



## **Sacred Heart School Goes Green**

“Mother Nature doesn’t eat garbage!”, declared a Grade Three student at Sacred Heart School, Prince George. Our students and staff have been making a very conscious effort to reduce our environmental footprint and to increase awareness of the importance of the three r's of recycling, reducing and reusing. The classrooms and our school office have paper recycling bins in which scrap paper is collected. Our principal, Mr. Kevin Harnish, takes this paper to a recycling facility on a regular basis. We have many bins for the collection of beverage containers. These are taken regularly by parent volunteers to a bottle depot to raise funds for the Grade 7 annual trip to Camp Morice in June.

Believe it or not, the Grade Two/Three beverage container recycling accounts are recorded in a notebook made from 100% original elephant dung paper and recycled paper! It doesn't smell, honest!

Our school has strong links with the REAPS Composting Garden at Ft. George Park. Our Grade Four/Five and Two/Three classrooms look after worms from the garden. These tiny classroom pets are vital to our survival on earth as they aerate the soil and create castings which are helpful to soil fertility. The children donate organic waste from their lunches (apple cores, orange peels, carrot tops, vegetable stems, etc.) to feed the worms. Each month Terri McClymont from the REAPS Garden visits the worms to check their state of health. In the spring the worms are sorted from the castings by the children and a fresh bin is started. The castings are used in the school garden to add nutrients to the soil. The garden is a project begun by Mrs. Marie Perison. In May the students plant the garden and look after it until the summer holidays. During the summer teachers and school families take turns watering the garden until the fall harvest. Vegetables like cabbages, broccoli, carrots, and potatoes are grown along with beautiful flowers. Children love things that grow and everything about a garden appeals to them. They love to plant seeds and they watch on a daily basis to see if they have begun to sprout.

Each year the Grade Two/Three students participate in the REAPS Waste Reduction Challenge. For one week in October, the garbage from the classroom is weighed each day and the total submitted to REAPS. The class with the least amount of garbage per student for that week is declared the winner. This year the Grade Two/Three students won \$100 for their efforts.

Sacred Heart School also collects cell phones for recycling. These are sent to Alberta where they are remanufactured and donated to developing countries.

Our school participates in the annual Pitch-In- Canada clean-up campaign and in SEEDS (Society, Environment Energy Development Studies) Foundation programs. We have a regular



schedule for yard clean-up with each grade taking a turn to ensure no litter is left in the playground after the lunch recess.

Sacred Heart students are delighted to receive donations of yarn and knitting needles. They love to recycle this yarn into scarves, bags, and other knitting projects. Knitting Club members regularly recycle chopsticks into knitting needles. These are just the right length and diameter for little hands.

Because of our geographical location our students are able to take field trips into the community without using a drop of gas! We can walk to the Coliseum for skating, Two Rivers Gallery, Four Seasons Pool, Ft. George Park, Cottonwood Park, REAPS Compost Garden, Exploration Place Museum, the Public Library, The Civic Centre and City Hall. Not only do we not use gas, we gain the health benefits of waling to these venues. What's not to like about that?

During the Christmas season it is estimated that we produce up to 25% more waste than normal. Much of this is due to gift wrap. Sacred Heart School invites you to consider using cloth or paper gift bags which can be re-used for your Christmas gift-giving. This is a simple but effective way of doing your part for the environment. The bags can be re-used by the recipients thus avoiding waste. Also, don't forget to bring some cloth bags when grocery shopping!

Mother Nature doesn't eat garbage and the students and staff at Sacred Heart School are doing their part to ensure that they leave the environment in a healthy state for the generations to come.