

SUPER RECYCLERS



Citywide Winner
High School Division

Central Park East
High School

2016 GOLDEN APPLE AWARDS

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City of New York
Department of Sanitation
nyc.gov/zerowaste





School Information

- School Number: M555
 - School Name: Central Park East High School
 - School Address: 1573 Madison Avenue
 - School City: New York
 - School Zip Code: 10029
- School Population: 464

Contact Information:

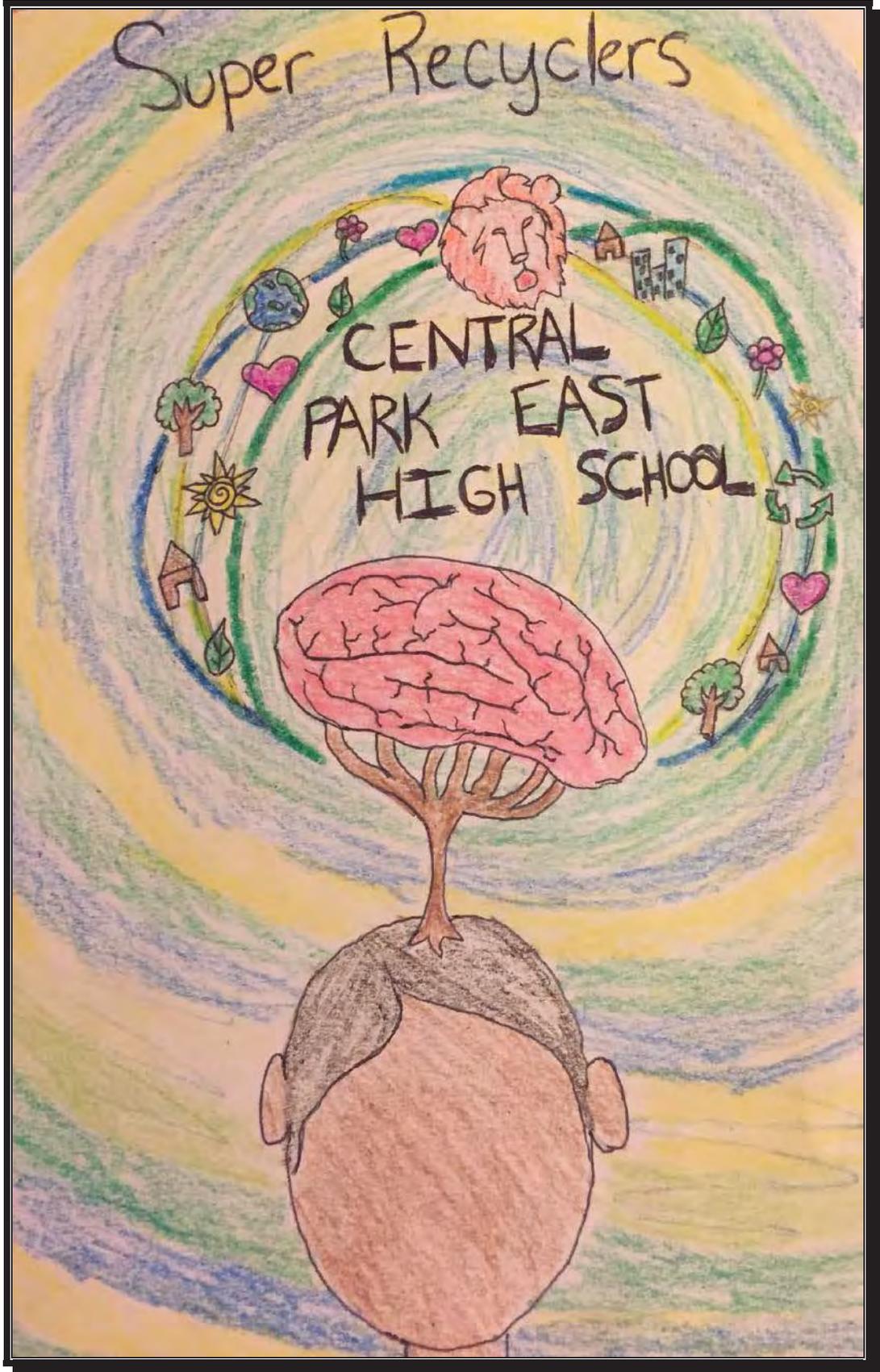
- Principal Name: Bennett Lieberman
- Coordinator Name: Joseph Moll
- School Phone Number: (212) 860-5929

Contest Entry:

- Contest Grade Division: High school
- Contest Entry Title: A Planet for Your Thoughts
- Contest Entry Summary: Our school has taken many steps to change the culture of recycling in our school. We officially started a Green Team in an effort to work with the staff and students to make the best environmental choices. We used posters to promote recycling around the school and spread the word. To cap it all off, we held a major, week long Recycling Carnival to foster our schools fledgling recycling efforts.

Super Recyclers

CENTRAL
PARK EAST
HIGH SCHOOL





Recycling at Our School Central Park East High School

STEP 1. Describe and document your exemplary school recycling program, explaining how your school is a “Super Recycler.” Answer the following questions:

Recycling paper and cardboard. Describe and include photos showing how your school recycles mixed paper and cardboard in classrooms, offices, teachers cafeterias or lounges, kitchen, and common areas (such as entrance, hallways, auditorium, and gymnasium).



Figure 1: A Student Properly Using Green Paper Recycling Bin

At Central Park East High School, green has been identified as the color associated with paper recycling. Every classroom has a labeled green paper bin, or labeled box with green writing.

All the green bins have been labeled with stickers indicating that they are to be used for paper and cardboard. In addition to the classrooms, all offices, including the photocopy room, have green bins, or paper boxes labeled in green.

To address paper recycling in the cafeteria, the organics bins have been painted orange to differentiate which bin is for food scraps and cardboard, making it easier to compost later.

At the end of the 2014-2015 school year, we collected stats about our paper consumption and posted the data around the photocopy room to remind teachers to reduce their paper consumption.

For 2015-2016, we started off the year tracking our schools paper use and budget in attempts to both reduce the paper used and save the school money.



Figure 2: A student properly using a labeled paper recycling box. This box has a lid shaped so that only paper can fit in.

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Recycling metal, glass, plastic, and cartons. Describe and include photos showing how your school recycles metal and foil; glass bottles and jars; plastics; milk and juice cartons, and drink boxes in the following areas: offices, teachers cafeterias or lounges, student cafeterias, kitchen, common areas (such as entrance, hallways, auditorium, and gymnasium).



Figure 3: A lid for a blue hallway bin.
Only bottles and cans fit in.

Blue has been identified as the non-paper recycling color. Every room in the school, from classrooms and offices, to the library, cafeteria, gym or halls has a blue bin. All our blue bins are labeled both on the bin and with signs around the bins indicating that they are to be used for plastic bottles, hard plastics, cartons, glass bottles, and metal. There is one blue bin on both the basement and first floor halls with a lid for recycling.

Our entire school has lunch during the same time period. To accommodate lunchtime waste, the cafeteria is set up with three disposal stations. Each consists of a black/gray bin, a blue bin, an orange/brown bin and a liquid disposal bucket. Each station has the Sanitation issued posters, stickers and labels on the bin themselves and custom three-dimensional posters showing exactly what waste goes where. The trash bin is either gray or black and is used for trash, wrappers, chip bags and soft plastics that cannot be reused for another purpose. The orange bin is for food, napkins and food soiled cardboard or paper that can be composted. The blue bin is for hard plastics, metals, glass and cartons.

The school's Green Team and the Sustainability class periodically set up student monitors for the disposal stations to help answer any waste questions and to reinforce proper use of the separate bins. The waste stations are most heavily used the last 5 minutes of lunch when all students are exiting the cafeteria.

In addition, all the bulletin boards and support columns in the cafeteria have been decorated with recycling information that encourages proper waste disposal. In the future, we hope to create a greener school with more blue recycling bins in our shared entrance and auditorium to encourage more waste reduction.

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Additional Photos to show Recycling Efforts

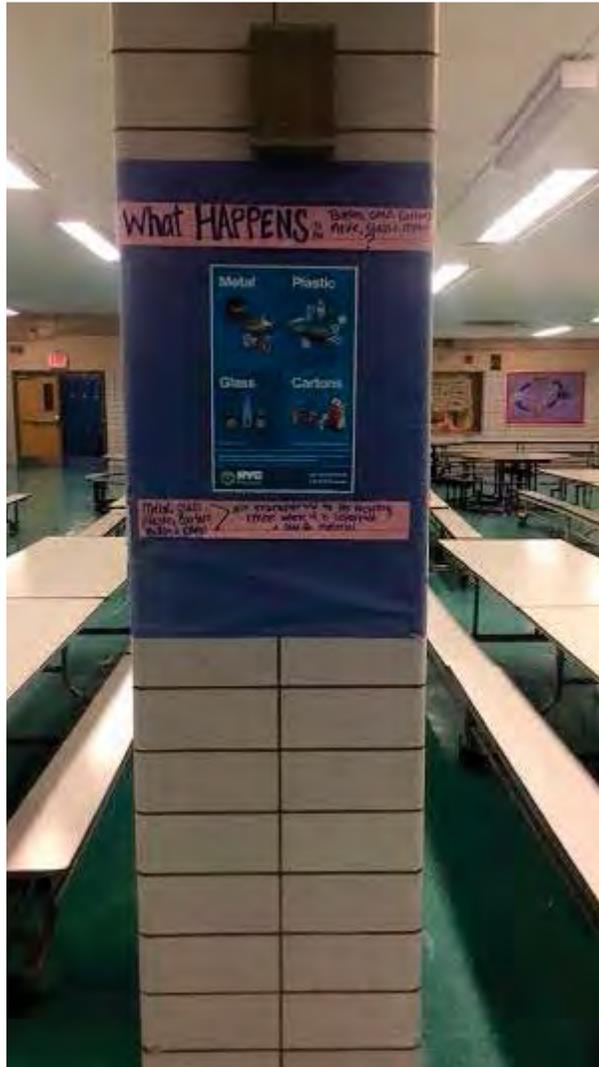


Figure 4: Signs in the cafeteria that show how to properly use the blue bins.



Additional Photos to show Recycling Efforts (2)



Figure 5: A 3-D poster above one of the cafeteria's blue bin recycling stations

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Additional Photos to show Recycling Efforts (3)



Recycling
Information



“Keep Calm and
Recycle Blue”

Figure 6: Hallway signs posted near a blue recycling bin.

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*Organics (for schools in the **Organics Collection Program**). Describe and include photos showing how your school recycles food waste in student cafeterias and the kitchen.*



Figure 7: Signs in the cafeteria that show how to properly use the orange bins.

these objects do not go in the correct bin, then it stops the whole cycle and prevents our sorted material from being correctly processed.

We feel very fortunate to be in our second year of cafeteria organics collection. As was mentioned previously, we have three stations in the cafeteria and each contains a trash (black/gray), recycling (blue) and an organics (orange/brown) bin.

We painted our school issued brown organics bin orange to increase the visibility of the organics bin and match the colors to the signs provided.

Our 3-D signs emphasize that the “food scrap” bin is not just for organic food waste but for anything that can be composted, including cafeteria trays, napkins, paper cups, pizza boxes, paper bags, food soiled paper and shredded paper. We have one specific bulletin board in the cafeteria that describes how organics can be recycled into usable compost and the importance of keeping the bin free from garbage.

We have also tried to arrange our bins to maximize waste reduction. By putting the organics bin first, followed by the blue recycling bin, we hope to cut down on the amount of recyclables/food scraps waste that ends up in the garbage, as well as avoid cross-contamination in the Organics and Blue bins.

Proper sorting is very important to maintain in order to help the chain of reducing, reusing and recycling. If

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Additional Photos on “Organic” Collection Program



Figure 8: A 3-D poster above one of the cafeteria’s orange bin recycling stations



Additional Photos on “Organic” Collection Program



Figure 10: A 3-D poster above one of the cafeteria’s black bin trash stations.

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Recycling collection and setout. Briefly describe and include photos showing how your school collects the separated recyclables throughout the building, including storage and set out for DSNY collection. Note: Recyclables must be moved through the building by custodial staff, not by students.

In our effort to improve our schools recycling capabilities we knew it was important to integrate the school's custodial staff.

To better understand their end of the process we interviewed Tim and Anthony, the two custodians at our school in charge of handling our waste. The Sustainability class asked them what their daily tasks were and how different types of recyclables and wastes move through the system. We were told that our building only uses clear trash bags so that the city sanitation workers can more easily sort waste from recyclables. In addition, they told us that sanitation collects food scraps daily, blue recyclables are collected Tuesday through Thursday, and paper and cardboard are collected on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. All the waste that is sorted in the classrooms is emptied into bags that are on a cart that is moved around the halls. The carts are designed to hold two large bins so that different types of waste can be collected on the same trip. Once all waste is collected, all bags are immediately placed on the curb for pickup. As stated previously, the city sanitation department uses the clear bags to determine what to pick up when. The custodians empty the pails but do not further sort any waste that might be cross contaminated.

We interview Tim and Anthony our School Custodians

The custodians informed us that sanitation allows for 10%-15% cross contamination. Besides any excess mixing of garbage, some of the major issues that they encounter are liquids. People pour drinks into the trash cans and recycling bins when they're not supposed to, making a mess.

In addition, different schools on different floors have different food policies. The Charter elementary schools eat in their classrooms causing an excess of food being mixed with the regular garbage. Most of their food also comes prepackaged in plastic that needs to be sorted from the organics bin if the organics bin is used. Something they believe may help is if not eating in classrooms is enforced.

The Issue of Cross Contamination

Another issue they encounter is that when the orange organics bins are left outside, they are often stolen. If we receive the grant we will be able to buy all kinds of bins to put around our school and better carts (with space for three or more bins) to help pick up the sorted materials on each floor. Our custodians say that receiving this grant would be of great help to them because the city keeps cutting funds while simultaneously adding to the city's waste and recycling list.

Theft

School Recycling Program Implementation

Before and after. Before you implemented these projects, what was your school recycling program like? What changes and improvements were made?

Central Park East High School has been working hard to become a greener school and create a more sustainable atmosphere. Officially started last year, our Green Team is changing the culture of the school by working with staff and students to make choices that are environmentally responsible. This school year, we began offering a Sustainability course to help the Green Team accomplish these goals and to expand our outreach to students.

Changing Culture

- Sustainability Course
- Increased posters for awareness
- Three properly labeled bins
- Recycling Carnival
- Interactive presentation

Although recycling bins were present in our school, they were not properly distributed or being utilized for their intended purpose. Any bin was simply a trash pail, including all bins in the cafeteria. This is what spurred the creation of the Green Team: to help teach others about recycling. In addition to recycling, we recognize our building has lots of potential to further reduce waste but lacked a driving force and budget to initiate any change. Once the Green Team and Sustainability Class feel like our recycling efforts are improved, we hope to help reduce energy and water waste.

Before the creation of the Green Team, there were no posters to inform student of what recycling was or how to recycle. Teachers lacked access materials to set up recycling stations in their classrooms and most classrooms did not have enough bins. Many classrooms were missing a trash bin which forced students to use the wrong colored bins to discard their trash. In addition, the cafeteria bins were mismanaged and were not being properly used by students. The hard work of our school's Green Team helped spur much needed change from this sorry state.

Central Park East High School now has three properly labeled bins in every classroom and office and signs throughout the school about proper recycling. Our student and staff are now more aware than ever of recycling. We are slowly changing the culture and attitude around recycling and waste reduction in our school. Students will correct other students that they see using the wrong bin. Students have begun to ask each other and teachers more frequently about what goes into which bin. In addition to the improved signage, and bin placement, our team has put an emphasis on educating both our students and staff about proper recycling and why it is important.

As a major part of this effort the Green Team and Sustainability class jointly sponsored a cafeteria recycling carnival. This was another way for students to get the feel of where and what is needed to be recycled in the correct bins in a fun way. Students from the Green Team and the Sustainability class planned and implemented over ten different games that provided a fun way for students to learn about recycling. In addition, students from the Sustainability class prepared a 10-15 minute interactive presentation that they brought to classrooms to teach other students about recycling.

We have seen an increased effort to recycle through these efforts.

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***Project planning.** What were your objectives, and the planning and organization that drove this project?*

After recognizing our school's potential to reduce waste, our first task was to narrow our focus to achievable goals. To help with this, Ms. Boccafolo, a co-adviser of the Green Team and one of the teachers of the Sustainability class, attended the city-wide sustainability meetings. This was an opportunity to network with other schools and see what had been accomplished throughout the city. In addition, as a group we met with the principal and custodians to talk about recycling goals and to better understand what was feasible given our school's resources. From these discussions our focus became two-fold.

First, we wanted to improve the infrastructure of recycling (bins and signs) and second we wanted to increase waste reduction awareness.

Our first focus of the school year was ensuring that all classrooms had a properly labeled set of recycling bins. All classrooms bins were counted and collected to re-distribute equally throughout the rooms. This involved several members of the Green Team coming in over the summer and painting bins to make sure all colors (blue, green and black) were represented. We also applied stickers, clearly marking all of the bins so that students could easily tell what to put where. We also made sure the hallway trash bins were all black and the cardboard boxes for paper recycling bins had lids. We decided that if every classroom had proper recycling bins, it would be easier for students to use the bins correctly. In addition, we encouraged the custodial staff to order carts that could carry separate trash bins to allow them to keep the classroom waste that is collected separate from each other as they made their daily rounds.

Once we had the proper bins, we started mapping out our education component. We developed a plan to help educate our building about recycling. In our building, ignorance about recycling was a huge obstacle to our goals and we wanted to address this head-on. Information was provided to the staff and they were encouraged to provide recycling directions in their syllabus and to enforce recycling rules in the classroom. We devoted time to creating better cafeteria signage, bulletin boards and hall flyers to educate students about how to recycle. To support the improved recycling infrastructure, the sustainability class developed an interactive presentation to share in different classes, educating fellow students about proper recycling and about the importance behind recycling.

We have also reached out to the other schools we share our building with. We hope to bring our presentation to help educate the younger students about the importance of recycling. Our high school currently shares our building (including our cafeteria) with one public elementary school and two charter elementary schools. Sharing a building offers unique challenges. While we can make our school more sustainable, our overall waste reduction generated by our building will be impacted by all schools.

We hope by creating a well established sustainable recycling program at our school, it will become easier to transition the remaining schools to become more sustainable and help foster a more sustainable community at the Jackie Robinson Campus.

Twofold Focus:

- *Improve infrastructure*
- *Increase waste reduction awareness*

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Student involvement. Describe student efforts to plan and implement the project. Include activities conducted by classrooms, cluster, grade, school-wide, team, club, or afterschool program.



Figure 11: Ms. Boccafola closing up at the end of one of our schools bake sales.

Our Green Team meets every Tuesday after school. Meetings always open with a group discussion focused around the question “What changes do you notice in the culture of recycling in our school?” Change takes time, but the team feels that it is important to acknowledge the small changes happening and improve practices that foster these changes.

Our Green Team recognizes that real recycling has to be integrated into the school culture, and that this is a continuing process but one that we can see discussions, meetings are devoted to planning/ doing sustainable themed activities that can double as advertising or fundraising.

We have created different up-cycled crafts, such as plastic bottle snowflakes, CD Christmas ornaments or decorated flower pots and arranged three different bake-sales.

We even used our schools 3-D printer to make our own recycling themed cookies for our bake sales. The work of the green team is complemented by lessons around recycling that occur in other classes. As one example, in Spanish 3, students worked together in groups to make a video informing people on different ways to recycle.



Figure 12: We made 3 recycling themed cookie cutters using our schools 3-D printer



Student Involvement



Figure 13: A gigantic recycling chocolate chip cookie

Student Involvement



Figure 14: Members of the Green Team making Tie-Dye t-shirts

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The two classes whose students have probably been most instrumental in encouraging our recycling efforts are our Sustainability classes, consisting of 15 students in total. In these classes, the students and teachers work together to try to find ways to spread recycling in our school.

Much of the work done around our Recycling Carnival, which we hope to make a yearly event, was done in these classes. Our recycling carnival was the most high profile student led effort to encourage recycling in our school. We also had a trivia on what items are recyclable, a handout on how to recycle and its importance, and crossword puzzles on recycling. Events were held daily in the cafeteria for a week and prompted students to participate and learn about recycling. The carnival was held during lunch for an entire week, with raffles for the students to have a chance to win different prizes.

All of our games had something to do with recycling. We used recycling materials and tested to see whether the students knew where certain trash items went (e.g. bottles go into the blue bin, etc.). For the students who were new to recycling, we gave them a paper on the importance of recycling and how to recycle. This acted as a cheat-sheet which they could review prior to competing in the games. During the carnival, many students learned how to recycle in a fun and interactive manner. Several students enjoyed themselves so much that they participated in games every single day of the week. To accommodate these students, we ensured that at least one new game was rolled out each day while keeping around games that had proved popular earlier in the week.

The carnival lasted a week with over ten games that were all planned and made by students. Students who won games received raffle tickets. At the end of the week there was a drawing and 8 different students won \$10 gift cards to local businesses. The funds for these gift cards were raised by the Green Team during our bake sales. Below we list some examples of games along with a brief description of the rules:

Memory: Memory is played like the traditional card game but with a slight twist. Instead of matching two of the same objects, students matched recyclable items with the correctly colored bins. This game was a one on one game, meaning two people were competing to be the first to get 5 matches.



The students who designed the game made over 100 different cards with pictures of trash bins and recyclable items on them so that multiple games of memory could occur at once. As in all of our games, the winner received a raffle ticket that was entered to win prizes.

Four Corners: Four Corners is a game in which each player (usually two people) receives a sheet split into 4 sections: Orange Bin, Black Bin, Blue Bin, Green Bin. The goal is to think up as many unique items as possible that could go into each bin. In order to win a raffle ticket, the student must have more unique correct items than any other competing student.

Heads Up: Heads up was a game in which one player held a card with a recyclable item up onto their forehead, so that they could not see the item. The other player(s) would give them hints on

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what that object is. With these hints in mind the person had to guess the item and what bin it goes in. For example, if a student picked up and place on their forehead a picture of an apple, the other players could shout out things such as; “Red, Green, Yellow, Adam and Eve, juice!” And the list goes on.

However, they can't rhyme it with things like, “Papple! Snapple! Cackle etc.” They would also shout out things like, “In the classroom” or “In the cafeteria” because in classrooms an apple would go into a black trash bin, while in the cafeteria the orange bin is used for food items.

Basketball: In the game Basketball, we had 4 bins; Orange, Green, Blue and Black. We only used 3 bins at a time however. We used the orange bin when we were simulating being in a cafeteria, while green paper recycling bin was subbed in for simulations of a classroom. Students would receive bouncy balls with names of recyclable items taped onto the ball. The object was to get all of the balls into the correct bin with different time limits depending on the round. Students were allowed to make only one mistake to receive the raffle ticket.

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Promotion. Describe your efforts to promote this project. Include samples of relevant announcements, memos, flyers, posters, letters, web pages, skits, songs, assembly programs, media coverage, or other special events.

Throughout the school, we placed different posters in the hallways and on some of the classroom doors to get students aware of the importance of recycling. We have fliers for the green team along the school hallways. We also have signs on every bin showing people what goes in which bin. For the recycling carnival, we made announcements via the school intercom each day of the carnival and placed different posters around the school. After the carnival was over we also announced the winners of the raffle. We also have members of the Green Team and Sustainability classes to spread the word to their peers and students around the school.

To support the improved recycling infrastructure, the sustainability class developed a presentation to share in different classes, educating fellow classmates about proper recycling and about its importance. Student driven efforts include: making announcements so that the whole school can be informed of our clubs activities and sending emails to all the students and staff of the school about the importance behind recycling. In addition, during the club fair, the Green team's table was so successful that dozens of students signed up to become a part of our mailing list.



Figure 15: Two green team members promoting the club at our club fair

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In addition, we devoted time to creating better cafeteria signage, bulletin boards and hall flyers to educate students about how to recycle. We have also reached out to the other schools with which we share our building. (These efforts were discussed in the project planning section of this grant.)

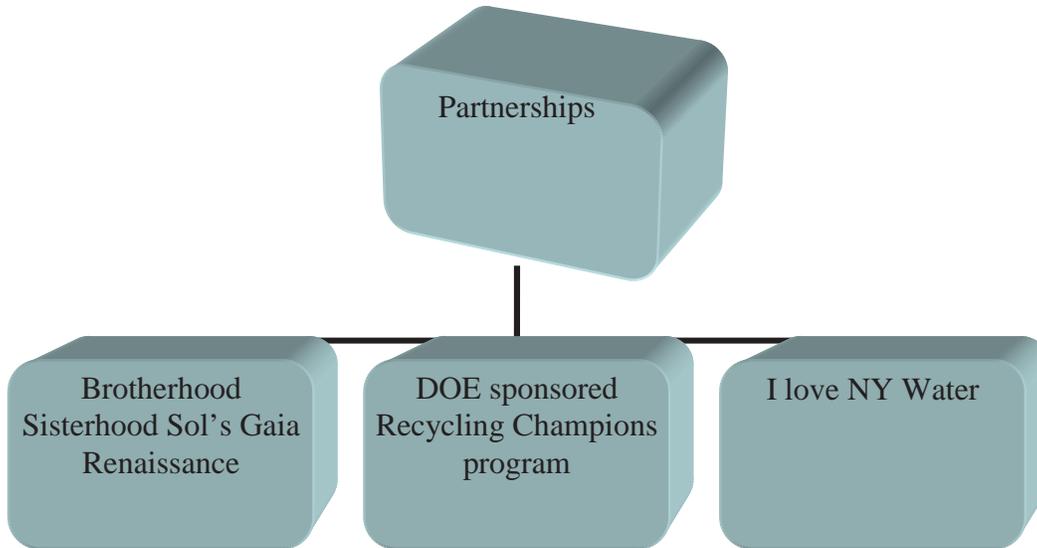
This semester we hosted our first Recycling Carnival with the goal to get students involved and educated in recycling. We created games that involved recyclable items (i.e plastic bottles, cans, papers, etc.). Our Recycling Carnival is discussed in further detail in the Student Involvement section of the grant, since its planning and implementation were largely student driven.



Figure 16: A promotional poster in the hallway showing how aluminum materials are recycled

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Collaboration. What other schools, professionals, businesses, or community organizations did you work with on this project? How did you solicit donations or help?



To improve the waste reduction attitude and recycling efforts in our school we have established several partnerships. In our many ventures into becoming a Zero Waste School, we the Sustainability collective have made a partnership with The Brotherhood Sisterhood Sol's Gaia Renaissance. The Brotherhood Sisterhood Sol has been actively engaged in the urban gardening and farming movement. They are the caretakers of the Frank White Memorial Garden and encourage students in high school to join a program to work in the garden. This partnership has introduced us to new and fresh ideas for the school and has helped us plan what we will do in the future, such as recycling programs that will involve the youth and make it seem much more exciting, a revamped recycling carnival, pushing into classrooms for presentations and sending school wide emails. The Brotherhood Sisterhood has helped us get connections to local community gardens and youth collectives who will help us on our mission to be a greener school and to expand composting to the classroom with worm bins in the 2016-2017 school year.

In addition to our new partnership with Gaia Renaissance, we have been working with the DOE sponsored Recycling Champions program to help with our recycling efforts. Over the past year, we have had two outreach coordinators that have helped us organize our efforts and helped create programs. We hope that our new outreach coordinator will help us with professional development workshops for our faculty and staff. We hope to use their expertise to help us develop a stronger relationship with our custodial staff as we continue to try to reduce our waste and energy in the future. Recycling Champions has experience with recycling programs throughout New York City and is a valuable resource as we face hurdles to our fledgling program. While we were not chosen this year, we also hope to become involved in the Zero Waste Initiative being piloted with Recycling Champions and the NYC Department of Education

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in the future. We will continue to improve our management of waste in our school by maximizing recycling and organics separation following the Zero Waste Initiative outlined by Recycling Champions.

Lastly, we have worked with I love NY Water to help provide curriculum resources about New York water. These resources have been used primarily by our school's Physical Science class and to help in our reduction of plastic water bottle usage at our school. (This initiative is discussed in our school's second golden apple grant: Golden Apple Recycling Grant: Reduce and Reuse).

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Educational components. Include learning standards met, lesson plans, and exemplary samples of student work.

Changing the culture of the school takes time, but we are committed to creating a more sustainable future. Our school has allowed for both the establishment of a Green Team and a credit-bearing class titled Sustainability, to help drive our efforts forward. The students involved have taken the mission to heart and strive to inform everyone of the benefits of recycling and teach all how to recycle properly. In providing a class, our school hopes to drive STEM thinking skills as students analyze our school's practices and work through solutions with the staff and student body. The class is interdisciplinary and student focused. Students are learning how to handle relationships and work with people who have different ideologies about our environment. They have learned how to respectfully reach out to adults to ask for help, develop partnerships, and formulate well thought-out contacts between peers. They have also done a lot of online research and interviews with adults at our school as part of a larger process of learning how to plan and write grants.

In addition to our Sustainability class, other classes have also incorporated waste reduction and recycling awareness into their curriculum. In some of the Spanish 3 classes, students had an assignment to create a video in Spanish promoting different ways of recycling. Students either worked in a group or on their own for this project. Some of the projects talked about recycling basic items like bottles, while others spoke about protecting animals by helping to use more eco-friendly makeup products and acting as an environmentally friendly consumer. Samples of these videos would exceed the allowed limit for uploading this grant, but can be provided upon request.

Recycling has also been emphasized in nearly all our school's science classes. Living Environment includes recycling in their unit on human impact. One entire lesson was devoted to how to properly use the recycling bins and how recycling helps to mitigate human impact on the environment. Then, during the week of our school's Recycling Carnival, every single day the Do Now for the Living Environment class was taken from regents questions having to do with human impact on the environment and when possible, recycling more specifically.

Our school's chemistry class also had a lesson that involved learning the specifics of how recycling plants work. Students used principles they learned in chemistry (such as magnetism and density) to understand how different materials are sorted in a recycling plant and the energy needs of this process. The Earth Science curriculum incorporates lessons about recycling with the discussion of raw materials and energy consumption. The physical science class spends the majority of the fall discussing personal usages and how it impacts our environment. In AP environmental science, students learn the timescales involved for different products in the waste stream and do a lab in which they determine how long it takes for different types of trash items to decompose.

These classroom efforts have made a notable difference in student's awareness of and effort put towards recycling. Teachers have commented that while these efforts are ongoing, students are more likely to use the correct bin while recycling and ask teachers or other students for help if they are not sure which bin to use. Our hope is that we can continue these efforts next year and expand to more classrooms.

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Project Analysis

- *What worked?*

We felt that our efforts toward making information about proper recycling available to the school community were extremely successful. Before this project was implemented, even students who wanted to properly recycle had no good way to access information on how to do so. Now our school has created an environment where no member of the community has an excuse for not knowing how to recycle.

- *What were the most successful aspects of this project?*

Our school's first ever Recycling Carnival was hugely successful. This one-week event dramatically increased awareness of recycling around the school. In addition, it gave recycling a positive aspect for many students who in the past had thought of it more as a chore. The planning of the carnival really brought together our Green Team and our Sustainability classes in ways that we hadn't seen before. Overall the carnival was a tremendous win for Central Park East High School. Because of this success, we hope to have the Carnival twice next year, once in the Autumn and once in the Spring.

- *What didn't work? What were the least successful aspects of this project?*

In retrospect we really wish we had more quantitative data to track our progress as a school. One of the things we want to know is the amount of contamination found in different bins in the classrooms and cafeteria. We hope to do this next year by periodically checking select classrooms for contamination. This would involve sorting through the trash bins but we feel this is the only way that we can really document our school's progress.

- *Applicability to other schools. What advice would you give to other schools with similar populations who want to replicate your project?*

The advice we would give to other schools with similar populations that want to replicate our project is to be serious about it. We would also recommend that they set goals that they want to be completed and track their success. We would also suggest strict deadlines for when things have to be done and better ways for people involved to communicate what has already been completed. We had a lot of success with labeling our bins and found our cafeteria's 3-D posters showing examples of what goes into each bin to be extremely helpful.

We would recommend this to other schools. We also recommend creating a recycling Carnival as a way to make recycling more fun.

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- *Measuring success. Describe how you measured the success of your project. Include charts or graphs, if possible. Explain any impact on the students or community.*

Just in the past year, there have been huge changes in the culture around recycling at our school. Last year, our Green Team had only two members who came consistently. This year, from week to week our numbers grew and peaked at around 14 people. For a school of less than 500 students, we feel this is impressive. The Green Team's increased presence around the school led to our increase in membership and we only envision this trend continuing going forward.

We have also grown the number of students who participate in our school's Sustainability class from around 6 students in the Fall to 15 students currently. As we have done so we have enriched and improved the curriculum in this semester long class.

While the bins around the school still have small levels of contamination, it is nothing compared to previous years. Especially on the days when we have had student volunteers manning the bins in the cafeteria, we have seen that almost all the bins were properly sorted. This is a rewarding experience for us because it shows that when given the correct information and the proper push, our school's community really does care about recycling.

- *Future plans. How would you use contest prize funds to further enhance your school recycling program?*

While we have the support of the school in developing a sustainable recycle culture, we lack support with a financial budget. Our class recognizes to reach full potential as a Zero Waste School, we would need funding to supply more recycling stations and materials.

In the future we are planning to go into even more classrooms and explain the importance of recycling and how to do it. The recycling and garbage bins will be labeled to remind people of what belongs there. The janitors will also be informed of where to put the trash and how it will be distributed when the garbage truck comes around. Teachers will be reminded to inform the class and enforce recycling in classrooms daily. On the syllabus that is given to students, it will explain how to recycle and what it takes to do it. When freshmen orientation takes place, a small speech will be given on recycling. It will explain the importance of recycling especially in our school. We have to get the whole school body involved in order to succeed. Once everyone has been informed we will take action for the cause of recycling.

Prize funds can help promote recycling programs in several ways. One is by being able to afford more promotional events and increase educational programs that teach about recycling. This year, our school's recycling carnival was quite successful, however, it was limited in that we only had \$80 dollars available in order to purchase prizes for the raffle. The games at the Carnival were fun and many, but some students might have chosen not to participate because of the limited prizes. Our future Recycling Carnivals will benefit from increased funds used to purchase better prizes and further encourage recycling among the student body. Also speakers could visit the school and help explain the benefits of recycling.

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In addition to this, we want to have an after school training session for all the teachers in the school where we teach them how to recycle properly. We realize that a lot of teachers may not be fully aware of the recycling rules as they exist in New York City. We would like to be able to offer per session to teachers who attend this event as a form of encouragement. We would also like to have money available to pay teachers and staff for tasks they perform above and beyond their normal duties related to improving recycling at our school.

We would spend some of the money from this grant on helping the custodial staff purchase equipment (such as carts that hold three bins) that would further enhance the recycling infrastructure at our school.

Our efforts will help the environment and school by creating less waste, thereby sparing resources. By raising awareness, we will have a cleaner school and we will create a healthier environment. The more we recycle, the less trash that is sent to landfills, and the less trash is getting burned. If the amount of trash getting burned is reduced, so is the amount of pollution being released into the air. We are essentially conserving natural resources, saving energy and preventing pollution from increasing. We plan to pass on our knowledge about recycling to the outside world.

Finally, as some of our members continue to college we plan to educate our peers about the importance of recycling. We will also push for creating a Green Team in our community in order to get more awareness and participation in helping keep our planet a cleaner place.