

One Step at a Time for Greatness

The Niceville Youth Advisory Council saw this Community Service Project Contest as an opportunity to do something worthwhile, and simultaneously encourage our community to participate. We chose recycling for our project, and started by involving the youth in our town. The Niceville Youth Advisory Council began a program at the largest high school in the city. The program started off as a fully funded "Recycling Drive," and eventually rolled over into a permanent system at our school. The drive was designed to jumpstart a recycling program in the school, and was a valuable tool which allowed us to hit the ground running with our permanent system.

The project encompassed a variety of structural and organizational skills to bring all the parts together. We partnered with Waste Management to create a plan for increasing recycling in the community. The school was the started point, and the idea was to get the kids recycling then bring habits home, eventually spreading awareness throughout the whole community. We worked with the Niceville High School principal, and received approval to launch the project as a "Recycling Drive." We also made an agreement with him that following the drive, the school would fund the project to be a continual program. Waste Management provided all the materials such as cardboard receptacles and the pickup of waste for six weeks. This allowed us to build a solid foundation for the project's future.

This project was needed in our community because we have the resources to recycle and contribute to making the world a little better, but we were not taking advantage of them. Niceville, Florida is a small town on the water, and adjacent to a tourist beach town. Wildlife protection is taken very seriously here, so it was a factor in our decision to center our project on recycling due to its greater value within our community. Our council chose this project and the

challenge of how far we can spread this recycling. Now that our school's recycling system is up in running, the next target in increasing the numbers is the community, and then hopefully our neighboring towns. We plan to have the beaches equip with recycling bins by next year.

This project has given students the opportunity to get more involved in service through recycling, and learn knowledge on the subject. Spreading recycling in our community will reduce landfills, set a great example for other schools and cities, and make our own city cleaner.

Creating and implementing the program was a rewarding experience for our council. We had the opportunity to develop our management and organizational skills by dividing the responsibilities of the project, and work together to see it through. We also gained multiple contacts within the community. These new relationships may provide the chance to do more within the community on future projects. Overall our project opened a door for us to make a difference, and be a part of something greater than ourselves. It is a stepping stone to a better society.