



NEWSLETTER

March 2009



GREAT AMERICAN CLEANUP™

The Details

What: Free clean-up supplies! Trash bags and other materials available while supplies last.

Who: All teachers, staff, school groups who are interested in organizing a school grounds or near-by park clean-up.

How: Pick supplies up at NHC Government Center on Friday, March 6 2009 from 1:00pm-4:00pm. (You may want to coordinate with other teachers so that one representative from each school can pick up supplies for everyone.)

When: Organize a cleanup at your school when it's convenient for you.

Why: Help keep America beautiful by participating in the annual Great American Cleanup!

First impressions about neighborhoods and commercial areas are genuinely lasting impressions. Litter, debris and barren spaces contribute toward shaping negative perceptions. Litter-free and beautified neighborhoods can serve to reduce crime, stimulate community pride, stabilize property values, and generate economic investment.

Every person can impact the quality of life in our community. By doing simple little tasks, everyone can make our area a cleaner, healthier, and more attractive place to live. The most successful way to prevent litter in our communities is to have an

ongoing, organized program that involves schools, businesses, civic groups, local government, and private citizens. Keep America



Beautiful's Great American Cleanup is the nation's largest community improvement program, involving an estimated 3 million volunteers and attendees and takes place annually from March 1 through May 31. In 2008, Great American Cleanup volunteers

collected 86 million pounds of litter and debris; planted 107,000 trees and 48,000 gardens, xeriscapes and green spaces; cleaned 144,000 miles of roads, streets and highways; and diverted more than 189 million plastic (PET) bottles and more than 1.4 million scrap tires from the waste stream.

As long as litter is a problem in the environment, we must continue to educate people, starting with the youngest, about cleaning up locally and globally. Set an excellent example for the community and get involved in the Great American Clean-up by holding an event at your school to help ensure that your piece of the world will be that much cleaner and litter free.

“Green Starts Here” Poster Contest

8 Sources of Litter

Household trash at curbside, dumpsters used by businesses, loading docks, construction and demolition sites, uncovered trucks, boaters, motorists, and pedestrians

Organizing Your Clean-up

Hosting a clean-up event at your school is not only a great way to get students outside and connected to their environment, but also is a wonderful learning experience that builds community pride!

1. **Organize a cleanup committee** by seeking out a few people who share your passion for the cause. Set a meeting date and let the ideas flow.

2. **Decide on a project!** The possibilities for projects are endless. Suggestions to get your imagination started:

School grounds clean-up, plant trees and/or flowers, have a litter-free event, put a new coat of paint on much needed areas, adopt a road with your students, have a litter collection contest, collect recyclable and reusable items; deliver to a recycling center.

3. **Set a date for your activity.** During school hours— like during recess or study periods. On the weekend, Saturday mornings (8am to noon) are best, with an alternate rain date the following weekend. Make sure that the activity you are planning is not the same day as

another community event, especially one that relies on volunteers.

4. **Make a checklist** of the equipment you will need to remove litter, clean up and beautify an area. Ask volunteers to bring some of their own equipment and encourage them to wear sunscreen, proper clothing, sturdy shoes and heavy work gloves.

5. **Reach out to the community.** Turn to local business owners to support your efforts. Ask them to donate supplies (flowers, bulbs, paint and brushes, refreshments). They can even rally their own employees to help. Also, contact local radio, newspaper and television stations. Alert them about your project/event.

6. **Say thank you** to your volunteers for an important job well done. Remember to recognize all of the community’s contributions through media and personal communications.

The choice to make a difference is yours. So, roll up your sleeves and have fun. **Your efforts to improve our community will become a source of pride for everyone!**



Swat-A-Litterbug

Littering North Carolina roadways is not an acceptable behavior - never has been! Some people simply need to be informed and reminded that their littering, whether deliberate or unintentional, can end with their personal commitment to stop.

The Swat-A-Litterbug Program is an educational effort administered by the Office of Beautification Programs within the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

It’s easy to Swat-A-Litterbug! All you need to make a report is the vehicle's license plate number, date and time of the incident, street name, city (if



applicable), county and kind of littering observed. Reports can

be by phone, mail or online.

Challenge yourself and your students to Swat Litterbugs! So keep a notepad nearby and have a pen handy and start SWATING!!

For more information and to make a report, visit:

www.ncdot.org/doh/Operations/dp_chief_eng/roadside/Beautification/Litterbug/

A two-mile stretch of highway contains approximately 32,000 pieces of litter!

How Long Does Litter Last?

To *biodegrade* means to break down naturally. Sunlight, air, water and microorganisms help materials to biodegrade. Different materials break down at different rates.

Directions: Rank the following commonly littered items from 1 to 9. Use 1 for the item that will biodegrade the fastest, and 9 for the item that will biodegrade the slowest. Assume these items are on a roadside, and are exposed to the same conditions.

____ Aluminum can

- ____ Paper
- ____ Glass bottle
- ____ Plastic bottle
- ____ Cigarette butt
- ____ Orange peel
- ____ Milk carton
- ____ 6-pack ring holders
- ____ Gum

Items that go to the landfill are compacted several times by large machinery. Each day, the

portion of the landfill that is currently in use is covered with several inches of ash or sand.

Ask your students:

Do you think the items above would biodegrade in the landfill? Why or why not?

Do you think that things like apple cores and orange peels are litter? Why or why not?

For the answers and more lessons like this, visit our website and click the “Beautification” tab.

What Else Can Our Class Do?

There are many things that your students can do to help make their community cleaner!

1. Have a litter challenge. Pick -up a piece of litter every day and challenge a friend to do the same.
2. As a class, vote on a site to keep clean. Adopt the area and keep it clean to discourage others from littering. Place a sign that designates your class (or school) has adopted and take before and after photos to document your actions.
3. Have students come up with a list of ways they can prevent litter. Then develop a group to give talks to other classrooms about

the importance of eliminating litter in our community.

4. Write and perform a litter prevention skit, or create a slogan for your school to



adopt that will help educate others about the need for litter prevention.

5. Go on a litter hike. Talk about what you find, its possible source, its proper disposal and ways to prevent

or solve the litter problem.

6. Conduct pre- and post-surveys on the values that your students hold regarding litter. Compare the two surveys to see if there are any changes in your students’ attitude toward litter following the study of litter problems and a school or community clean-up.
7. Volunteer. There are many organizations in our area that are committed to beautifying, and cleaning up our area! Check out: Cape Fear River Watch, Hands On Wilmington
8. Share. Let others— schools, teachers, local media, etc.— know what you’re doing. Your actions may inspire others!

NO ONE IS BORN

A LITTERER.

A bad habit such as littering is taught and learned. But by engaging children and youth in anti-littering behaviors and activities, we can reinforce good habits and involve youth in their community's overall improvement.



Founded by Wilmington, NC parents, Sustainable Schools Initiative's mission is to foster Green Programs in North Carolina Schools. Partnering with Keep America Beautiful of New Hanover County, we are committed to helping new and established Environmental Committees and their efforts of starting and maintaining green programs in our local schools. It is our goal to unite school communities and give the needed tools and resources to accomplish the Sustainability Goals of each individual school. In doing so, we— along with everyone involved— will foster the development of generations of students becoming good stewards of the earth.

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For information on Sustainable Programs in your school visit our web site

www.nhcgov.com/AgAndDpt/KAB

Learn More and Plan Ahead

EVENTS

- **Earth Hour 2009:** Already 538 cities in 75 countries which is double the number of countries that participated in 2008, are committed to turning off their lights for one hour—Earth Hour. With hundreds more cities expected to sign up to switch off in the coming months, Earth Hour 2009 is setting the platform for an unprecedented global mandate for action on climate change. It's easy to participate, on March 28 at 8:30pm switch off all of your lights! For more information visit: www.earthhour.org
- **Earth Day:** Even though Earth Day is Wednesday, April 22, it's not too early to start thinking about and planning an Earth Day Celebration at your school!! Your event could consist of any number of activities and can include just one class/group or your whole school. Some ideas to get you started:
 - Not recycling? Earth Day is a great day to try your hand at recycling! Pick one material (like paper) to recycle and take it to a local drop off site!
 - Hold a Waste-Free Lunch. Challenge students (and adults) to pack a lunch with no trash! You can also coordinate with Child Nutrition to have a less wasteful "hot lunch" on Earth Day. Visit the waste-reduction link at our website for more information on Waste-free lunches.
 - Have a Funky Junk/ Trashformations and/or Earth Day Poster Contest. Get students excited with a hands-on activity that lets them use their imaginations to turn trash into art. Have them think "Inside the Bin" and only use what would be either trash or recycled!!

