

Creation Care

October 2022 Issue 4



Students and two high school teachers making a difference

How many tree's worth of paper does a 1,250 student high school use in a year? Karla Schultz, a PE teacher at New Prague High School who is passionate about care for the environment, set to find out. Want to take a guess? (answer on p. 3) To help offset the school's paper use, Schultz and fellow Green Team advisor Lynn Schoenbauer ordered 200 tree saplings from the National Arbor Day Foundation. On a sunny, mild Saturday in May the group planted 31 trees. The rest were distributed to students to plant with their families.

The two teachers have initiated a number of projects with students in the four years the Green Team school club has been in existence, including Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares purchased by 8 fellow faculty members. The group has planted apple trees and a rain garden on school grounds. The rain garden was the first project, supported by a grant and facilitated

A newsletter for and by people who care about the future of life on the planet and want to do what they can to preserve and protect.

by local landscaper, Dave Sticha. They also set up a sharing cart in the high school lunchroom where students drop in unopened, unperishable food items, like fruit cups, which are then donated to the local food shelf.

This year they will be growing micro greens in their hydroponic indoor garden. It will yield nutritious sprouts which can be added to salads in the school lunch program. Concern for good nutrition is what motivated Karla to start the club and stay involved. "Kids don't know where real food comes from. As a health teacher, I need to foster and encourage kids to grow their own veggies."

Karla is full of ideas for the Green Team and works hard to bring them to fruition, while Lynn is doing the tough work of rewriting and teaching the environmental science curriculum. It takes a good deal of time and energy to prepare and teach this class. She hopes to give students an idea of how scientists get unbiased data to understand the state of the environment and the changes that will determine the future. (cont' p. 2)



The rain garden attracts monarch butterflies.

It was the Green Teams' first project, planted in 2018.

Lynn has her students do hands on activities like soil and water testing within an 8 mile radius of the school. The class makes use of a fish and wildlife habitat area in walking distance of the school, which sadly dried up during this severe year of drought in Scott County. "It gives us good data for an example of poor water quality," Lynn states.

She explains the focus of the class, "Environmental science is a broad topic. I try to stick to science, but I have to make them aware of the social issues and injustices related to our crashing environment."

Lynn has a \$300 budget for class supplies, and students pay \$20 to cover bus fees for the 5-6 field trips they take each year. The Green Team club, however, is dependent upon private donations, the CSA and the sale of tomato and pepper seedlings they plant in March for their spring plant sale.

What fuels the passion these two NPHS teachers pour into their work with students? Lynn states it succinctly: "For the love of HUMANS...we will not survive if we continue current habits!"

Francis Corner: from Pope Francis

There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions, and it is wonderful how education can bring about real changes in lifestyle. Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us, such as avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices. All of these reflect a generous and worthy creativity which brings out the best in human beings. (LS 2011)

We must not think that these efforts are not going to change the world. They benefit society, often unbeknown to us, for they call forth a goodness which, albeit unseen, inevitably tends to spread. Furthermore, such actions can restore our sense of self-esteem; they can enable us to live more fully and to feel that life on earth is worthwhile. (LS 212).



Plants grown from seed for the spring plant sale



The 2022 planting crew

The environmental class and service club involve both indoor and outdoor planting, giving students hands on experience.

October Eco Tips

Oct. 3: REDUCE/REUSE/RECYCLE

EASY: At home, avoid using paper, plastic, and Styrofoam plates, cups, and utensils.

CHALLENGING: Propose reducing/eliminating paper, plastic, and Styrofoam plates, cups, and utensils at your workplace, where you shop, school, factory

Oct. 10: TRANSPORTATION

EASY: Keep reusable water bottle/coffee mug, shopping bags in car

CHALLENGING: Drive a fuel-efficient vehicle such as a hybrid or electric car.

Oct. 17: WATER

EASY: Take a short shower rather than a bath, and shower less often

CHALLENGING: Install a solar water heating unit.

Oct. 24: CLOTHING

EASY: What clothes are 'best' to wear and purchase? The ones you already have

CHALLENGING: Buy less, skip the trendy fast fashion! Think about purchasing high quality and lasting items.

40. Oct. 31: RECYCLING GLASS

EASY: Generally, clean glass bottles and jars can be recycled in most curbside recycling programs. Do it. (The metal lid can also be recycled but remove it from the jar.)

CHALLENGING: Drinking glasses, light bulbs, mirrors, window glass are generally *not* accepted in curbside programs. Recycle light bulbs through hardware stores like Home Depot or Lowes. Donate mirrors to a thrift store. Become a recycling expert for your community by googling ways to recycle specialized glass products.

How many tree's worth of paper does a 1,250 student high school use in a year?

The New Prague school district consumes 20 pallets of paper yearly. That's 4 million pages and equivalent to 400 trees, according to Karla Schultz's calculations. Since the high school uses about 40% of the paper, their share would amount to 160 trees. The Green Team ordered and planted 200 trees.

Here are some good links on reducing paper usage. Every little bit helps!

<https://www.bralin.com/7-ways-to-reduce-your-paper-usage>

<https://www.smallfootprintfamily.com/30-ways-to-use-less-paper>

Coming in the November issue: A parish that actively works on good stewardship of the earth.

Contact Mary Higgins at mjgh5174@gmail.com to unsubscribe, contribute an article or give a comment. Feel free to suggest friends and families who might be interested.