

FEBRUARY 2019

*A newsletter published by
the School Energy and
Recycling Team*

SERT Spotlight

Attention Montgomery County Public Schools students and staff:
It's time to pull out your art supplies, put on your thinking caps,
and start creating entries for the thirteenth annual

Watts Up?

ENERGY AND RECYCLING AWARENESS POSTER CONTEST

sponsored by the School Energy and Recycling Team (SERT) program

EACH YEAR, all Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) students and staff are invited to participate in SERT's **Watts Up?** poster contest that promotes energy conservation and active recycling. This contest engages our entire MCPS community in a creative competition that reinforces the conservation messages taught in our curriculum. It also provides a large platform for our talented artists to showcase their amazing skills. As always, the 2019 contest is focused on the two very important activities that are the foundation of the SERT program: conserving energy and recycling.

We all know that energy production/use is one of the most important environmental issues of our time. Most environmental concerns are related to energy – air and water quality, global climate change, waste management, and transportation. With 80% of all pollution coming from producing, consuming and distributing energy, we should be incentivized to cut energy waste. The Watts Up? contest gives you the chance to show other MCPS students, staff, and community members how to make wise energy choices.

Recycling our paper, glass, aluminum, and plastic is an easy and effective way to make a positive impact on the environment. As we each live responsibly, those around us will notice our actions and begin to follow our examples. Let's all make a conscientious effort to shop with reusable grocery bags, drink from reusable containers, print or write on both sides of paper, reuse plastic containers, share hand-me-downs, etc. Share your ideas creatively and encourage others to reduce waste and increase recycling to help make MCPS a greener place to learn.

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MONTGOMERY
COUNTY PUBLIC
SCHOOLS





Collaborative Conservation at Glen Haven

BY MRS. LAURA PYKOSH, GRADE 5 TEACHER
GLEN HAVEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

GLEN HAVEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL'S (GHES) recycling team, the Green Eagles, and the fifth grade STEM students have come together to combine conservation with math and science. Through creative problem solving, this group of students is encouraging everyone in our school to use less energy, conserve water, and to reduce the amount of paper we use.

At the beginning of the school year, the Green Eagles and STEM students collaborated on a project entitled the *Scrap Paper Box Initiative*. Their goal was to educate students and staff on the importance of reducing paper use. The students gathered boxes to hold scrap paper and went to each classroom collecting paper that had only been written on or printed on one side, then distributed that paper for students and staff to reuse.

In December, the two groups enjoyed a special treat when Jim Stufft, GHES' SERT facilitator, came to speak to them about energy. He provided valuable information about the actual energy usage of Glen Haven in particular and Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) as a whole. This helped the students make the connection between their initiatives at our school and the work of the SERT program to educate and empower people to conserve. Mr. Stufft provided the students with digital thermometers which they used to complete a temperature survey. The students used this survey to analyze temperature inconsistencies and energy use throughout out school.

Once they understood that overhead lighting accounts for nearly a third of the electricity used in schools, the Green Eagles and the STEM students decided to implement a *Light Switch Initiative* as their second project. The goal of this initiative was to save energy by reducing the number of overhead lights used in classrooms without impacting the ability of students to see well. The plan involved visiting and assessing each classroom, then making recommendations about which, of any, of the three light switches could be left off during the day. (Check out SERT's [light switch templates!](#))

The STEM students performed the classroom assessments and, using the data they collected, made the appropriate recommendations. Then, using a formula given to them by the SERT program, they put their math skills to use and calculated the number of kilowatts their recommended light settings would save. Multiplying that number by \$0.12, they could then estimate how much money GHES would save MCPS by implementing the recommendations. The Green Eagles are currently working on making light switch covers that educate the classroom members while reminding students and staff to leave that particular light switch off during the school day—and to leave all switches completely off when not needed.

Once the *Light Switch Initiative* has been completed, the Green Eagles and Grade 5 STEM students will collaborate once again for a *Water Conservation Initiative*. Together, they will create posters that educate students and staff on the importance of conserving water and remind everyone to turn off the bathroom faucets.

Our amazing GHES students have been thoroughly engaged with these real-world conservation activities. They have implemented initiatives that are meaningful and purposeful, and our students have been inspired to view themselves as leaders and role models for all of our activities that promote conservation. 🌱



When it comes to environmental sustainability, principal Cassandra Heifetz, Grade 5 STEM teacher/co-SERT leader Laura Pykosh, assistant principal Desmond Mackall, and building services manager/co-SERT leader Joseph Stevenson work together to ensure that Glen Haven Elementary School's Eagles soar!

Are You Ready to Earn an Award?

IN OUR JANUARY 2019 ISSUE, we introduced the restructured recycling awards and applauded the schools that earned awards for the first quarter of this school year. Did your school make the list of our “top 25” remarkable recyclers? If you did, well done! You already know how to run a great recycling program. If your school didn’t earn an award, however, you might want keep reading and take steps to improve your recycling game.

The first step on the path to success is to do a thorough assessment of your current recycling program. Do you have a leader? Through the years, we’ve learned that all successful recycling programs begin with identifying a recycling leader in each school who helps coordinate the recycling effort. Effective leadership in any program is the key to increase productivity while inspiring students, staff, and community members to actively recycle. Involving students in the recycling effort will improve performance and increase recycling rates. Students can participate by monitoring classroom and cafeteria recycling; keeping an eye on the centralized stations; helping collect the recyclable materials; creating public awareness campaigns and/or simple feedback systems; and by setting good examples by recycling properly themselves.

How’s the recycling infrastructure in your building? Do you have enough recycling bins? Are you certain that the bins you have are placed in the most effective locations? Are each of them properly labeled? Do the bins have the correct color-coded lids help to reduce contamination? What about signage that promotes recycling? Are you sure that your students and staff know what can and cannot be recycled in MCPS?



Remarkable Recyclers

If you answered “no” to any these questions, you have opportunities to improve your recycling performance and earn an award. SERT is here to help you turn all of those noes into yesses!

Contact us and let us know what you need in order to make the most of your recycling efforts. If you have any questions or concerns about recycling in your school, or if you need help setting up your recycling infrastructure, please email recycling@mcpsmd.org. Just maybe you’ll see your school listed as one of the “top 25” award-winning schools!



These items get tossed into your PAPER ONLY recycling bin!



Watts Up?

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POSTER CONTEST GUIDELINES

- All MCPS elementary, middle, and high school students and staff are eligible to enter the contest.
- Posters must encourage others to conserve energy and to recycle responsibly.
- Art must be the original work of a student or staff member and must not contain any copyrighted elements. Artwork should be work the artist has created alone.
- Posters should be no smaller than 8.5"x 11" and must not exceed 18"x 24" in size.
- All entries must be accompanied by the official 2019 poster [contest entry form](#), which can be found on our website. Student entry forms must be approved and signed by the student's parent/guardian and school principal.
- Three entries per grade level per school will be accepted. Schools are asked to hold preliminary competitions and submit the best three entries by staff and from each grade.
- Entries may be sent to SERT via Pony or first class mail, or hand-delivered and must be received by the SERT program on or before Monday, April 1, 2019.
- Upon submission, entries become property of MCPS and will not be returned. The SERT program will not be responsible for lost or damaged artwork.
- Artwork and artist information may be used in future public awareness campaigns by MCPS.

POSTER JUDGING

The initial round of poster judging is done by SERT staff. For the past two years, we've used Google Forms and invited all MCPS staff to participate in the final round of judging. The same process will take place this year. Watch this [newsletter](#), our [website](#), and the MCPS staff [bulletin](#) for more details. Contest winners will be announced before the school year ends. 🌱

SERT Spotlight

This newsletter is produced by the School Energy and Recycling Team (SERT) program and distributed to school-based SERT leaders and teams, building service personnel, and others who are interested in conservation and sustainability.

As part of the [Montgomery County Public Schools](#) Department of Facilities Management, the SERT program provides opportunities for all schools to participate and receive incentives and recognition for their energy conservation and recycling efforts.

The SERT program supports a balanced environment for the integration of all students to work together in a culturally diverse environment. Our goal is to provide the resources, support, and vision of the future for a successful conservation program at each school. Promoting the connections between human behavior and its impact on the environment reinforces our culture of conservation and increases participation in our mission to conserve resources and recycle actively.



SERT PROGRAM

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