

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **SUFFOLK STUDENTS RECYCLE NEARLY 354,000 PLASTIC BAGS**

SUFFOLK, Va. (April 29, 2010) – Plastic bags make up over 10% of washed-up debris polluting the U.S. coastline and take 15 to 1000 years to decompose. For the past five months, Suffolk students have done their part to divert nearly 354,000 plastic bags from our landfills, ditches and waterways.

The Suffolk Clean Community Commission and Suffolk Public Schools collaborated with Trex Company, Inc., the leading manufacturer of alternative decking, railing and fencing, for a plastic bag recycling drive. The drive started on America Recycles Day 2009 (November 15) and ended on Earth Day 2010 (April 22).

Students recycled nearly 354,000 plastic trash bags. “Suffolk Public Schools is committed to recycling and saving energy, and the plastic bag project has provided a wonderful, hands-on lesson for students that I’m sure they’ll remember the rest of their lives,” said Bethanne Bradshaw, public information officer for Suffolk Public Schools. “With the number of participating schools increasing from 10 to 14 this year, the impact expanded because more students and employees (and their families) joined the recycling effort. It’s been a very successful program, as you can tell by the increase in bags collected this year. Way to go, kids! Thanks for helping Suffolk go green!”

Participating schools were placed in two groups – “Group One” included the elementary schools and “Group Two” included the middle, high, and alternative schools. Trex will award a bench made of Trex materials to the school in each group that collected the most bags per capita, taking into account the student population in each building. Second and third place winners will receive a plaque. Other participating schools will receive a trophy.

Group One’s winners are: **First place**-Southwestern Elementary with 79,777 bags and 223 per capita; **Second place**- Mt. Zion Elementary with 51,626 bags and 195 per capita; and two schools tied for **Third place**- Florence Bowser Elementary with 20,880 bags and 84 bags per capita and Kilby Shores Elementary with 51, 670 bags and 84 bags per capita.

Group Two’s winners are: **First place**- Turlington Woods with 7,724 bags and 119 per capita; **Second place**- John F. Kennedy Middle with 11, 527 bags and 20 per capita; and **Third place**- Kings Fork Middle School with 17, 030 bags and 17 per capita.

Participating schools included Creekside Elementary, Florence Bowser Elementary, Mack Benn Jr. Elementary, Mt. Zion Elementary, Robertson Elementary, Southwestern Elementary, Kilby Shores Elementary, Northern Shores Elementary, Booker T. Washington Elementary, John F. Kennedy Middle, Kings Fork Middle, Turlington Woods School, Nansemond River High and Kings Fork High Schools.

“I am so appreciative of the energy, excitement, and tireless efforts put forth by the staff and students at the 14 schools participating in the plastic bag recycling drive,” said Hattie Lester, litter control coordinator for the City of Suffolk, who spearheaded the drive. “The plastic bags collected during the drive will make a huge difference in the preservation of our Earth.”

Each year, Trex utilizes more than 1 billion recycled grocery bags to create its environmentally-friendly outdoor living products. By working with Trex, local schools and students learn the importance of recycling, help keep plastic bags out of landfills and are rewarded for their efforts.

"Suffolk City Schools have completed their second year of the "Trex Plastic Bag Challenge" and have yet again surpassed any expectations. All 14 participating schools have done an outstanding job and Trex greatly appreciates their continued support and commitment," said Amanda Harrington, recycling promotions coordinator for Trex Company, Inc. "I thank Suffolk schools and their students and faculty for another successful year!"

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Cutline for photo:

Photo provided

John F. Kennedy Middle School placed second in this year's drive in the Middle/High/Alternative School category. Pictured (left to right) are some of the JFK Environmental Club members who helped count bags this year students: Jada Williams, David "Nick" Gardner, Lavonius Beasley, Tierra Bell-Several members of the environmental club at JFK-Amanda Johnson & Roosevelt Brown sponsors.

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