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Elementary Division
Brooklyn Borough
& Citywide Winner

PS 185
Walter Kassenbrock

2014 GOLDEN APPLE AWARDS

This certificate is awarded with the sincere appreciation and esteem of a grateful Department and City in recognition of your school's efforts to help make New York City shine.



City of New York
Department of Sanitation
Bureau of Waste Prevention, Reuse and Recycling
nyc.gov/recycle



2014 Golden Apple Awards Contest Entry Judging Info

(This sheet prepared for judges' use by DSNY BWPRR)



ID Info: 14020
School: PS 185 Walter Kassenbrock
Grade Division: LM
Borough: K

Golden Shovel Award contestant
(for borough Master School Composter)

2014 Project Entries received for:

School Population: total # 760

Core Group: **Total Participating:**

TrashMasters! Super Recyclers

Received:

TrashMasters! Reduce & Reuse Challenge

50

714

PS 185 Bottle Cap Mural Project

Received: 5/1/2014

Considering the astounding statistic that only 1 in 10 plastic bottle caps are recycled, PS 185's Go Green Team planned and implemented this school-wide art project. Every student in the school worked together to collect over 15,000 bottle caps, and to design and create the murals. Students learned the importance of community participation by reaching out to their Bay Ridge neighbors, Councilman, Senator, and local restaurants to collect bottle caps. The murals, unveiled during their Earth Day Celebration (along with their Indigenous Garden, also constructed in honor of Earth Day), now grace the school's lobby, demonstrating their commitment to the protection of our planet.

TrashMasters! Team Up to Clean Up

Received:

Prior Year Entries:

02:RR-boro;03:RR-part;10:RR-ru,SR-part,TU-part;12:TU-C,GS-K

Current Prizes

14:RR-C

School Contact Information:

Phone: 718 745-6610
Address: 8601 Ridge Blvd
Brooklyn 11209
Block&Lot: 3060430001
DOE Location: K185
DOE Bldg: K185

Contest Coordinator: Rena A Goudelias, AP

Principal: Kenneth Llinas

Sustainability Coord:

REQUIRED for Super Recyclers only:

Custodian: Mike Sanchez

Info Confirmed: 6/10/2014

Printed: 6/18/2014

Golden Apple Contest Entry 2014

PS 185's Bottle Cap Mural Project

PS 185 Walter Kassenbrock
8601 Ridge Blvd.
Brooklyn, NY 11209

Phone: (718)745-6610

Fax: (718) 836-9631

Principal: Kenneth Llinas



Contest Coordinator: Rena Goudelias/Assistant Principal

PS 185, in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, 2012 Winner of the Citywide Golden Apple Award for our Garden Project, is dedicated to a progressive environmental agenda which is constantly evolving to meet the needs and vision of our school community. With a student population of just over 700 students, PS 185 is living its Go Green Team motto, "Growing Great Ideas" when it comes to the protection of our planet, as each year our students, teachers and volunteers dream up new ways to showcase Going Green.

Contest Entry Info: Borough: Brooklyn
Grade Division: Elementary

Contest Entry Title: PS 185's Bottle Cap Mural Project

Contest Entry Summary: In considering the astounding statistic that only 1 in 10 plastic bottle caps are recycled, last school year, PS 185's Go Green Team planned and implemented a school-wide bottle cap mural art project, wherein the entire student body collected over 15,000 bottle caps, designed in art class the concepts for the murals and executed that design. Every student in the school participated in the design and execution of the project. The murals, unveiled during our Earth Day Celebration, now grace our school's lobby demonstrating to all our commitment to the protection of our planet.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

- Student Participation: Core Group #__50__
- Student Participation: Total #__714__
- School Population: Total #__760__

WASTE PREVENTION & REUSE PROJECTS

IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Why this?** PS 185's Go Green Team, seeking to impart upon our school community the impact our actions have on the environment, brainstormed for a project that would involve the entire school community in a meaningful and long-lasting way. It was through a real life observation that our project finally came to fruition when one of our volunteers noted, during a morning walk along the Shore Road Promenade by our school, all of the plastic that had washed up onto the rocks there. We did our research and learned that about only one in ten plastic bottles was generally recycled. The remainder washed up onto our shores, or ended in our landfills or as litter.

In considering the many colorful bottle caps being discarded and our aim of involving the whole school community, we set upon our somewhat ambitious bottle cap murals. Our intent was to have the entire student body collect caps, submit designs, and once a final design was compiled, volunteers would go from class to class and have all the students glue the caps onto the designs.

- **What did you do?** In March 2013, we launched our project with a goal date set for our Earth Day Celebration in May at which we would (hopefully) unveil our completed murals. Our Go Green Team, comprised of selected third, fourth and fifth graders announced to the student body our project and the help we would require. The announcements were made as part of our bi-weekly P.A. system "Did you know..." environmental facts. Letters were also sent home to our families and then we set upon the task of collecting bottle caps, setting up central bins, and day after day, our students brought in bags and bags of colorful caps.

As the caps were collected, volunteers met with the entire student body during art classes, and had the students design elements they would like to see in our murals. Students from Kindergarten through Fifth grade submitted drawings on one of two themes, either pertaining to the earth or to the sea. Once the individual designs were completed, our Go Green Team selected elements to incorporate into the murals.

All collected bottle caps were then sorted by the students according to colors, and those caps were then glued to the design, again, by the entire student body.

The completed murals were then framed and hung prominently in our school lobby and unveiled (as planned) at our Earth Day celebration. We were proud to host our school chancellor and Councilman, and our entire school was treated to a video which documents the process of completing the murals. You may view that video at our link, posted at the end of this application.

- **Project planning.** Our objective, as it is always in our Go Green Team, was to find a creative solution to get the message across to our school and community that we need to recycle more. As this is not the first large scale environmental project we have undertaken, we were considerate of several key factors.

First we set a timeline for each aspect of the project's compilation, from bottle cap collection, sorting, design, execution, promotion, installation and unveiling. We built-in extra time and considered the potential for obstacles which might delay completion of our project. We identified key volunteers, and enlisted the aid of our art teacher, Ms. Delcour, without whose assistance in her classes this project could not be completed. We then considered materials needed and demoed a mock-up using a variety of glues and backings, to account for longevity or deficiency. We visited Materials for the Arts for foam board to back our project. Several weeks of scheduling in art class yielded designs from our entire student body. Time was set aside and then a month was allotted to

bring the designs to life. In the meantime, invitations were sent out to our community, particularly our school chancellor, councilman and key business owners who participated in the project, inviting them to the unveiling at our Earth Day Celebration. We also notified the press as well.

Although the project came down to the wire, we were successful, and our Earth Day Celebration, showcasing our new murals and a newly developed indigenous plant garden our school had also constructed, was the best we have ever had.

- **Student involvement.** This Bottle Cap Mural Project was by far the most comprehensive environmental undertaking which our school has ever completed. We realized from initiation that what we wanted most was for every child to say that they actually created the murals, that they actually drew the elements or that they actually glued some of the ten thousand caps on the murals. We knew that these murals would grace our lobby, and we wanted our students to be able to show their families what they had done, and more importantly, we wanted them to be able to tell their families why they had done it.

We succeeded beyond our wildest dreams. Indeed, led by our Go Green Team, our school body submitted over seven hundred designs and our students created a vivid mosaic of colors that is now proudly displayed in our halls. We orchestrated this involvement through a careful checklist and precise scheduling. Volunteers met with every grade, every class during art, first to draw the designs and then again to execute the designs. Our Go Green team met during school and during our After-school program to supervise and troubleshoot, and direct the younger grades as needed.

- **Promotion.** In promoting our project, Go Green recognized the need for a layered approach to create buy-in and momentum for our efforts. We accomplished this promotion on several fronts.

Firstly, we announced the Project to our student body in one of our bi-weekly Go Green “Did you know...” announcements and in letters to our teachers. We showcased the dangers of plastics in the environment and solicited the aid of our student body in doing something about this problem. We set up centralized bottle cap collection bins, as well as bottle recycling bins, and encouraged our student body to collect bottle caps as they recycled the bottles. (We received over 15,000.)

Secondly, we sent a letter to our school families, giving the parameters for the project and what we needed from them at home. We gave a timeline as well and when we hoped to unveil the project. We reinforced our requests by frequent updates to our PTA Facebook page regularly requesting parent volunteers to assist in art classes as well as posting updated photos of our progress throughout the project.

We also reached out to our Bay Ridge Community enlisting the aid of neighborhood businesses and political representatives asking them to collect bottle caps in their own offices or restaurants.

Finally, the promotion of our project culminated in our Earth Day Celebration inviting members of our extended community including press, politicians and our school chancellor to the unveiling of our murals. Our student body was invited to view a video compilation of the project timeline including student commentary about their participation, before the murals were unveiled. We also set a description below the murals to tell the story of the project and why we did what we did.

- **Collaboration:** Our Bottle Cap Murals could not have come to be without the vision and dedication of our Go Green Team, Administration, Teachers and volunteers, and of course where would we be without the enthusiastic participation of our entire student body? However, as we have in the past, PS 185 realizes that Community is what makes a vision thrive. So with that in mind, we enlisted the support of our Bay Ridge neighbors. From the initiation of the project, we invited Councilman

Gentile and Senator Golden to have their offices collect bottle caps in their offices, letting them know our intentions and that we would invite them to the unveiling in several months' time. We did the same with local restaurants including *Gino's* and *Trace*. We gave each community participant special bins to display in their offices/businesses advertising our initiative.

We also sought out materials from Material for the Arts, particularly foam board to back our projects.

Finally, we enlisted the support of our local press to advertise our success and thereby spread the word of our school's prominent environmental agenda.

- **Educational components.** From the beginning of this project, the educational component our Go Green Team sought to impart was that of the immense impact of the use of plastic on our environment. We sought literature online and specifically noted, that (at the time of our project) plastic bottle caps were not recycled, as they only broke down at a higher temperature. We reinforced the educational message through bi-weekly announcements highlighting facts about plastic use in the world. We instructed our core Go Green Team during after school on more detailed aspects including the Pacific trash vortex, and the lifespan of plastic. We then sent our Team back to their classrooms to impart what they had learned. In the classrooms, we asked teachers to designate recycling monitors to ensure that plastics were being disposed of in the proper receptacles. Furthermore, we reinforced the educational message to our parents on our PTA Facebook page. We knew our project was having a significant impact when it caused one parent to comment that she had never realized exactly how much plastic her family used, until they started collecting bottle caps for the art murals.

For our Earth Day celebration, we compiled a video made of student commentary which we spent weeks soliciting, asking our students what they had learned from the project. We added instructional content of specific facts about plastic use, and capped off the video with a photo show documenting the project from start to finish. We were proud to show the finished video to not only our student body, but to our School Chancellor and Councilman, as well as the local press, before unveiling our murals.

It was by far agreed by all that our students would many years from now, still remember the fabulous work they had teamed together to accomplish, not merely because the work now hangs in our lobby, but because of the unique and riveting way in which our task was accomplished.

We did have a secondary educational component which was a wonderful consequence of our project. This was, after all, a highly artistically inspired project, and our students created this project from beginning to end. They were asked to think of concepts, draw those concepts, and then, which is the most challenging aspect, to execute those concepts in bottle caps! The mosaic quality of the work is fascinating to observe, and the students were greatly intrigued how when you looked closely at the works, they looked like a bunch of bottle caps, but how when you looked from far away, the bottle caps blended away to create the vision of the depicted design.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

- **What worked?** What worked best in our Bottle Cap Mural Project was the incredible enthusiasm which the concept of a bottle cap mural engendered in our student body. This was such a hands-on practical application of a solution to an environmental need, we could not have asked for better reinforcement of our message, or better results for our efforts. The students were thoroughly focused on the initiative, and momentum for its completion never wavered. This is ultimately what we want for our students, to be so invested in the educational components of a worthwhile

curriculum that they can't wait to be a part of it. We were so pleased that this project fostered nothing but the best for our school.

Also, what really worked was how comprehensive our Earth Day efforts were last year. The Bottle Cap Murals were a part of a much larger Project simply entitled Our Earth Day Project. While we launched the Bottle Cap Project, we simultaneously launched our Indigenous Garden Project.

Our school is currently undergoing extensive renovations, due to which we lost the use of our primary Organic Garden. To offset this loss we set about creating a garden of plants native to Brooklyn. We include a link to our YouTube Video highlighting our full project (both the garden and the murals) and our students' overwhelming reaction to being a part of such an undertaking. Words do not do justice to what was accomplished. The growth of the garden (which our students constructed under adult supervision, reinforced that recycling goes hand in hand with cultivating the earth, and protecting our planet. Again, it was the practical application that engrained our educational objectives so firmly in our students' minds.

The PS 185 Earth Day video is available for your viewing at www.ps185.com. Click the link on the left hand side under Go Green and you will be directed to the video compilation which we played for our school last Earth Day at the unveiling of the garden and the murals.

What also worked, was the visual product of our efforts which hangs in our lobby. First the project added such vitality to our school environment, but more importantly, we have discovered a unique and significant way to reinforce to any who enter our school, that we are an environmentally committed school. Our administration, students and teachers all enforce that message.

- **What didn't work?** What didn't work or rather what was most challenging during this project was consideration of materials. What backing to use and what adhesive, and how to frame to finished project were our biggest problems. We considered nailing the individual caps to a wood surface but knew that would hinder student participation, and make the final product extremely heavy. We tried several glues, but had no success as the caps would fall off when the mural was placed vertically. We finally found relatively inexpensive craft glue but then never quite realized exactly how much glue we would need, and kept running out to buy more. Then there was the issue of collection. 15,000 caps is a lot of caps and we were swimming in them. Also, we needed some colors which we never seemed to have enough of (purple and pink) so we would make special endeavors to search out those colors. Different sized caps were also valuable. Smaller bottle caps could fill in smaller spaces. We didn't want white spaces showing to ruin the effect of the mosaic. But larger caps added a nice effect.

Having volunteers meet with all the students was also a challenge. Again, a special thanks needs to be made to our Art Teacher, Ms. Delcour, who dedicated weeks of art class so we could meet with all our students. Nevertheless, scheduling to meet with those classes and sorting the bottle caps for their use was a challenge. Also, teaching the students how to place the caps close together and to fit them like puzzle pieces so no space showed and you stayed true to the design also required much patience and energy.

A final challenge was actually framing and hanging the finished products. For that we thank our Head Custodian Michael Sanchez and his staff, who painstakingly framed and hung the finished projects as we came down to the wire of our deadline.

- **Applicability to other schools.** In our minds, any school with energy and follow-through can accomplish this project, and the rewards are almost immeasurable. We will admit that the project takes commitment as the sheer volume of materials and time needed was daunting at times. For

this reason, dedicated volunteers are a must, to support the teachers and the efforts of our students. A strict schedule and timeline is also advisable and consideration of a school's other obligations should be factored in, particularly concerning testing, or curriculum requirements. Also, student enthusiasm was high and as such the energy and efforts of the students needed to be harnessed for effective productivity. We also found that it was best to have a set deadline. In our case that deadline was our annual Earth Day Celebration held in May. We coupled the unveiling with the simultaneous unveiling of an indigenous plant garden which was being constructed at the same time as the bottle cap project was underway. (We had used funds from our Citywide Golden Apple Award to construct that garden – Yes we have been very busy.) Having two such major events to showcase during our Earth Day Celebration, gave our extended community a significant reason to take note of the environmentally focused agenda of PS 185.

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- **Measuring success.** The success of our project was most apparent in the finished product. We took care to document our progress, and in those documenting photos and videos, the engagement of our students and the blossoming of the work is remarkable to see. The impact of the project was also far reaching as the message of our need to recycle plastic reached into our homes and our extended community. The practical application of the reusability of recycled materials to create such a vivid work of art was a message which could have been relayed by words, but how much better is it to see that message come to life in works of art?
-
- **Future plans.** Should we be honored with a prize for our Bottle Cap Mural Project, we have definitive plans for the use of that money. Previously we had used a portion of previous prize money to purchase dedicated paper recycling bins. Those bins have been extremely successful, due to their design and size. They have a slot on top which encourages the disposal of paper. Due to the use of those bins we have seen a tenfold increase in the recycling of paper waste.

Unfortunately, we still wrestle with plastic recycling. The small blue topless bins we currently use are easily confused by the children and more often than not garbage finds its way into those bins. Now, with new recycling laws allowing for an even greater assortment of plastic to be recycled, we are finding the small bins even less practical. We also have a sustainability plan in place which dictates that at least half of our waste should be recycled.

Should we win this year, the money we would receive could be allocated to the purchase of plastic recycling bins similar to the ones we use for paper. The bins are larger, blue and covered with a slot which encourages the disposal of plastic items. We have proven in the past that we know how to use funding to grow our environmental program, and will continue to do just that in years to come.





Classroom Jobs	
Messengers	
Attendance	
Board	
Technology	
Librarian	
Project	
Table Captain	
Secretary	



Walter A. Kassenbrock Elementary School
Public School 185
8601 Ridge Blvd,
Brooklyn, NY 11209

Kenneth Llinas
Principal
Rena Goudelias
Assistant Principal

Phone: (718) 745-6610
Fax: (718) 836-9631

February 7, 2013

Dear Parents,

We are very happy to announce that in the next coming months, the students of PS 185 will participate in the design and construction of two art murals. These murals, one to depict ocean life and one to depict the earth, are to commemorate our Earth Day Celebration, this year to be held on Friday, May 3, 2013. The mural, to be designed by the children, will be constructed entirely out of plastic bottle cap!

We have chosen to use recycled bottle caps in our project because they are one of the top ten items found washed up on shore. As we go through our project, an educational component will be included to discuss how our environment is being harmed by plastic. We are asking you to assist us, by helping your children collect plastic bottle caps and plastic jar lids of all colors and sizes. They might be on milk bottles, or juice cartons, soda bottles, peanut butter jars, coffee cans, and containers of nuts or on any of the household products you use.

Please begin this collection as soon as you are able, keeping in mind the following;

- The caps should be plastic and in any variety of colors, but no metal caps.
- Please clean and dry the caps thoroughly.
- Children should only take the caps after the contents of the containers are gone and the containers have been recycled.
- No caps from chemical products

On Fridays, our Go Green Team will collect these caps. (We will need thousands of these caps to complete our project.) In Art class, students will consider the design to be undertaken, and each class will be given a portion of the mural to complete.

Thank you for helping us make this project a success. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Rena Goudelias
Assistant Principal
PS 185

DID YOU KNOW...P.A. System Announcement

Did you KNOW... Americans use five MILLION plastic Beverage bottles every five MINUTES...(pause)

But we only recycle one in ten plastic bottles.

That means that **90%** of all plastic bottles end up somewhere else...

Every five minutes...another 4 million, five hundred thousand plastic bottles end up

In the streets as litter...

In Landfills never to decompose...

On our beaches... and...

In the oceans... to be eaten by fish and other wildlife...

Every five minutes.

PS 185 Bottle Cap Mural

February 13, 2013

Dear Teachers,

By now you have heard about PS 185's Bottle Cap Murals, and I am sure you and your students will have a number of questions about the project. The Go Green Team will look to address any questions you might have. We would like to start by saying "Thank You" for participating in a project which we believe will have a significant positive impact on our school and in our students' lives.

You and your students should begin collecting their bottle caps at home according to the guidelines laid out in their letters. Go Green will begin collecting those caps from you and your students, next Friday. Please ask your students to bring the caps in on that day. We are expecting receipt of two dedicated bins to collect the caps. One will be placed by the Main Office and the other in the school cafeteria. Your students may deposit their caps in those bins with your permission at any time, but formal announced collections will be held on Fridays. We need a varied assortment of sizes and colored caps, but all caps should be plastic. Ask your students to reuse the plastic bags in which they bring in their caps, just dumping only the caps into the bins.

We have asked Ms. King to work with the students to come up with design elements for our murals. We would also ask you to consider researching bottle caps and the environment, particularly the effect of bottle caps on sea life. For instance, did you know that we use over 200 million bottle caps every five minutes, or that bottle caps do not generally get recycled because they have a higher melting point than plastic bottles? Or that we only recycle about five percent of all the plastic we use. If you choose to do an internet search, we would suggest that you screen the material first as some of the content may not be suitable for younger children, particularly concerning what happens to wild life.

As the month progresses, we will forward you helpful links and curriculum, or we can come talk to your class for you. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch. Please forward on your students' questions. We would love to formalize answers for you and share them with the school. All the best!

Adele Doyle and the PS 185 Go Green Team

Ps185garden@aol.com or text or call (646) 318-8079

THE STORY OF THE BOTTLE CAP MOSAIC MURALS AT PS 185

June, 2013

It was the aim of the Go Green Team of PS 185 to create a permanent work of art to be displayed in our school building that would both use recycled materials and bring to the school's attention how much waste we create on a daily basis. Plastic caps were an obvious choice, as they are objects that are non-biodegradable and are seen littering our streets and oceans at an alarming rate. Students would be educated about litter in our streets and oceans and with the help of their families, collect bottle caps that would later be used in the construction of several large-scale mural mosaics.

In January of 2013, the student population of PS 185 began collecting plastic bottle caps. Over the next six months, thousands of caps were brought to school. Parents and students alike remarked frequently on their astonishment on the sheer volume of caps they would normally throw away. The caps began to accumulate at school in large plastic bags at the back of the cafeteria. Student members of the Go Green Team began to sort caps by color, an undertaking that continued for months as the caps continued to come into the school.

By the first week of May, the Go Green Team was ready to begin the planning and construction of the mural. Every class in the school was visited and students sketched ideas of what images they would like to see in the mural. The themes that were chosen were The Ocean (3rd and 5th grades), the Earth (1st and 4th grades) and Flowers & Insects (Kindergarten and 2nd grades). Go Green volunteer parents used the children's ideas to make three compositions. The compositions were sketched out on to large sheets of recycled corrugated plastic, in preparation of the mural's construction. That was when the fun began!

With the aid of parent volunteers, the Go Green Team visited every class in the school to begin the construction of the murals. Students laid out and glued down the caps by color in every section of the images on the corrugated boards. After weeks of work, the murals as you see them here today were completed.

We wish to thank all of the supporters of this project: the local businesses, political representatives, and neighbors who donated caps to our cause, the school's parents who supported us through this entire project, and the Administration and Staff of PS 185 who gave us the opportunity to see our vision through to the end. We would especially like to thank Michael Sanchez, our custodial engineer and his staff for their tireless work, Mrs Goudelias for her optimism and confidence in Go Green and Mr. Llinas, our principal, for his unwavering support of all of our projects.

Our Indigenous Garden Project: Planned and developed, along with our Bottle Cap Mural Project as part of our Earth Day Celebration 2013. Visit our website, www.ps185.com and click on Go Green 2013 on left hand side to be directed to our Earth Day Celebration video which showcases our students' efforts.

Over 30 varieties of flora, native to Brooklyn, have been planted in our new garden.

