



NEWS RELEASE

News from Orange County Public Schools

Students from winning schools celebrate “Green Day” event



Christina Parlemond, 14, left, an eighth-grader at Lockhart Middle, colors a bookmark while Joshua Reyes, 11, a fifth-grader at Castle Creek Elementary, takes aim at recyclables during the OCPS Green Day event Tuesday at Showalter Field. (Lauren Roth/Orange County Public Schools)

May 12, 2015 – Students from three Orange County Public Schools that have embraced sustainable, “green” practices got to celebrate during a “Green Day” event at Showalter Field in Winter Park on Tuesday.

“One day, fossil fuels are going to run out, and we need to recycle,” said Joshua Reyes, a fifth-grader at Castle Creek Elementary. Joshua, 11, said that when cars can run on banana peels someday, he wants one. At Tuesday’s event, he shot suction-cup arrows at recyclable items arranged on a target board.

Each school had won a top slot in the second annual OCPS Green Schools Recognition Program. Lockhart Middle came in first, Castle Creek Elementary second and Dommerich Elementary third. Schools earned points by improving healthy or “green” practices such as increasing recycling, reducing energy use and improving the school grounds.

Lockhart Middle, for example, convinced parents to turn off their cars while waiting for students, increased recycling by 80 percent, started an environmental club, built bird houses, added turf to an outdoor education area and participated in national green challenges.

Guidance counselor Audra Cucarelli, who spearheaded the school efforts, said students took the message of environmental stewardship so seriously that they have saved six injured squirrels and two birds so far this year.

The OCPS contest included about \$15,000 in prizes, including \$5,000 for the first place school, \$3,000 for the second-place school, \$1,000 for the third-place school and six judge's choice awards.

Marc Clinch, facilities program director, said that having schools strive to improve their green practices not only provides a cost savings to the district, it "educates students on sustainability and environmentalism."

At Tuesday's event, students played giant board games, sat while Timber Creek High School students molded newspaper hats on their heads and got to look at a rescued squirrel and screech owl up close.

Krystal Lake, 12, a sixth-grader at Lockhart, said it means a lot to her that her school won the top prize. "If we don't do a lot for the environment, we won't have a world to live in anymore," she said.

For more information, contact Lauren Roth with Facilities Communications at 407-317-3700 x2023774.

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