

Published October 24th, 2012

JM Gets a New Hydration Station

Submitted by Stacy Giglio



JM's ECO Club members in front of the new Hydration Station. Photo Provided

turned into methane to produce electricity. The plant uses the electricity to operate, and sells excess power back to PG&E.

More than 300 pounds of food waste is diverted weekly at JM. It also improved its recycling collection and the two together were enough to reduce the number of trash pick-ups from twice a week to once a week, a savings of \$1,150 per month. In six months, the program saved JM and the Moraga School District over \$6,000, which was used to purchase the Hydration Station, pay for an ECO Club field trip, and some additional options on the club's wish list.

Last spring, JM custodian John Behr won the 2012 Contra Costa County Solid Waste Authority Custodian Award for his dedication to the new recycling program.

"I'm happy the money the ECO Club helped save by collecting food waste could come back to the students and our school. It's important for the kids to see that their hard work benefits their school," said Kim Lockett, JM Science Teacher and ECO Club Leader.

The Hydration Station idea isn't new; Orinda Intermediate School installed one over two years ago, and cut back on the number of bottled drinks provided with lunch. At their Green Summit meetings, OIS, JM and Stanley Intermediate School share ideas about how to make their schools more environmentally friendly. An average school child creates 67 pounds of trash a year, which provides opportunities on many levels to address the waste.

JM's ECO Club is comprised of about 30 students and seven teachers. They monitor the recycling and food waste disposal stations during lunchtime to make sure the waste is separated properly. JM previously had 30 trash cans on campus; these have been replaced with four recycling stations and only 7 trash cans. The ECO Club also sponsors Green Movies once a quarter, plans events for Earth Week, works with the hot lunch program to improve the containers used, and helps JM become a 'greener' school.

Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School installed its first "Hydration Station" at the school last month, and paid for it from savings the school achieved by diverting food waste and turning it into electrical energy.

The new Hydration Station is an automatic water dispenser for water bottles that turns on when it senses a bottle under the tap. Not only does the Hydration Station provide water to thirsty students, it also counts the number of plastic water bottles that have been saved as the Hydration Station is used.

"It's great to have a way to fill up your water bottle easily between classes. Before the new Hydration Station, I sometimes went all day without getting a drink," commented Kaveh Boostanpoor, a member of Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School's (JM) Environmental Conservation Organization (ECO) Club.

JM eighth grader Lev Garcia said, "I ride my bike to school so it's really helpful to have a place to fill up my water bottle on hot days."

Last year, JM's ECO Club began collecting food waste, and sending it off to the waste water treatment plant in Emeryville, where it was broken down by bacteria and

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA