

GRADES OF GREEN

WATER CAMPAIGN FALL 2019

Final Report



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Executive Summary

Grades of Green Eco-Leaders rocked the 2019 Water Campaign focusing on plastic reduction. These passionate student teams each reached 1,457 student and community members on average, spreading environmental awareness and implementable solutions. Wow! That was a 77% increase over the Fall 2018 Water Campaign!

RISE Campaigns empower students to take local action that leads to global change, develop lifelong leadership skills and cultivate a sustainable future. Each semester, Grades of Green guides teams of students as they wage their own environmentally-focused campaigns around the globe.

The Campaign Process

Campaigns are structured to lead teams through the following process is designed to help students develop powerful leadership skills while bringing about long-lasting change.

1. Our students develop an environmentally-focused passion and are then guided to research how their passion is related to an environmental issue in their school or community.
2. Students then develop a solution to this issue using research and their advisor's support.
3. Students champion their solution. They advocate for the implementation of their solution by drumming up support from their community, meeting with community leaders and actively encouraging their peers, families and communities to change their habits for the greener.
4. Finally, students bring their project to life by putting their solution into action and changing their local community significantly. Students then complete a final report which includes their project's measurable results, their challenges, successes, and plans to continue their project.

After completing the Campaign, truly exceptional teams are then chosen by a panel of environmental experts to **receive Eco-Grants of \$500 or \$1,000** to enable the students to expand the impact of their projects.

2019 Water Campaign Scope



658	Eco-Leaders
48	Student Teams
30	US Cities
8	Countries

Impact Summary

Growth

Each of the 35 teams that completed the 2019 Water Campaign **reached, on average, 1,457 community members and students.**

A **growth of 77%** above 2018's Water Campaign.

Advocacy Outcomes

26,095	Community Members Reached
24,892	Students Reached
425	Awareness Actions Taken*

*Awareness Action Examples: Presentations to school districts, city councils or school assemblies; advocacy letters; posters or signs posted; pledges or petitions signed by the public; etc.

Habit Change and Waste Outcomes

212,679	Total Gallons of Water Saved
10,958	Total Pounds of Plastic Diverted
128,635	Number of Plastic Items Diverted*

*Plastic Examples: Single-use plastic water bottles, straws, utensils, plastic shopping bags, plastic baggies, produce bags, food packaging, plastic microfibers, etc.

Eco-Grant Winners

The following student teams were selected by an expert panel of judges to win Eco-Grants to use to advance their projects and expand their impact.

GRAND PRIZE ECO-GRANT WINNER - \$1,000

Fisher Middle School

Los Gatos, California

The Fisher Green Team was able to accomplish its goals and then some! Not only did they convince their classmates to reduce the use of single-use plastics, but they also convinced their school's leadership to:

- Stop selling single-use plastic water bottles!
- Switch to reusable aluminum bottles
- Eliminate sales of Capri Sun, due to the attached straw and single-use container
- Support the new use of all compostable and sustainable serving trays in the cafeteria
- Switch from single-use plastic water bottle sales at after school events, to cardboard cartons of water
- Allow the Green Team to plan and implement new trash sorting stations campus-wide to help make sure their recyclables can be recycled

How did the Fisher team do all this? They put together a powerful campus-wide advocacy campaign to convince their fellow students, their administrators, and their school's community to support their green initiatives.

Why does the Fisher Team care? *"We care because if grown-ups aren't doing something about this, then we should. We have seen the impact and the lack of action. Solid evidence and proof that we need to take care of these problems now to save the earth for the future."*



BEST COMMUNITY CHANGEMAKER – \$500

Mary Bragg Elementary School

Cerritos, California

We knew we had an exceptional team on our hands when the elementary students from Mary Bragg called out their school board for using single-use plastic bottles during the team's pitch for a plastic-reduction plan. These young students changed how their school community approached single-use plastics by convincing their school to reduce single-use plastics on campus and do a better job of recycling.



The Bragg students' winning effort was featured in the [Los Cerritos Community News - click here to view the article.](#)

How did their team impact their community? *"Our Green Team has created such a movement on our campus, we have many students asking to join our Green Team now and plan on increasing our membership. We've started a movement that will continue for years to come."*

Runner Up: El Rancho Charter School – Anaheim, California
(More on El Rancho later!)

BEST INNOVATIVE IDEA – \$500

Irvine SEVA Group

Irvine, California

The SEVA Group found a plastic problem that many green-leaning people overlook: plastic produce bags in grocery stores, which can easily be replaced with reusable versions. They met with their PTA and other members of their school community to convince them to go reusable and also did something unique! The SEVA group got their own reusable produce bags and went to a local store to hand them out and raise awareness of the issue. They're currently in the middle of setting up another give-away event at another local grocery store.



Why does the SEVA Group care? *"We first started this project because our moms wanted us to, but as the project went on and we learned more about how plastic impacted the planet, we realized it's the little things that count. Just reducing the amount of plastic we use in our life would make a huge difference. Convincing a whole community to reduce their plastic use is even bigger."*

Runner Up: Magruder Middle School – Torrance, California
(More on Magruder later!)

BEST IMPACT BY AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – \$500

Seven Generations Charter School

Emmaus, Pennsylvania

These fourth graders worked hard to reduce the amount of single-use plastic, especially sandwich baggies, packed in their school's lunches. They wanted to educate people in their school and community in an entertaining way, so they went above and beyond to make an extra "Family Feud" themed video to share their project. They also worked to provide easy access to sustainable alternatives to sandwich baggies by coming up with a proposal for the PTO to sell school-branded reusable snack pouches.



Why are they so passionate? *"We have taught our students that while they may be 10 years old, they have more power than they know. They can truly enact change."*

Runner Up: Innovation Academy – Oro Valley, Arizona

BEST GRADES OF GREEN ALUMNI TEAM – \$500

Airbender Team at Hughes Middle School

Long Beach, California

The Hughes Airbenders have been working with Grades of Green for a few years, and we've always been very impressed with their work. This year, their team did an excellent job of picking a specific target audience for their advocacy campaign. Their school's physical education department had been a place where many students were using single-use plastic bottles. Among other tactics, the Airbenders set up a competition to encourage students, coaches, and teachers to use fewer plastic bottles and the change stuck!



Why do they care about fighting plastic pollution? *"We care deeply about this because this is horrible for the earth. Animals mistake it for food ... it puts plastic in the air, which is bad for our lungs and pollutes our water which is unhealthy for animals, humans, and other living creatures."*

Runner Up: Nathaniel Hawthorne Middle School – Bayside, New York

INTERNATIONAL CHANGEMAKER AWARD – \$500

The Parallel Projects

We developed this new award as a means to recognize the teams that work to tackle the unique environmental challenges facing communities across the globe. For the Water Campaign, we wanted to specifically feature those who struggle with plastic pollution and access to clean water. The inaugural awardee was obvious: The Parallel Projects, which is a collaboration between Justin S. and his mom, Sheri, and all of their friends in Africa – Perise, Maulid, Hudu, Rashid and others.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARD

Beatrice O. at Whitney High School

Cerritos, California

Beatrice has always gone above and beyond to help her fellow students take environmental action! Here are just a few of the qualities that her Grades of Green Advisor, Cathy, shared with us: she has excellent organizational and planning skills, she's very responsive, very sophisticated and exhibits the most outstanding leadership! Congratulations to Beatrice for not only receiving this award but also for leading her team to a third season in the finals.



More Success Stories from Our Eco-Leaders' Projects

El Rancho Students Partner with Starbucks

The El Rancho Green Team worked with a local Starbucks to encourage customers to use reusable mugs. The team held an outreach event at the Starbucks, made signs and spoke with customers about how they can protect water resources by reducing their paper and plastic use. The El Rancho team's work was featured in the [Buena Park / Anaheim Independent](#).

Magruder Middle School Walks to Keep Plastic Out of Their School

Students at Magruder Middle School went above and beyond by hosting a walk-a-thon to raise money to buy hydration stations for their school (a hydration station is a water spout made specifically for cleanly filling up reusable water bottles). By having hydration stations, the students enable their peers to stay hydrated without having to buy single-use plastic water bottles.

Grand View Elementary Students Partner with Surfrider and Local Restaurants

Grades of Green first started at Grand View Elementary 10 years ago, and the school is still very involved in every campaign. This campaign, the students at Grand View worked with the LA chapter of the amazing non-profit, Surfrider, to help local restaurants get involved in Surfrider's Ocean Friendly Restaurants program.

Water Campaign 2019 Sponsors THANK YOU



4th District Supervisor, Janice Hahn
3rd District Supervisor, Shelia Kuehl
2nd District Supervisor, Mark Ridley-Thomas



Water Campaign Judges THANK YOU

Allie Bussjaeger
Stephanie Cochrane
Lisa Coppedge
Emily Gee
Mahsa Kazempour
Shaya Kirkpatrick
Doug Krauss
Richard Montgomery
Dana Murray
Cassia Patel
Teresa Pesek
Ariel Russ
Sharon Shapiro-Fox
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Isaiah Williams

Environmental Consultant
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Founder, Grades of Green
Marketing and Communications Manager, AeroFarms
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