

Overview of the *Gardens for Kids L.A.* BEVERAGE CONTAINER RECYCLING PROGRAM

On April 5, 2001 a letter was mailed to nearly 160 individuals at fifty participating *Gardens for Kids L.A.* schools introducing the *Beverage Container Recycling Program*. The letter described the program, offered technical assistance, resource materials, and recycling bins, and solicited information on school recycling programs. An example of the letter and survey used to collect information are attached. Almost all feedback from the schools was received by April 17, 2001; however, more teachers continue to call expressing their interest in joining the program and the information concerning their feedback will be included in subsequent program status reports. Results of the initial outreach effort revealed that 17 schools would like to participate in the program. (See table below.)

Eighteen Schools Participating in Beverage Container Recycling Program (as of May 16, 2001)

School	Address	City
Accelerated Charter School	116 E Martin L King Jr Boulevard	Los Angeles
Chatsworth Park Elementary School	22005 Devonshire Street	Chatsworth
Cohasset Street Elementary School	15810 Saticoy Street	Van Nuys
Compton Avenue Elementary School	1515 East 104th Street	Los Angeles
Dorsey High School	3537 Farmdale Avenue	Los Angeles
Eagle Rock Elementary School	2057 Fair Park Avenue	Los Angeles
Germain Street Elementary School	20730 Germain Street	Chatsworth
Holmes Middle School	9351 Paso Robles Avenue	Northridge
Kentwood Elementary School	8401 Emerson Avenue	Los Angeles
Kester Avenue Elementary School	5353 Kester Avenue	Van Nuys
Loreto Street Elementary School	3408 Arroyo Seco Avenue	Los Angeles
Pinewood Avenue Elementary School	10111 Silverton Avenue	Tujunga
Shenandoah Street Elementary School	2450 Shenandoah Street	Los Angeles
Sherman Oaks Elementary School	14755 Greenleaf Street	Sherman Oaks
Sierra Park Elementary School	3170 Budau Avenue	Los Angeles
Sierra Vista Elementary School	4342 Alpha Street	Los Angeles
Soto Street Elementary School	1020 South Soto Street	Los Angeles
Stoner Avenue Elementary School	11735 Braddock Drive	Culver City

Survey Results

Fifteen surveys were received; two schools submitted two surveys (from different individuals) and therefore thirteen schools were represented. The results indicate the following:

- Ten schools (or 77 percent) currently have recycling programs.
- Reasons for not having a recycling program include: lack of interest/apathy, “no one wants the responsibility” and there is a need to build up administration and faculty support.

- Of those schools reporting, two schools have had recycling programs for ten or more years, five have had programs for at least four years, and three have had programs for one year or less.
- Three schools (or 23 percent) report that they are currently recycling beverage containers; however one additional school listed “cans only.” Newspapers are the most commonly recycled item (nine schools or 69 percent recycle them). White paper and cafeteria items are each recycled by eight schools (or 62 percent).
- Most schools (80 percent) have an external agency collect their recycled materials. Two schools indicated that individual teachers drop off the materials and one school stated that the Los Angeles Unified School District transported their recyclables to a local recycling center.
- Of the schools with recycling programs, about half reported that less than ten teachers cover recycling in their curricula, one school indicated that all teachers covered the subject and two schools reported that “most” did. One school said that only the science department included recycling in its curricula.

This survey process also revealed that there is likely a general lack of coordination regarding school recycling programs since some classes focus on some items, but not others, and some teachers perceive recycling practices within their schools differently than do others. However, more detailed information is required to make definitive judgements on either of these preliminary perceptions. Future outreach efforts will serve to gather more of this kind of information.

Best Practices

All of the participating schools expressed their willingness and desire to share information about recycling practices. The initial outreach uncovered some best practice cases that the schools have offered for inclusion in print or Internet broadcasts:

- Compton Avenue Elementary recently held a can/bottle drive to raise money for a family to send their children to college: 23,000 were collected in a one-month period.
- Dorsey High School has an Ecology Club, which will take on the responsibility of their new beverage container recycling program.
- Germain Street Elementary hosts a schoolwide assembly each year to discuss the importance of recycling at school and at home.
- Holmes Middle School has hosted aluminum can drives and manages its styrofoam waste as well (separated into “special” containers).
- Pinewood Avenue Elementary teaches recycling as part of its gardening efforts, specifically, for compost purposes. Also, several teachers do a schoolwide cleanup for Earth Day each year that includes recycling.
- Sherman Oaks Elementary designates a ten-minute period every morning as time for classes to send recyclable materials to bins.

- Sierra Park Elementary recycles through its gardening program and recently participated in the City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Sanitation's recycling and waste reduction survey—concerning the entire facility's recycling practices.

Next Steps

Following the feedback received from the schools, the EAD staff has researched recycled-material products for distribution to the participating schools. These include recycling bins for collection of the beverage containers, tote bags made of recycled soda bottles to facilitate transport of beverage containers from home to school, and other items to support the school's gardening efforts and demonstrate the use value of recycled products. (See the attached list and descriptions of the recycled products for more information.)

EAD staff has also compiled information on starting recycling programs from the California Department of Conservation as well as from the City's Department of Public Works. These materials will be mailed to each participating school in conjunction with delivery of their recycling bins in mid-summer 2001.