

## Green goes elementary: New program teaches students about sustainable living

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Several children put on a skit Monday for their school that involved a visit from the aliens of "Planet Guava," where the habits of residents there caused a buildup of trash that was consuming the land.

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The aliens told earthlings to reuse, reduce and recycle, so this planet doesn't end up like theirs.

Caughlin Ranch Elementary School was being introduced to the GreenPower program, which supports and promotes educating students in renewable energy and incorporating conscious living practices. It's a partnership among Desert Research Institute, NV Energy and their customers.

To put things in perspective, school staff and some students weighed trash produced in the cafeteria after lunch one day last week and took pictures of the filled bags.

"It was 139 pounds," fourth grade teacher Traci Loftin said during a school assembly. "That's more than an average sixth-grader weighs, and that's just one day. How many pounds is that in a 36-week school year?"

The math came out to 25,020 pounds.

"That's 10 tons of trash," Loftin said.

Fayth Ross, DRI GreenPower outreach administrator, said Caughlin Ranch became the most recent member of the 10-year-old program, which has 35 schools in the program statewide.

Each member school gets \$500 worth of materials annually. Materials could include teaching supplies, recycle bins, model solar cars and model wind turbines. The program is funded by donations from customers who pay extra on their energy bills.

A handful of Caughlin Ranch students are promoting the program schoolwide.

"I decided it was a good thing to do," said Brian Ruiz, 9. "I like helping our planet and all that stuff and growing plants."

Anthony Bateman, 9, said he hopes his classmates will think twice before tossing recyclables in the garbage.

"No one ever recycles, and they throw away trash and don't care about it," he said. "They should care about what they throw away, like plastic bottles."

Jill Rovetti, 9, has confidence in her classmates. "I think they'll save their plastic bottles and maybe reuse their plastic bags," she said. "It's important because we don't want the world to be like a landfill."

Garbage weigh-ins after lunch will be held to see how much more the school can keep out of landfills and get into recycling bins.



In an effort to cut back on plastic bottle waste, Anthony Bateman, left, Jill Rovetti and Brian Ruiz from Caughlin Ranch Elementary School service club are selling reusable bottles for students to carry drinks. The GreenPower program promotes educating student in renewable energy. (Provided to the Reno Gazette-Journal)



### HOW TO HELP

The GreenPower program is funded through donations from NV Energy customers, who add a few dollars to their monthly electrical bill. To join the program, log on to [www.dri.edu/how-you-can-help](http://www.dri.edu/how-you-can-help).

### ON THE WEB






For more information, log on to [www.greenpower.dri.edu](http://www.greenpower.dri.edu).

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