

In only the third year of existence, Coventry High School's Earth Club has been involved in numerous efforts of energy saving and waste reduction. Projects we are working on or have completed include composting and recycling with our school-wide distribution of special blue recycling bins and the construction of compost boxes. We have written a contract for teachers to promise to be more environmentally friendly and we won the Keep Connecticut Cool Challenge for climate control in the high school. Thus, continuing these efforts is of great importance to our club, school, and community. Plans have already been formulated to achieve this by purchasing solar panels, a can crusher, and an Earth Tub. The funds provided through this contest are needed in order to make these plans a reality.

Today in our more environmentally conscious world, composting is a topic heard about more and more. To some, it is an old concept that has been around for some time now but, to others, it is a new technique to help the environment. To start a composting program, many materials need to be used to achieve a healthy goal of decomposing food for future use in gardens around the school. Originally, a plan was set to build a wooden compost bin from materials in the school. This bin can take some time and also is too small to hold the capacity of the compostable foods served in the cafeteria each day. To decompose the food faster, and on a much larger scale, a new technology is needed. This technology is the Earth Tub. Developed to handle large-scale composting such as in a school, the Earth Tub is able to decompose foods faster and easier. An auger is set in the middle of the large bin, powered manually to mix foods and able to handle more seasonal conditions. The tub will greatly accelerate the composting program so the environmental results will show quickly and be very effective. The tub will also prove to save our school a considerable amount of waste money. Unfortunately, to add such an asset to the school, the Earth club would require \$9,000, a goal that would enlighten the spirits of our members to begin a powerful composting program.

Another goal of our club is to more efficiently dispose of the many large, metal cans used daily in our school's kitchen. We have several bins that hold metal recyclables and get picked up. This, however, is getting quite expensive since our school pays a flat fee each time the bin is picked up regardless of how many cans are inside. If we had an electric can crusher, we could reduce the amount of bins we have because more cans would fit per bin. However, in

today's economy school funding is limited. Therefore, with the prize money we would be able to fund the can crusher and so much more. \$1, 500 may not appear to be expensive, but in public schools, funding is restricted. This machine would be ideal for our school because it is big enough to crush larger cafeteria cans as well as small metal juice cans.

Finally, our club has been looking into installing solar panels on a portion of the roof on our building. With this energy-saving addition to our eco-friendly effort, we could really begin to make a dent in our electricity costs and raise awareness of green options. It would also serve as an educational opportunity, as science students could learn about and understand alternative energy systems at close range. With the proper funding, this possibility could turn into a reality and we could come that much closer to making our school a green one.

Throughout the history of Earth Club at Coventry High School we have been able to increase environmental awareness of the students as well as increase the environmental friendliness of the school building. We have been fortunate enough to receive award money for our work in the past and with it we were able to replace Styrofoam lunch trays with plastic ones. If we were to receive this grant money we would be able to further our contribution to the green movement in our school by purchasing a can crusher, Earth Tub, and solar panels.