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Fourth-grader leaves mark on school recycling project

By Hailey Stolze / Leader Staff Writer Feb 8, 2018



Joslyn Stamp, 10, at Pilgrim Lutheran Childcare and Education Center Thursday with markers collected to be recycled. Stamp started a ColorCycle Marker program in Bellevue because she's passionate about the environment.

Photo by Hailey Stolze

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When many see 10-year-old Joslyn Stamp around town, they pass off used-up markers for her to recycle.

The Fairview Elementary School fourth-grader collects hundreds of used markers and sends them to Crayola, which converts them into energy as part of its ColorCycle initiative. Any type of marker can be recycled, including dry erase, permanent and highlighters.

Interested in the environment, Joslyn was researching ways she could recycle online.

“I don’t want this world to look junky and because I don’t want this whole entire world to be a trash can,” she said.

Joslyn learned about ColorCycle and in October wrote letters to Fairview teachers asking them to participate in the program. Kindergarten, third-, fourth- and fifth-grade classes, among others, agreed.

Joslyn didn’t expect many students to care about her project, but to her surprise students collected 100 markers on the first day by going through shared marker bins.

The children are so excited to help, Joslyn has to double check that all the markers are actually out of ink before sending them off.

Being exposed to marker recycling has motivated many of Joslyn’s classmates to recycle in other ways, she said.

Her mother, Margaret Stamp, was supportive of her taking on this marker recycling project, but told Joslyn that if she was going to do it, she needed to take charge of it on her own. Joslyn’s stuck to that, Margaret said.

“She does it all,” Margaret said. “I’m not too involved in it.”

Joslyn picks up markers from various locations at least once a month. She counts the markers with the help of her sister, kindergartner Maggie, and they package them and ship the markers off. Crayola covers shipping costs.

It's gotten way bigger than Joslyn ever imagined, she said. So far she's recycled around 800 markers.

Along with the Fairview classrooms, markers are collected at a Birchcrest Elementary School first-grade classroom, a St. Columbkille Catholic School kindergarten class, Pilgrim Lutheran Childcare and Education Center, the Plattsmouth public library, the Cass County 4H Extension Office and Trinity MOPS of Papillion monthly meetings.

She promises she'll keep the year-round program running, even after she moves on to middle school.

Joslyn said she's been interested in helping the environment for a long time. One day, during a trip to the zoo, Joslyn realized she wanted to help clean up the planet for the animals.

"I love animals so much; I'm so fascinated by them," Joslyn said. "I wanted to do some more to help."

Before starting her marker recycling program, Joslyn started a small animal club at school during recess. She and a few friends raise money by doing chores and saving birthday money to adopt animals from wildlife organizations. They've supported seven animals so far.

She's interested in helping all animals, not just the cute ones.

"Most people only go for the animals like elephants, tigers," Joslyn said. "They usually want to do the cute ones, so they adopt the cute ones. And, I'm like, what about the ugly ones?"

Joslyn also placed first in the formal wear category at last year's Bellevue Woman's

Club annual fashion show for a recycled outfit she designed and Maggie modeled.

She's working on a "top secret" recycling project for this year's fashion show, Joslyn said.

Joslyn encourages everyone to help recycle, even if they can't do a lot.

"Every little bit helps," Joslyn said.

