



NEWS RELEASE

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ENVIRONMENTAL MESSAGES HITTING HOME FOR KIDS

It started with a small piece of paper that Eileen Van Pelt found on her fridge.

The drawing featured a colourful rendering of planet Earth, surrounded by phrases such as “Keep the world clean,” “Fresh water,” and “A healthy world.”

It had been created by Eileen’s granddaughter Ashley, and was soon followed by dozens of meticulously hand-written posters urging Aldergrove residents to help the world by recycling.

Eileen knew the nine-year-old had discovered something that meant a lot to her.

“I just felt like doing it,” said Ashley. “People should know not to throw garbage everywhere. We need to make the world more clean and better for animals.”

Last year, Ashley was a student in Ms. Penner’s Grade 3 class at Shortreed Community School in Aldergrove, where the students recycled in the classroom and learned about the importance of caring for the environment. A fun and educational live production sponsored by the Township of Langley and presented by DreamRider Productions had been staged for the students, who were encouraged to think about protecting water resources and the world around us.

The class started working on water conservation logos and Ashley began drawing the three looping arrows that have come to represent recycling. That’s when she came up with the idea to start a Recycling Club with two of her friends, to encourage others to be aware and make an effort to dispose of waste properly.

“I was very proud,” said Eileen, who will accompany Ashley as she distributes her handmade posters to neighbours and throughout the community this summer. “A lot of effort went into this.”

Eileen shares her granddaughter’s enthusiasm for recycling and the need to protect the environment and the creatures who share their habitat with us. She recognizes it takes effort to separate organics and recyclables from garbage, but is necessary for the wellbeing of people, animals, and the planet.

She is glad that school and Township programs are reinforcing that behaviour in people of all ages, and was especially pleased with the #IDIOT campaign that was recently launched by the Township of Langley. The letters in the word “IDIOT” stand for *Illegal Dumper In Our Township* and the message is - don’t be one.

An avid walker who enjoys the greenspace in her neighbourhood, Eileen was disturbed to find someone had left a mattress in the bushes at the end of her road. Soon after, Township staff surrounded the site with yellow “illegal dumping under investigation” tape and signs urging others, “Don’t be like this #idiot.”

“I thought it was great,” said Eileen. “People need to learn it and live it.”

This bold approach was taken by the Township to deal with the serious and costly issue by getting the public’s attention, encouraging them to report illegal dumping, and providing them with information on proper disposal options. Visit tol.ca/illegaldumping.

For her part, Ashley - who wants to be a doctor when she grows up - plans to continue the Recycling Club when she enters Grade 4 this year.

“Students are such great resources for us,” said Krista Daniszewski, Sustainability Programs Specialist for the Township of Langley. “They are like sponges when they are young, absorbing information, and many of them are fascinated with the idea of protecting our environment.”

“They take it very seriously and are eager to go home and share what they have learned,” Daniszewski said. “One of the best ways to reach adults is to teach their children. These kids are our future, and with children like Ashley taking the initiative and getting involved, it’s clear we are in good hands.”

The Township of Langley’s Engineering Division offers a number of fun, educational, and interactive ways to teach local students about the importance of recycling, caring for water resources, and the environment. Teachers interested in having plays, workshops, and other programs presented at their elementary and secondary schools, or would like to request educational materials, can contact Daniszewski at kdaniszewski@tol.ca.

To learn more about recycling in the Township of Langley, call 604.532.7300 or visit tol.ca, go to Services & Contacts, and click on Garbage and Recycling.

For more information, contact Krista Daniszewski, Sustainability Programs Specialist at 604.533.6090, ext 2208 or kdaniszewski@tol.ca.