giving schools an added incentive for starting the school year right by capturing the paper recyclables that are generated before the beginning of the school year. Funds for the two recycling contests will be deposited into the building services custodial supplies accounts of the winning schools.

For the first quarter of the 2018–2019 school year (September–November), the average PPP for elementary schools was 5.76, middle schools achieved

an average of 4.19 pounds per person, and high schools managed 2.77 PPP. The SERT program is pleased to announce that the 25 schools listed have earned awards for recycling remarkably well during the first quarter of this school year. We thank all of the students and staff for their outstanding recycling efforts throughout the quarter, and applaud the evidence of their commitment to conservation and sustainability.

Make sure to keep track your recycling data. School charts are typically updated on our [website](#) by the 10th day of each month. If your school didn’t earn an award for the first quarter, don’t despair—there’s time to improve your recycling efforts and try to win in the second quarter! If you need help with your recycling program, contact SERT. We’re here to make sure your recycling efforts are successful. 🌱

TOP 15 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:

- Belmont Elementary School
- Cold Spring Elementary School
- Damascus Elementary School
- Germantown Elementary School
- Glen Haven Elementary School
- Highland View Elementary School
- Laytonsville Elementary School
- Monocacy Elementary School
- North Chevy Chase Elementary School
- Oak View Elementary School
- New Hampshire Est. Elementary School
- Sligo Creek Elementary School
- Travilah Elementary School
- Westbrook Elementary School
- Wood Acres Elementary School

TOP 5 MIDDLE SCHOOLS:

- Gaithersburg Middle School
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School
- Redland Middle School
- Rocky Hill Middle School
- Westland Middle School

TOP 5 HIGH SCHOOLS:

- Albert Einstein High School
- Damascus High School
- Northwood High School
- Quince Orchard High School
- Seneca Valley High School



POUNDS PER PERSON

PPP = weight of paper + weight of commingled ÷ total students and staff

New and in the News

THE SERT PROGRAM is happy to announce that Mr. Giancarlo Rodriguez has joined our team as the SERT facilitator for schools in the Bethesda Depot area. Before joining SERT on December 19, Giancarlo served as the Building Services Training Specialist with the Division of School Plant Operations. Prior to that, he was the Building Service Manager at Watkins Mill High School and Takoma Park Middle School. Giancarlo played a key role in actively promoting energy conservation and improving recycling participation in both schools. We look forward to Giancarlo's contributions as he works to strengthen the SERT program in the specific schools assigned to him and throughout MCPS as a whole.



GIANCARLO RODRIGUEZ
SERT FACILITATOR



Visit My Green Montgomery's [website](#) to read the story about Team Green Tea's fight against food waste in MCPS!

SERT'S RECYCLING DUO, John Meyer and Yusuf Umar, recently had a very informative meeting with *Team Green Tea*, a trio of Roberto Clemente Middle School students who want to reduce food waste. They've implemented a composting program at Clarksburg Elementary School and are very excited about helping to make a dent in Montgomery County's solid waste. [Read their story online.](#)

Although MCPS doesn't currently have a systemwide composting program, from time to time some schools do very small composting projects for educational purposes. In those instances, the details and scope of the project is determined and managed by the schools.

The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection ([DEP](#)) estimates that approximately 147,000 tons of food waste was generated countywide in 2015. Motivated and environmentally-conscious students like Angelina, Shrusti, and Adviki will certainly help Montgomery County reach its goal of reducing solid waste. 

This newsletter is produced by the School Energy and Recycling Team (SERT) program and distributed to school-based SERT leaders and teams, building service personnel, and others who are interested in conservation and sustainability.

As part of the [Montgomery County Public Schools](#) Department of Facilities Management, the SERT program provides opportunities for all schools to participate and receive incentives and recognition for their energy conservation and recycling efforts.

The SERT program supports a balanced environment for the integration of all students to work together in a culturally diverse environment. Our goal is to provide the resources, support, and vision of the future for a successful conservation program at each school. Promoting the connections between human behavior and its impact on the environment reinforces our culture of conservation and increases participation in our mission to conserve resources and recycle actively.



SERT PROGRAM

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