

**NEWS RELEASE**

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April 1, 2009



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## **Suffolk students recycle more than 150,000 plastic bags**

SUFFOLK, Va. (March 29, 2009) Why recycle you ask? The students in Suffolk Public Schools know the answer and they are doing it.

Recycling conserves our valuable natural resources, saves energy, saves clean air and clean water, and saves landfill space. Suffolk Public Schools is collaborating with Trex Company, Inc., the leading manufacturer of wood alternative decking, railing and fencing, for its plastic bag recycling drive. The drive started January 15 and ends on Earth Day, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. With less than a month left for the drive, Suffolk Public Schools have recycled 154,744 plastic trash bags.

“Suffolk Public Schools is thrilled that our students and staff have taken such a strong ownership in this effort to save the planet. The plastic bag recycling project has provided our students, staff and school families a real-life, hands-on lesson in improving the environment.”, said Bethanne Bradshaw, Public Information and Community Relations Officer for Suffolk Public Schools.

The participating schools include Southwestern Elementary, Kilby Shores Elementary, Kings Fork Middle, Turlington Woods School, Northern Shores

Elementary, Booker T. Washington Elementary, John F. Kennedy Middle, Nansemond River High and John Yeates Middle Schools.

Chad Oxtan, Engineering Data Technician for the City of Suffolk, spearheaded the drive. He is thrilled about the amount of bags that will be recycled. "The City of Suffolk appreciates the efforts put forth by the staff and students at the 10 Suffolk Public Schools that are participating in this plastic bag recycling drive." Oxtan said. "As of April 1<sup>st</sup>, with three weeks remaining in this drive, these schools have diverted more than 150,000 plastic bags from our landfill, streets, ditches, and farm fields."

"We in the alternative education program were especially pleased to undertake participation in the program because we used it as an incentive to the teaching of our other core areas of study. We have studied the environment and the effect that plastic has on the landfills and used this as an ecological project," said Barbara Edwards, who teaches alternative education at Kings Fork Middle School. "Beyond all of that we have stressed the importance of being good citizens through the concept of civic mindedness and taking care of our environment."

Each year, Trex utilizes more than 1 billion recycled grocery bags to create its environmentally friendly decking, railing, and fencing products, keeping the plastic bags out of landfills locally and across the country. By working with Trex, local schools and students learn the importance of recycling, keep plastic bags out of landfills and are rewarded for their efforts. Trex will award one elementary, one middle and one high school with a bench for their school for collecting the most bags.

"I am so proud of each and every school and thank you for your time and participation. It feels so good to find a school that puts 110% into this program, but an entire City..... Wow! Suffolk City Schools joined together and exceeded

any of my expectations, and recycled such a large amount in three short months,” said Amanda Harrington, Recycling Promotions Coordinator for Trex.

Photos by Hattie Lester, Litter Control Coordinator

**Cutline for plastic bag photo 1:** Pictured are Kilby Shores Elementary School students (left to right) Josh Brown, Kajuan Reid, Josh Ralston and Kilby Shores Math/Science Teacher Stephanie Ziegler counting some of the hundreds of plastic bags in her room.

**Cutline for plastic bag photo 2:** With only 70 students at their school, Turlington Woods has collected more than.... plastic bags to be recycled. Pictured is science teacher Nikkia Williams unloading bags out of one of the boxes at the school.

**Cutline for plastic bag photo 3:** Kings Fork Middle School is currently ranking first among the middle schools participating in the plastic bag recycling drive. Pictured are (left to right) Rainey Eason, sixth-grade English; Barbara Edwards, alternative education; and Sue Addair, alternative education preparing to count more bags students brought to school.