Students work to boost recycling at schools

Written by Lindsey Larson
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Seven students from Lesher and Boltz middle schools, along with a student from Poudre High School, are on a mission to make their schools more environmentally aware.

This week, Maya Felix, Christina Stoll and Olanre Ebanks from Lesher, along with Preston Foxx, Jasmine Chesson, Hee Wan Sim and Hee Jin Sim from Boltz and Michelle Zhu from Poudre, have been asking fellow students to participate in the Recycle It! program.

The program asks students to sign petitions to get more recycling bins in the schools and make the pledge to recycle.

At Lesher, the movement has been very successful, eighth-grader Christina said.

"We have this huge piece of paper (for students to sign), and you can barely see any white," Stoll said.

Olanre said he believes most of his fellow sixth-graders at Lesher put pen to paper to take the recycling pledge.

At Boltz, sixth-grader Jasmine said the offer of free bracelets seems to have drawn out her fellow students. Also, daily morning announcements have informed the student body about the recycling pledge.

"We tell (the other students) a little fact about recycling and tell them what's happening at lunchtime," Jasmine said.

These seven students are part of Public Achievement for Community Transformation, or PACT. The program partners with the School or Education, the School of Social Work and the Office of Service Learning at CSU to encourage students in the Poudre School District to become more conscientious community members.

"What (PACT) is about is empowering young people to become active community members and leaders," said Louise Jennings of the CSU School of Education.
Every year, the PACT program brings PSD students together with undergrads from Colorado State University who mentor younger children and guide them through service projects. The PSD students decide the project every year and chose to focus on recycling for 2011.

Christina said the project was born out of a trip the students took around Fort Collins snapping photos.

"We noticed most of the photos we took were of trash; especially around schools," Christina said. "And, we found most of it was recyclable."

Maya, an eighth-grader at Lesher, said she’s been around the concept of recycling her whole life.

"My family has always been very green," Maya said. "Our recycling bin (at home) is bigger than our trash can."

The students also have been putting posters in the halls of their schools reminding students what can and cannot be recycled. They were scheduled to finish their project on Earth Day.