

MoDOT's
2026

No  MORE
Trash! 

Trash Can
Contest!

Contest Entries





Category: Grades K-2

Entries: 2

School: East Elementary School, Jackson

Project Title: No Mo Trash in MO

Project Description: 1st-2nd Graders brainstormed and researched different types of animals/plants that are affected by litter in Missouri. Our 1st graders research birds in MO and were very knowledgeable about how trash impacts the birds in our area. The students sketched and drew the MO Dept. of Conservation logo and shared the load painting.

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CATEGORY WINNER

School: Dressel Elementary, St. Louis

Project Title: The Great Garbage Truck

Project Description: Our class made a trash truck out of trash can to show how important sanitation workers and their machines are to our community. Trash trucks help keep our streets, parks, and neighborhoods clean so our environment stays healthy. We used the colors green and gold to represent our school colors, but also to symbolize the green Earth and gold as something precious. This reminds us that our planet is valuable and worth protecting. Our project is a way to say thank you to sanitation workers for helping keep our Earth clean and free from litter and to remind others to take care of our Earth.



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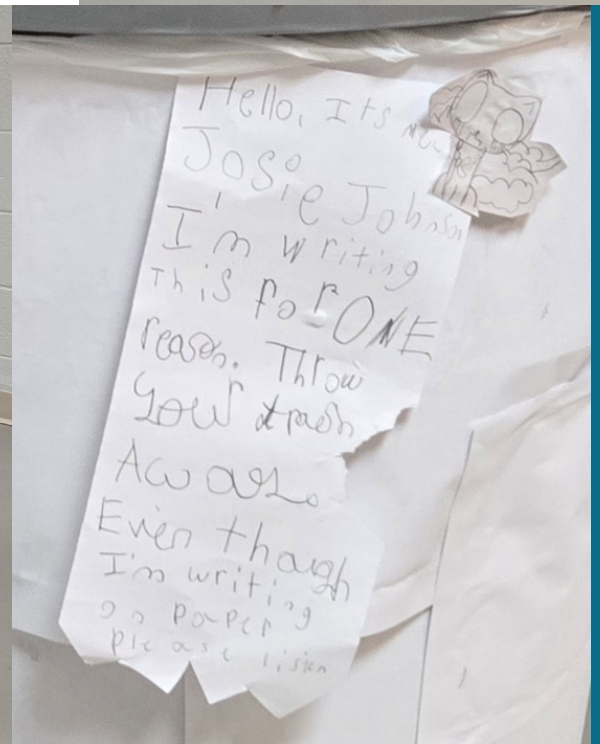
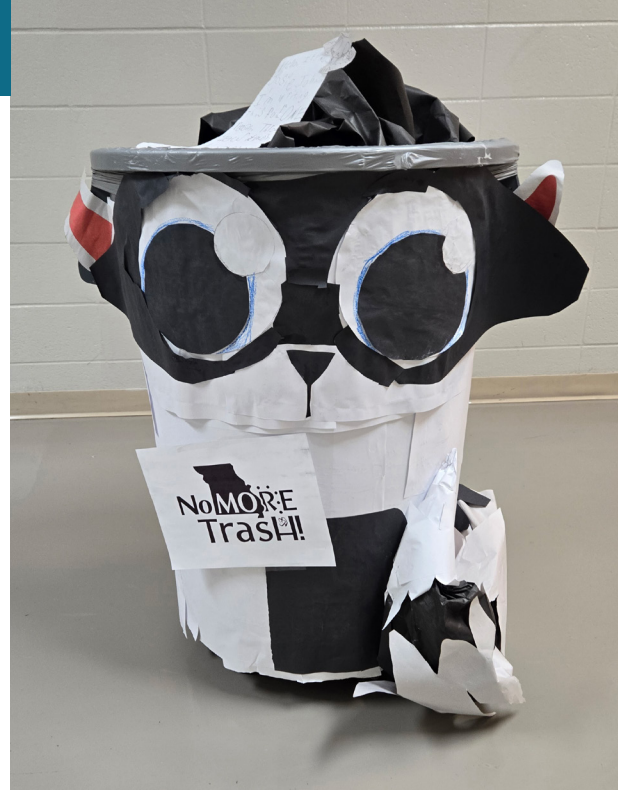
Category: Grades 3-5

Entries: 5

School: Freedom Elementary, St. Robert

Project Title: It's trash CAN, not trash cannot!

Project Description: Our project, "It's trash CAN, not trash cannot!", turns an ordinary trash can into an adorable raccoon with an important message. We wanted to show that trash doesn't have to be boring—or ignored. While our character is cute, we encourage people to think twice before tossing things carelessly and to take responsibility for their waste. Our furry wild friends also depend on us to keep our environment clean. A trash can isn't just for garbage—it's a reminder that small actions, like throwing things away properly, can make a big difference. Our students combined creativity and teamwork to recreate their raccoon with recycled materials. When we respect our environment, we create a cleaner, happier place for everyone.



School: Holy Family School, Freeburg

Project Title: Keep your junk in your trunk

Project Description: People empty their drinks or food and just feel it is more appropriate to deposit their trash out their window into the ditches, fields, and streams.

The kids were active members that cleaned Adopt A Highway sections. There was nothing more disheartening to pick up all the miles of highway in the morning and by that evening new trash thrown out. People would not appreciate the kids walking on their porch or throw trash in their yard and then their pets get sick from eating it. Just the same for the wild animals getting sick or stuck in the trash thrown out of careless people's cars. When heavy rains flood the ditches the trash could also get in streams. We really enjoyed the Adopt A Highway and worked it. Our roads are filled with LOTS of trash since that is gone.



CATEGORY WINNER

School: Graden Elementary, Parkville

Project Title: If You Like to Play, Throw Your Trash Away!

Project Description: Fourth grade gifted students explored sustainability and the impact humans have on the environment while participating in the No MOre Trash! Trash Can Contest. During discussions about litter in their community, many students shared that they often see trash left behind at school sporting events. This helped students identify a problem they wanted to address.

Students used a design process to brainstorm, sketch, and build a trash can prototype that encourages people to throw away their trash during games and events in the school gym. To support sustainability, students repurposed old gym equipment instead of using new materials.

Their trash can features bright visuals and the slogan "If you like to play, throw your trash away" to connect with the sports setting and remind people to keep shared spaces clean. Students practiced collaboration, creative problem solving, and environmental responsibility while learning how design can encourage positive behavior in their community.

NO MORE TRASH



[Click here to view the video portion of this group's submission on YouTube.](#)



School: East Elementary School, Jackson

Project Title: Guardians of the Trash

Project Description: Inspired by Groot from Guardians of the Galaxy, these 3rd-4th graders want to keep the Earth healthy. Groot is a great way to promote taking care of our current Earth to better prepare for our time in space.



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School: Dressel Elementary, St. Louis

Project Title: Catch the Trash

Project Description: "Catch the Trash" trash can has a Missouri river that is being cleaned by boats. When the river and land are clean it is good for our animals, plants, and us! The river is polluted at the bottom but a boat with a net is cleaning it and then the fish and wildlife are happy in the clean water. The large paper boat made from repurposed bulletin board paper says "throwing it in the can is better for the garbage man" to remind people to throw trash away and recycle instead of littering and polluting our streams and water. The trash can has recycled paper, bottles, and old Missouri Conservation and Xplore magazines, all collected at school. The animals are animals found in Missouri. This was made by our school's Environmental Team.



[Click here to view the video portion of this group's submission on YouTube.](#)





Category: Grades 6-8

Entries: 14

School: Republic Middle School, Republic

Project Title: Pink Edition Red Bull Trash Can

Project Description: Your trash doesn't have wings to throw itself away, so put it in a trashcan! Our trashcan was inspired by the very popular Red Bull company. We chose to design this trash can as a red bull energy drink to draw attention to a fun and popular concept by the eyes of people with their trash. Our goal is to reduce littering by making throwing your trash away just a little bit more fun.



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School: Pleasant View R-VI, Trenton

Project Title: "Make Way" for No MOre Trash!

Project Description: Maui- Shapeshifter, Demigod of the Wind and Sea, Hero of Men (and Women) would like EVERYONE to "Make Way For No MOre Trash!" Middle School students at Pleasant View R-VI have been promoting the importance of keeping the environment free of litter by displaying their decorated trash. Students constructed this trash can using a variety of materials and supplies in a creative fashion. Additionally students even conducted a trash clean up day and picked up trash around the school and roads. We want for everyone to "Make Way For No MOre Trash!"



[Click here to view the video portion of this group's submission on YouTube.](#)



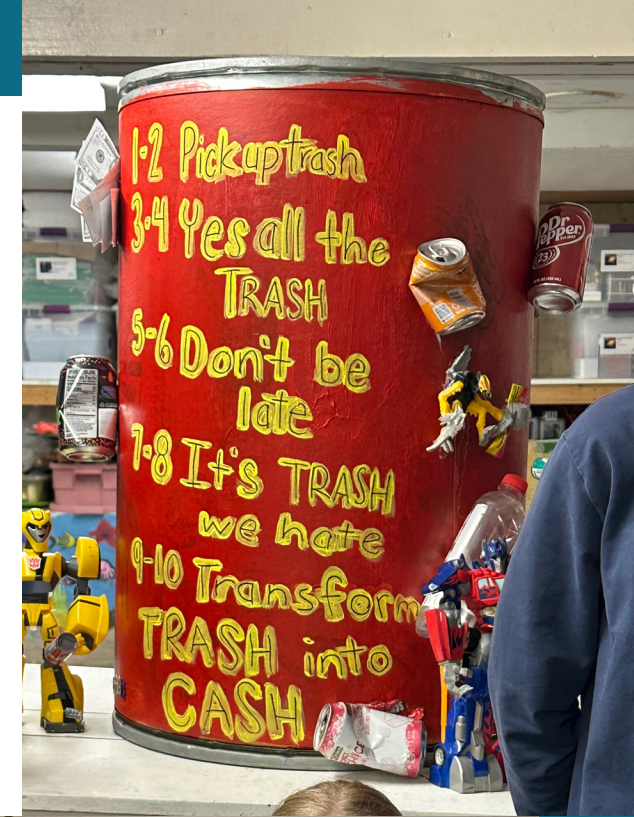
School: Holy Family School, Freeburg

Project Title: Transform Trash into Cash

Project Description:

- 1-2 Pick Up Trash
- 3-4 YES all the Trash
- 5-6 Don't be Late
- 7-8 It's The Trash we Hate
- 9-10 Transform Trash into Cash

The concept was seeing the PreK students playing with the toy monster Transformers and fthe Saying evolved and gives people especially kids Oh \$\$\$\$ yes!!!!



School: New Franklin Middle School, New Franklin

Project Title: We Be Ballin' Cuz The Trash Be Fallin'

Project Description: The trash can is representing a basketball goal. Since our school is really into basketball we thought the students would really take putting their trash in this can more seriously. And they really enjoyed this theme overall. They even included our class pet Bruce the Bearded Dragon!!!



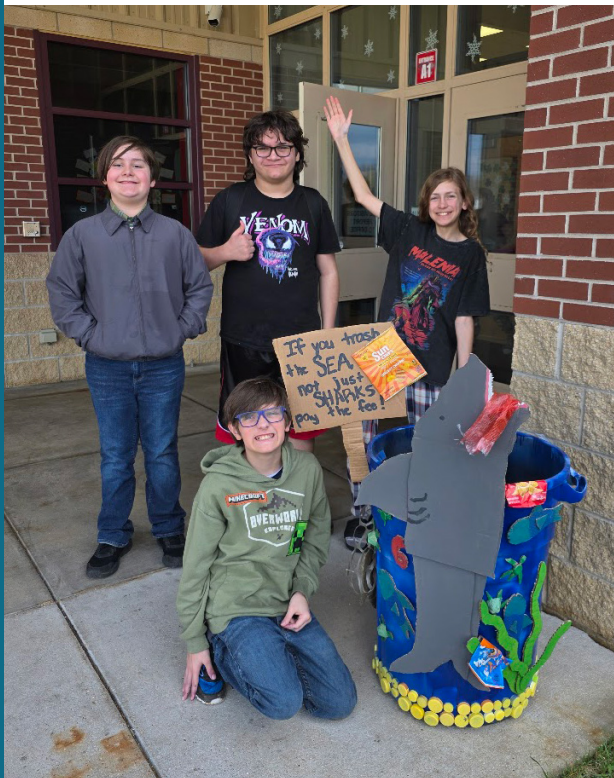
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School: St. James Middle School, St. James

Project Title: If you trash the sea, not just sharks pay the fee.

Project Description: STEM club students in 6th-8th grade designed and created this trash can. They first came up with a design of the shark coming out of the water, then other animals that are in the sea. They agreed on a slogan (title) to go with their design. The idea is that our world and all that lives within is a parallel to the ocean. When one thing is affected by litter, there is a ripple effect. Litter can hurt every living thing, from trees, plants, and animals, to humans. They used recycled boxes from the school cafeteria, as well as collected caps from containers. They gathered trash from school and recycled materials like egg cartons to build every part of their design. The only thing they did not reuse was the glue it took to hold it together, and the paint they used to decorate it.



[Click here to view the video portion of this group's submission on YouTube.](#)



School: Canton R-V, Canton

Project Title: Harry Tarry's Community

Project Description: Harry Tarry wants to make the world a better place. One half is already clean and beautiful, the other half is dirty and trashy. He needs your help to help clean the rest of our planet starting right here in Missouri! Make sure to pick up your trash and recycle the things that can be recycled. There are specific things you can recycle, not everything is recyclable. These things have a 1, 2, or a 5 on the bottom, these are the ones you can recycle. Some things you can recycle are cardboard, paperboard, paper, glass, plastic bottles, and aluminum cans.

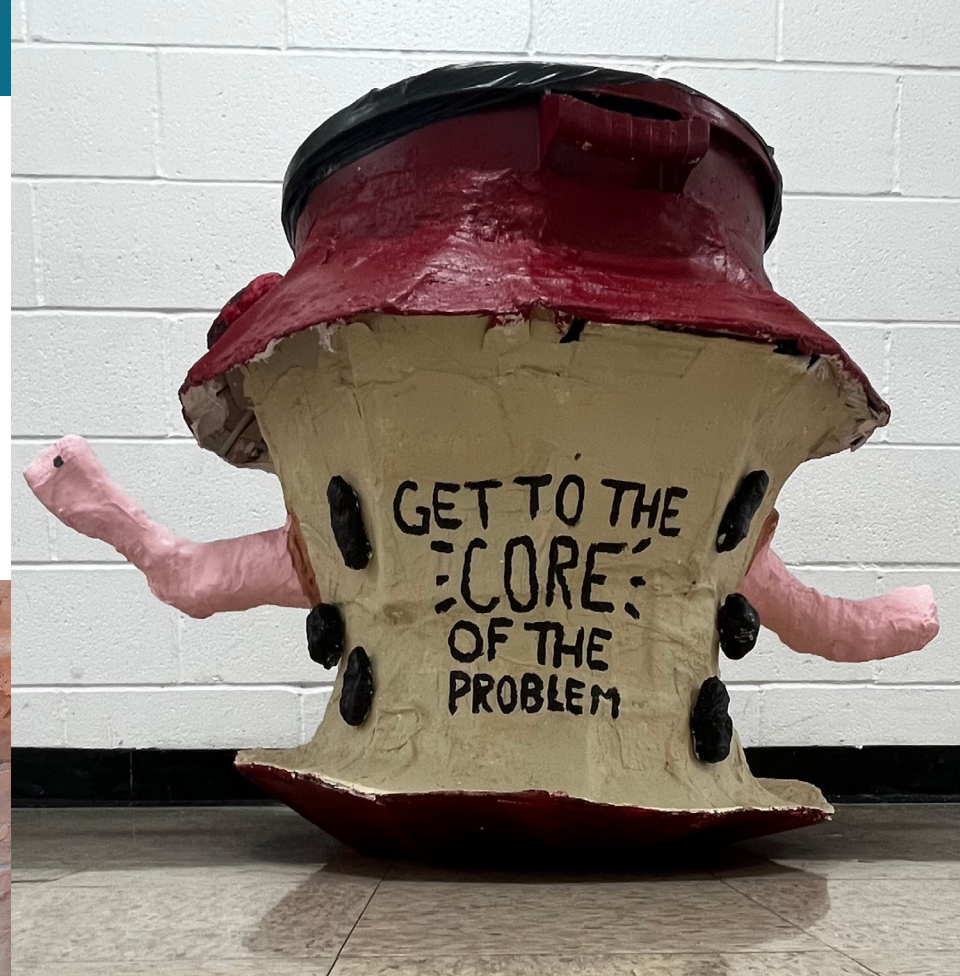
The reason why Harry Tarry is making a mission like this is because of his backstory. Due to pollution his family died, he doesn't want this to happen to others or again to himself. If we start helping here in Missouri, we can help spread awareness around the world.



School: Festus Middle School, Festus

Project Title: Apple Core

Project Description: After brainstorming ideas for the No MORE Trash Contest, students used recyclables like cardboard and newspaper to create the form of an apple core and critters for their can. Then they covered the builds with plaster gauze and painted their anti-trash slogan, "GET TO THE CORE OF THE PROBLEM!"



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School: Odessa Middle School, Odessa

Project Title: Alien Invasion

Project Description: Our 6th grade art club at OMS created a alien invasion trashcan to beam all the trash away! No More Trash!!



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School: Fisk Elementary School, Fisk

Project Title: Be the Solution, Not the Pollution

Project Description: The 7/8STEM and 7/8Art classes collaborated on this project. The STEM students submitted potential slogans and voted on their favorite. The art students then created several designs inspired by the slogan. Both classes came together to vote on the designs and select the one that best matched the slogan. Then the chaos began, as they worked together to use trash from around the school to bring the design to life. They even made the net out of old hoodie, shoe, and pant strings lying around. Once it was all finished, they took the trash can to the local city park and participated in a clean-up day. This project inspired them to launch a self-campaign to ensure that both their neighborhoods and the school stayed cleaner by encouraging others to pick up any trash they saw, whether it was their own or not.



CATEGORY WINNER

School: Weaubleau R3, Weaubleau

Project Title: I Speak for the Trees, Don't Litter Please

Project Description: We used the Dr. Seuss Lorax Theme to make a colorful and pleasing to the eye trash can. We used paper mach'e over over a wire base to make a Armature Sculpture. We used a variety of materials such as puff balls and shaggy fabric to decorate the Lorax and the Truffalu forrest. We worked together to draw and paint the details on the trash can. We used cardboard and paint to make the sign. We worked well as a team and we are very proud of our Trash can.



School: Nipher Middle School, Kirkwood

Project Title: Keep Peanut One of a Kind!

Project Description: As a beloved fixture at the Powder Valley Nature Center, Peanut the turtle represents the beauty of our local wildlife. Our project, "Keep Peanut One of a Kind", seeks to eliminate waste to ensure a safer environment for species like her. The installation features a model of Peanut swimming through a stream filled with actual trash recovered from our school grounds. This serves as a powerful visual testament to the daily survival challenges animals face when human waste enters their natural habitats.



School: Grundy County R5, Galt

Project Title: Don't Litter, Save Every Critter

Project Description: 7th and 8th grade Middle School Science club members at Grundy County R5 are encouraging others to save every critter by throwing away their trash instead of littering.



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School: Hermann Middle School, Hermann

Project Title: Save the Turtles

Project Description: Our 6th grade Exploratory classes wanted to focus on saving the turtles as it has been a big thing for them this school year. Instead of just doing the whole ocean they wanted to go in on one animal they really enjoy as a class and that is turtles. Their inspiration led the class to create a giant turtle stuck in netting from littering, holding the No MOre Trash paper to encourage all people to stop littering and recycle. They came up with a game plan to paint a trash can green for his shell, using string in our classroom for the netting and finally taking boxes that were laying around the school, painting them brown to add the turtles body. They then took paper plates to create eyes and a mouth for the turtle. Finished by adding cans from students to show how littering hurts ocean animals.



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School: Highland High School, Lewistown

Project Title: No S'more Trash

Project Description: The idea for No S'MORE Trash comes from a fun play on words using the classic campfire treat, a s'more. Almost everyone recognizes s'mores, and they remind people of camping, hanging out with friends and family, and enjoying the outdoors. Camping is also a popular activity in Missouri, so the theme connects really well with the state's parks and outdoor spaces.

The message behind the design is simple: there should be "no s'more trash." It's a fun way to remind people to clean up after themselves and help keep Missouri's parks beautiful. Using a familiar and positive image like a s'more helps the message stand out and makes it easy for people of all ages to understand.



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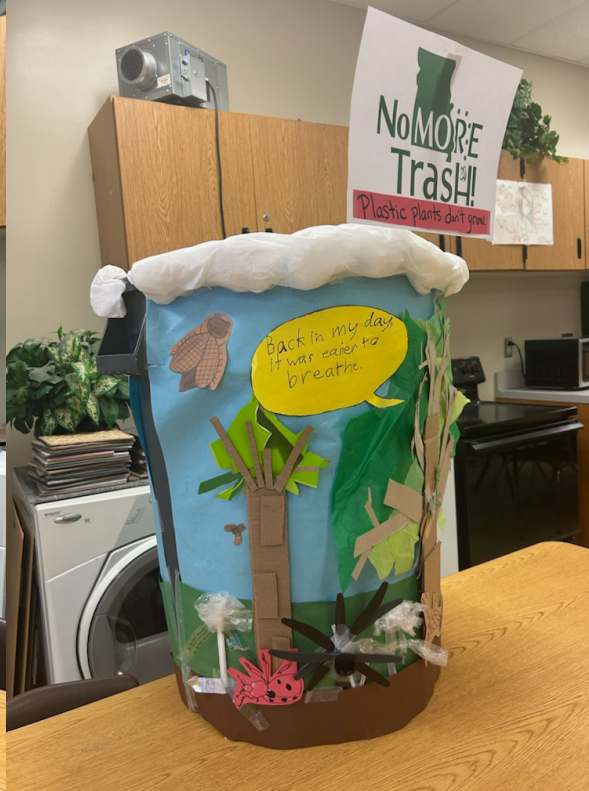
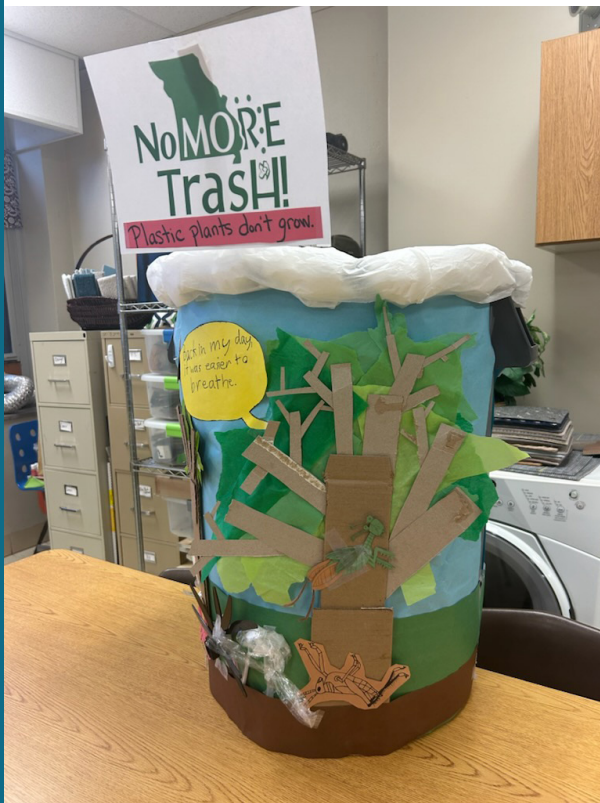
Category: Grades 9-12

Entries: 14

School: Hickman High School, Columbia

Project Title: Plastic Plants Don't Grow

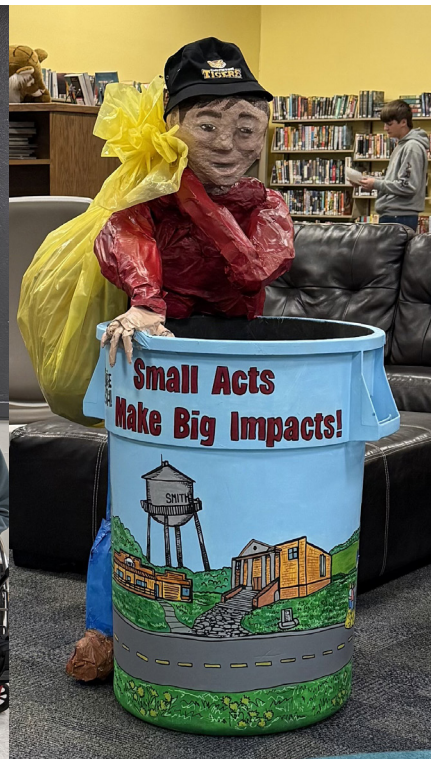
Project Description: Littering has an adverse effect on all living things - as seen by the dead insects. Trash contaminates the soil making it harder to grow healthy plants - as depicted by the plastic flowers made of common litter. Lastly, debris contributes to air pollution, causing stress on trees - as shown by the speech bubble from one older tree to the younger tree with stunted growth.



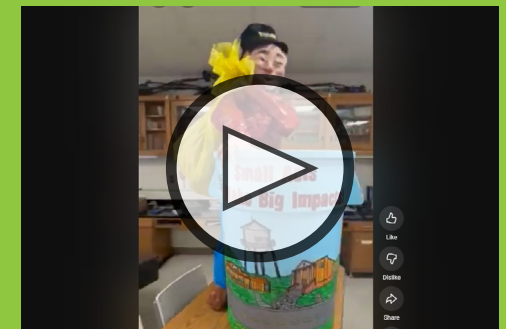
School: Smithton R-VI, Smithton

Project Title: Small Acts Make Big Impacts

Project Description: Our trash can figure is made out of milk jugs, water bottles, plastic coffee cans and paper mache. The plastic containers were collected from our recycling program the environmental science class supervises at our school. This program has recycled over 1000 plastic containers so far this school year. We wanted the trash can to serve as a recruitment tool to involve more students in our environmental science road "pick-up" days. The trash can exhibits some of the town's landmarks, as well as our students doing their part to keep the community clean. As we started working on this project, some art club students took interest and wanted to get involved, creating a cross-curricular experience.



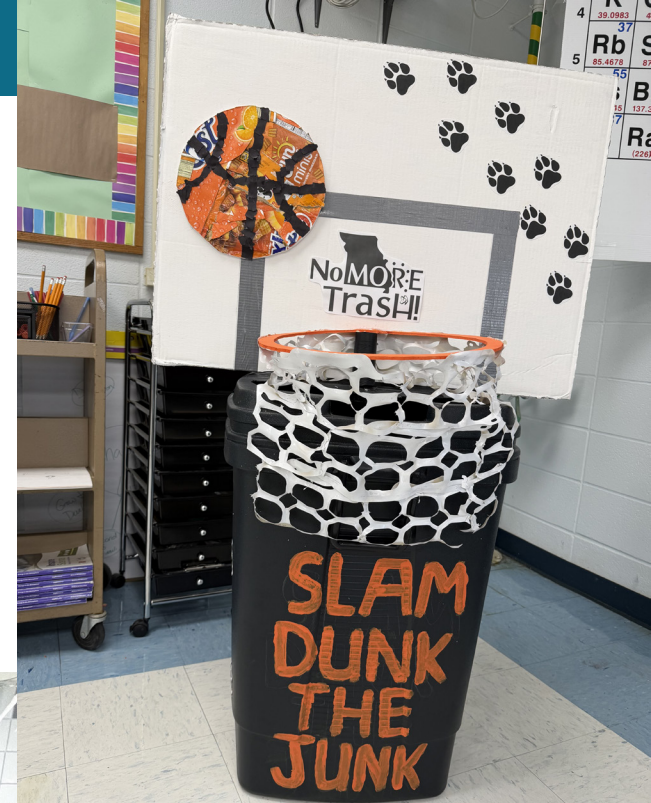
[Click here to view the video portion of this group's submission on YouTube.](#)



School: Grundy County R5

Project Title: Slam Dunk the Junk

Project Description: The 9th grade Physical Science class at Grundy County R5 is slam dunking the junk with this basketball themed trash can created from mostly recycled materials. Key features include the netting which is made from recycled plastic bottle rings and the basketball which is made from recycled orange food wrappers.



School: Ellington High School

Project Title: Have Good Taste Throw Out Your Waste

Project Description: These high school students thought "trash is messy and nasty let's put some sparkle on our trash can!" The bling has been catching everyone's eye around school. It is used in the cafeteria area and will be used for the school wide campus clean up on Earth Day!



School: Lafayette High School

Project Title: Please Respect the Locals

Project Description: Our students were challenged to transform recycled materials and everyday trash into works of art that raise awareness of pollution in rivers and oceans. Using discarded materials such as plastic packaging, cups, and cardboard, students designed and constructed fish and other sea creatures that appear to swim through a container filled with waste. The goal was to highlight the contrast between marine life and the pollution that threatens it. By reusing “trash”, students explored how art can communicate an environmental message while giving new life to discarded objects.

The phrase “Please Respect the Locals” reminds viewers that oceans and rivers are home to countless species. When trash enters these ecosystems, it directly impacts the animals that live there. Through this sculpture, students hope to spark conversation about how human choices affect aquatic environments and encourage people to be more mindful about waste, recycling, and protecting natural habitats.



CATEGORY & GRAND PRIZE WINNER

School: Spokane High School, Spokane

Project Title: Kraken Down on Trash!

Project Description: Purple Kraken (Thoe) collecting trash in his water to help keep thing clean.

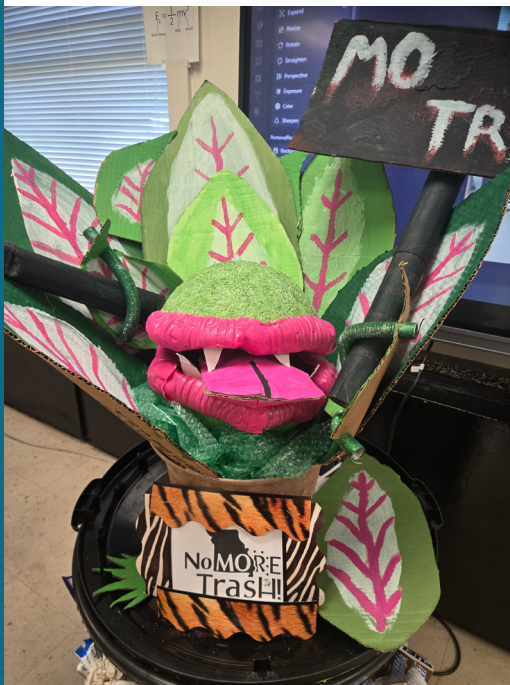


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School: Richland RIV School District, Richland

Project Title: NoMOTrash - Feed Me Mo Trash

Project Description: For our project, we're using recycled materials. We went to the cafeteria to collect cardboard boxes and are building the Venus Flytrap from the Rocky Horror Show. We're also reusing water bottles, bubble wrap, paper, and more to bring this project to life. We opted to do the Rocky Horror Show as many students in the HS Ecology class are fans of the original movie. We are using paint that has been donated to us from a local Girl Scout Troop. We chose specific colors to represent different elements of an ecosystem (blue-water, yellow-flowers, etc.). The trash on the can is actually trash from our Ecology classroom trash can. The 30-gallon can was privately donated. The students worked on the project for about 6 weeks.



School: Plato RV High School, Plato

Project Title: The Grouch of Highway 32

Project Description: The Grouch of Hwy 32 - Plato RV School District is located in Plato, Missouri aside MO Highway 32. This project was complete by students in the Physical Science and Art classes as a cross-functional project. This project focus is to increase awareness and understanding of how precious our Earth's natural resources are and simple ways each of us can contribute to a cleaner Earth for our current and future generations.



School: North Shelby School District, Shelbyville

Project Title: Sea Turtle

Project Description: The trash can show how a sea turtle can be trapped inside a plastic bag.



School: Wheatland High School, Wheatland

Project Title: Think of MO Animals Before You Toss

Project Description: WHS Ecology students created this slogan placed on their painted and recycled trash can gifted to our class by the custodial staff.

"Your Litter, Our Loss

Think of MO Animals

Before You Toss"

This can was made and displayed as a reminder that careless litter can disrupt animal behavior, drawing unwanted invasives, and create dietary problems for Missouri wildlife. Students used many recycled materials including already read Missouri Conservationist and Xplore magazine pages featuring Missouri animal images for the slogan lettering. These adorable paper mache animals found in Southwest Missouri get the message across with their signs and litter they have collected. Around the can you will find MO animal identification tags to describe the animals and the effects of trash in their Missouri habitat. Beyond displaying the can students will be going mobile with their trash can to share with elementary classrooms the dangers of litter to MO wildlife.

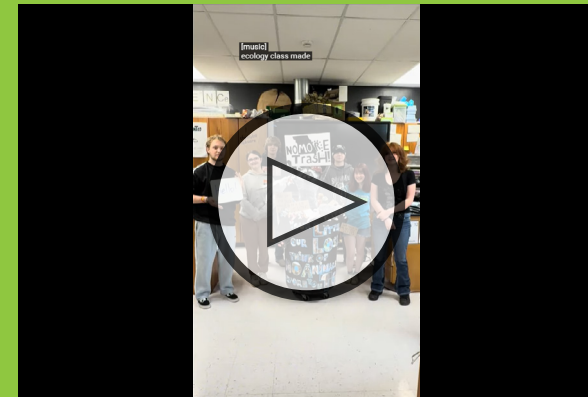


Virginia Opossum

Didelphis virginiana

A common residential marsupial known for their nocturnal behavior and tendency to play "possum" and feign death when threatened. For those who wish to see these drama divas put their trick on display you can find them largely hiding in hollow trees eating almost any insect which crawls along their path. This categorization leads them to be called "general foragers" by most scientists. Although don't be fooled, they don't need your trash because they can find food for themselves. Opossums are natural scavengers, but they are not designed to digest plastic or heavily processed human refuse, which can make them sick. So let the opossums eat the ticks carrying Lyme disease and not your carelessly thrown litter.

[Click here to view the video portion of this group's submission on YouTube.](#)

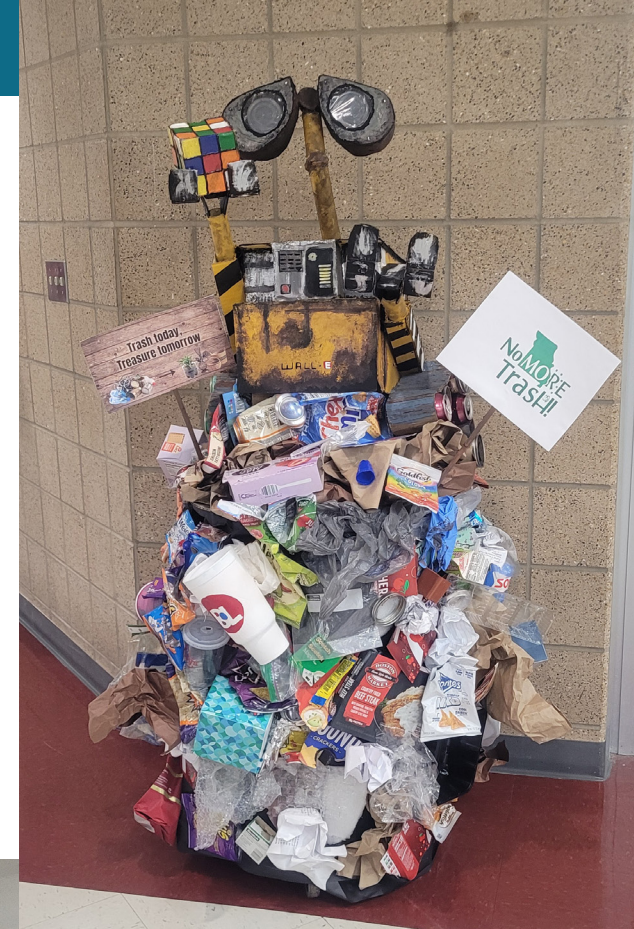


School: Rolla High School, Rolla

Project Title: Trash today, Treasure tomorrow

Project Description: Rolla High School ECO Club constructed a Wall-e themed trashcan from all recycled materials. The club used various materials that included cardboard boxes and tubes, plastic containers, and cans. They picked the theme "Trash today, treasure tomorrow" because recycling and repurpose is something the club believes in.

By constructing this unique trashcan, students demonstrated that waste can be reimagined and given new life. Their project goes beyond simple recycling; it's a visual representation of sustainable thinking and innovative problem-solving. The Wall-e themed design not only captures the playful spirit of the beloved animated character but also serves as an educational tool. It reminds everyone that what might seem like trash can be transformed into something meaningful and valuable with imagination and commitment to the environment.



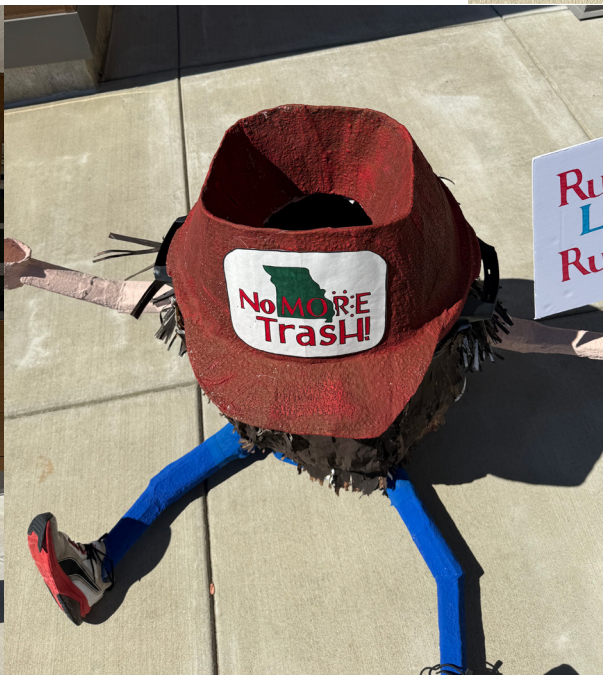
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School: Hartville High School, Hartville

Project Title: Run, Litter, Run

Project Description: The Hartville High School trash can is designed to look like Forrest Gump during the famous running scene from the movie Forrest Gump, when he runs across the country simply because he feels like it. We recreated his hat, face, hair, and beard to closely match how he looks in the film. The front of his hat has the "No More Trash" logo, and there is a hole in the top where people can place their trash inside the can. His beard and hair are made from recycled magazine pages that were painted brown, helping reuse materials while giving the trash can texture and character. It also has arms and legs made out of cardboard. He is wearing old shoes to show that he is running. In his hand he is holding a sign that says "Run Litter Run!"; encouraging people to pick up trash and keep the environment clean.



School: Bayless High School, St. Louis

Project Title: Snoopy Saves the World

Project Description: Bayless High School has a very diverse population with students from various countries and cultures. The trash can design depicts how we are a global community. The world features an icon, Snoopy, as a "Litter Gitter" sweeping away trash. We created flags in the shape of our hands around the base to show our diverse heritage and unity. We placed clouds around the base saying "Save the Earth" in different languages. This multilingual design suggests inclusion for all. The slogans "Don't Trash Our Planet" and "Save Me" are dialogue balloons that serve as messages from the Earth. The world and Snoopy sculpture atop the trash can is removable for easy access to empty the litter. Each component of the trash can was designed and created by different student art teams within the high school art class.



[Click here to view the video portion of this group's submission on YouTube.](#)



School: Troy Buchanan High School, Mowcow Mills

Project Title: Wall-E: Earth gave us everything,
Please don't give her trash.

Project Description: The Troy Traction Team worked together to create Wall-E from Disney. Wall-E goes to protect the Earth and we felt Wall-E represented our efforts in promoting students and our community to stop littering and to help other to be aware of the impact trash and littering has on our Earth.

