

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact:
Debbie George
757-514-4106
757-374-1770

Fourteen Suffolk public schools to begin plastic bag recycling drive

SUFFOLK, Va. (October 26, 2009) – Plastic bags don't biodegrade and because they are light weight, they are the debris most likely to fly away from landfills, settling instead in trees, storm drains, beaches, and the ocean. The students in Suffolk Public Schools are coming together to do something about plastic bags.

Suffolk Public Schools is collaborating with Trex Company, Inc., the leading manufacturer of wood alternative decking, railing and fencing, for its second annual plastic bag recycling drive. The drive starts on November 15, National Recycles Day and ends on Earth Day, April 22, 2010.

"This program was a big hit last year, and we'll have eight schools returning the recycling program this year. Another six schools are coming on board, so Suffolk Public Schools will be saving a lot of space in the landfill. Of course, it doesn't hurt that kids love competition and that the Trex benches presented to the winners are fabulous additions to the school facility," said Bethanne Bradshaw, public information and community relations officer for Suffolk Public Schools.

The participating schools include Group 1- Elementary Schools: Booker T. Washington, Creekside, Florence Bowser, Kilby Shores, Mack Benn Jr., Mt. Zion, Northern Shores, Robertson, and Southwestern; Group 2- Middle/High/Turlington: John F. Kennedy Middle, King's Fork Middle, King's Fork High, Nansemond River High, and Turlington Woods.

Hattie Lester, litter control coordinator for the city of Suffolk, is spearheading the drive. She is thrilled about this year's drive and the potential to rid the waterways and landfill of more 200,000 plastic bags.

"The City of Suffolk appreciates the tireless efforts and commitment that the staff and students at the 14 participating schools are about to embark upon," Lester said. "Research shows that a plastic shopping bag can take anywhere from 15 to 1000 years to decompose. By recycling plastic bags, the staff and students are making an invaluable contribution to the 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 a bench to the school collecting the most bags for each group.

"Trex is pleased to have 14 participating Suffolk schools this year, up from last year's 10. We appreciate all the time and hard work each school contributes to this program from recycling your bags from home, to counting the bags after school hours, and getting the material to Farm Fresh locations," said Amanda Harrington, recycling promotions coordinator for Trex. "We first and foremost want to educate and encourage the importance of proper plastic bag recycling, but Trex is also extremely proud to reward students and schools for their year long efforts. In the Spring of 2009 Suffolk schools recycled 277,837 bags and I thank you again for jumping on board another year and are very anxious to see this year's totals."

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