

Costa launches recycling program next Friday

Ellen Robinson | Posted: Saturday, April 19, 2014 5:45 am

With the help of several partnerships Mira Costa High School's Grades of Green student club will be launching a recycling program at the school starting next week.

“On Friday we're going to be placing recycling bins in every classroom,” said Jane Fishman, who is a freshman and member of Grades of Green's Youth Core program. “As a result of our lunch trash audit last month, we found that 63 percent of our lunchtime trash could potentially be recycled.”

According to Jan Dunbar, Grades of Green member, the implementation of a recycling program at MCHS has the potential to annually eliminate more than 60,000 cubic feet of landfill waste.

Launching a recycling at MCHS presented a significant challenge, Dunbar said.

“There are more than 100 free-standing garbage cans on campus at Mira Costa. We are working to place recycling bins in every classroom and to pair each of the garbage cans with a recycling bin. This will give the students the opportunity to choose do do the right thing,” she said.

Fishman said bringing recycling to Costa has been student-led. The recycling initiative began last year with former Youth Core representative Riley McDonald and Natalie Hoag, who are now both juniors at MCHS.

“The student involvement has been the driving force. We created a club, students have joined and gotten involved. We have a member that goes to school board meetings. We are working to spread awareness,” she said.

The goal for the program at the high school is to reduce the number of lunchtime trash bags from 32 down to 12 bags that are filled only with actual trash.

“We really hope to reach that goal. We are kicking off the program at lunchtime next Friday,” Fishman said.

After we kick-off the program the next step is awareness and education, Dunbar said. “We want to create a culture of green at Mira Costa. We are working to teach the students to think before they toss.”

With the scale of the recycling program being so large, Dunbar said it came together as the result of partnering with Waste Management, Inc. and the Beach Cities Health District.

To put it fiscally, this could save the school district money, said Dunbar.

“If a recycling program were implemented and decreased the need for waste management pickups from five to three days per week, this could save the school district some significant funds,” Dunbar said.

“Waste management isn’t cheap, and the simple implementation of recycling on campus would have a noticeable impact.”

A similar waste-audit at a neighboring high school in Lawndale proved that 66 percent of lunchtime trash was potentially recyclable.

“The idea is to bring awareness to the kids about how they really can make a difference,” said Dunbar.

“We work with the students to help determine what are realistic goals, if we can help them reduce 50-percent of their recyclables during the program’s first year, that makes a big difference on many levels.”

The student club will track the recycling program and provide feedback to Grades of Green. Dunbar says once the program has been implemented the Manhattan Beach Unified School district will see the resulting financial savings.