



## **2010 - 2011 Award Winners**

The School Recycler of the Year

*David Libscomb Elementary School - Nashville, Tennessee*

### Program Methodology

Reducing waste has become standard practice at Libscomb Elementary School. Recycling efforts began approximately 12 years ago when two faculty members carried student-collected newspapers to neighborhood recycle centers. Now a newspaper recycle bin is located in the north parking lot of our campus and a cardboard/can/paper/plastic receptacle sits in the south parking lot. These bins serve our school and are open to the public 24 hours per day. An estimated 30,000 lbs. of mixed recyclables collected have been kept out of landfills in 2008.

Kindergartners collect aluminum cans and remove the pull-tabs. Tabs are donated to the Ronald McDonald House to provide amenities for families of children in local hospitals, while can proceeds contributed to Monarch Watch. These funds further the science of tracking Monarch butterfly migration and go directly into the pockets of under-privileged Mexican families who live near the butterfly sanctuaries. In 2008, 256 lbs. of cans have been recycled; \$ 85.50 was donated. They are also learning to reuse newspaper as mulch in the butterfly garden. Approximately 15,000 lbs. of newspaper have been recycled at Lipscomb this year. One hundred seedling trees were purchased for reforestation of Monarch over wintering sites in Mexico with the proceeds from selling these newspapers.

Fifteen trees were planted on campus. These will absorb approximately 20.3 kgs of carbon dioxide per tree, per year, over a 40-year lifespan, thus reducing our overall carbon footprint.

Plastic water bottles from the upper grades are collected for recycling in blue recycle bins in their classrooms and large hallway bins.

Used printer ink jets and old cell phones are collected on campus. Old computers and used school furniture have been contributed to inner city programs. Gently used school supplies are sent to Honduras or Mexico each year. Reuse of school uniforms is made possible by a yearly consignment sale. Proceeds of uniform sales are donated to the school's Good Samaritan fund for needy families.

### Program Modeling

The success of plastic recycling in the elementary school inspired the Middle and High School, as well as Libscomb University to begin recycling plastics in their buildings.

As the first private elementary school to attain Performer Level Green School status, Lipscomb serves as a model for others who are working toward that goal. Currently we are mentoring four schools statewide that are involved in the Green Schools program. In April 2008, Lipscomb co-hosted a regional Outdoor Classroom Symposium. Educators from across the southeast visited Lipscomb's outdoor classroom, saw recycling in action, and attended environmental education sessions led by Lipscomb faculty.

### Educational Components

At Lipscomb each grade level gets intentional instruction in waste reduction, land and water conservation, air quality, hazardous waste, and energy conservation. Pre-K and Kindergarten students discuss 'junk' and what can be done with it. They plant and tend a butterfly garden, collecting caterpillars to raise, tag, and release. Julia Berbiglia, from Metro Beautification and Environment Commission, provides recycling programs for first-graders. Second-graders undertook an in-depth study of air quality, including activities on outdoor pollutants and indoor allergens. Observing and counting cars in the pick-up line alerted students to the need for a "no-idling" policy. A field trip to the downtown recycling center was an eye-opening experience for third-graders. This class sponsored a neighborhood Hazardous Waste Collection Day in November 2008. Over 800 batteries, 25 used fluorescent bulbs, 6 old cell phones, 4 mercury thermometers, and out-of-date medications (2,000+ pills) were collected. Third-grade is responsible for maintaining our fishpond in the outdoor classroom. Fourth-graders watched Kilowatt Ours and worked to figure out how many hours of electricity would be saved by recycling aluminum cans and plastic bottles, as well as replacing incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs in our building as a project for our Green School campaign.

Lipscomb students are alert to recycling opportunities. They can be seen sorting and depositing items in the recycle bins. Children will dive into trashcans to rescue a recyclable, all the while reminding you to be aware of what you are throwing away. They prod their parents into bringing recyclables to the bins at school. One parent recently sighed, "I can't throw anything away anymore. I get a lecture from my child!" Through our waste reduction and education program, Lipscomb Elementary is developing responsible environmental citizens for the future.