



Bellflower Unified School District

Media Release

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Bellflower Unified Elementary School Named a Finalist in Environmental Contest

BELLFLOWER – Bellflower Unified’s Esther Lindstrom Elementary has been named a finalist in the statewide Trash Free Lunch Challenge, winning a \$750 science grant for reducing waste and boosting recycling.

The contest is run by Grades of Green, an environmental education nonprofit that shows students how to recycle, reuse and reduce lunchtime waste. Lindstrom learned of the award on Tuesday during a visit by judges who were considering the school for a further \$250 award as grand prize winner.

“We are very happy with these results and know we will continue to grow,” Principal Lisa Luna said. “I’m extraordinarily proud of our students, who really drove this effort over the last four months.”

Before Esther Lindstrom began its effort in mid-November, the 868-student school was producing 18 to 20 bags of trash a day from its six lunch periods, including items that could be recycled or reused.

Now, led by student council members, students sort through the waste to glean such recyclables as milk cartons, water bottles and food packaging. Being selected as a sorter is a prize students earn for classroom excellence and good behavior.

“It was hard at first, but it’s worth it because we’re helping make the world a better place with less pollution,” Lindstrom Student Body President Diego Ulloa, 11, said.

The result: The school now produces about seven bags of trash each day and fills a recyclables Dumpster in just three days.

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Bellflower Unified School District provides a pathway for all students to attain the expertise and develop skills of academic excellence that will empower them to become lifelong active learners, demonstrate respect for themselves and others in a dynamic, diverse and global society, become responsible, informed, productive, independent and contributing citizens, and perform successfully in their chosen field and in society.



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The school has urged students to use re-usable lunch bags and water bottles, and recycles lunch trays, which means most of the waste that remains is from food – not packaging. And, when students bring plastic water bottles, they are reused to hold paints during class exercises.

On Tuesday, students demonstrated how they have worked to reduce trash, leading a tour for judges that included a review of each step of the effort. Fifth-graders in teacher Ray Hedgpeth's class greeted judges with a song about the importance of recycling, reducing and reusing.

Principal Luna said the school is excited about being named a finalist and is working with Grades of Green to further reduce trash over the course of the coming year.

"We are discussing the possibility of creating a garden area where students can get hands-on with science and begin learning about the benefits of compost," she said.

Bellflower Unified Superintendent Dr. Brian Jacobs congratulated Lindstrom on the award.

"Lindstrom students tackled one of the most important challenges facing our community – finding a better balance with our environment," Jacobs said. "Along the way, they created posters, organized themselves into teams, performed songs and dedicated themselves to beautifying their school. It's a great example of how these types of efforts help our students grow."

PHOTOS

BUSD_TRASH_1: An Esther Lindstrom Elementary School fourth-grader Courtney Cummings explains how students now use trash cans to gather recyclables during meals as judges review the school for a grand prize in the Grades for Green Trash Free Lunch Challenge on Tuesday, March 28.

BUSD_TRASH_2: Esther Lindstrom sixth-grader Makayla Vanosse (in blue) and classmate Elizabeth Ferrera describe how students are encouraged to use re-usable lunch bags as part of the school's effort to reduce the amount of waste generated as part of the Grades for Green Trash Free Lunch Challenge on Tuesday, March 28. The school was named a finalist.

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