

The Green Gurus

Recycling vs Reality

CAP Overview:

- In December, we sent out a survey to Lower, Middle, and Upper School students which asked them to rate their environmental practices on a scale from 1 to 10. Our survey revealed that most students do not know what should be recycled or thrown away but do make an effort to be conscious of their environmental decisions.
- In January, we contacted Waste Management and our school in order to gather information about janitorial training requirements as well as what companies want to be recycled and ask of schools.
- In February, we received information from Waste Management and also learned that our school's janitorial staff is not given much information about proper disposal methods.
- In March, our team gathered students from the Environmental Action Club in order to count the number of trash and recycling bins throughout the school. As a result, we found that our school needs help with the reorganization of collection bins and should invest in making proper municipal waste management accessible.
- Throughout April, we have been in contact with our Dean of Students and are working towards creating a budget for new bins and hanging signs that reflect proper methods of trash disposal. We are also working with members of our school's news broadcast team in order to create a video showcasing what we have found and why it is important for people to care and work towards conscious and proper recycling.

Reflection:

- We have learned a lot throughout this process. At the beginning of our journey, we struggled to get responses from supervisors in our school as well as struggled to get responses from Waste Management. It had a strong impact on us, for we were extremely frustrated that our community wasn't as eager to contribute toward enacting change as we were and that they didn't seem to see the urgency in the matter. However, we didn't let this discourage us and we continued to find solutions to work toward raising awareness about the false recycling practices in our school. Through this process and the following months, we learned a lot about what it means to enact change. For example, by collecting the required amounts of recycling and trash bins at our school that are necessary for proper recycling practices to be enacted as well as calculating the budget that our school would need to follow in order to do as such, we realized the significant time and effort that is necessary if one wants to make a substantial and long-lasting change in their community. However, we are willing to spend all of our time and effort on our climate action project since it means that there will be a large improvement in our community's sustainability practices and plastic usage. As a result of this process, our team has also learned to value the drive and passion that goes into implementing meaningful solutions. However, what our team is most proud of is how we persevered despite all of the

setbacks we encountered and also motivated our peers to understand the urgency of the situation despite being told lies regarding our school's recycling program for numerous years.

Impact and Goals:

- We believe that our CAP Project holds major implications in terms of holding our school accountable for failing to recycle. Ultimately, our project allowed us to learn how the majority of students at our school lack knowledge about sustainability and recycling practices through the results of a school-wide survey. In addition, we created awareness among the administration that recycling does not occur on campus by speaking with staff members such as the Environmental Science teacher. Further, we worked with the Environmental Action Club at school to survey all of the recycling and trash bins at school in order to determine areas which require attention. We hope to continue with this project by raising awareness about the importance of recycling through a video segment on our school's news broadcast platform. Although numerous setbacks including delayed response time and lack of administrative support, we ultimately realized how our school fails to consider the environmental consequences of their actions. Despite spending a large portion on the school's budget on hundreds of recycling bins, Pine Crest continues to waste money on unused bins. Therefore, although we still have a lot of work to accomplish, our group feels obligated to implement recycling on campus in order to reduce the amount of recyclable materials being sent to landfills. By talking with peers on campus, many also share the same frustration regarding the school's negligence in terms of recycling. Our ultimate goals not only include raising awareness but also holding the administration accountable for the amount of recyclable material gone to waste. Even though our group hoped to implement a recycling program on campus prior to the deadline, we stand determined to make this change happen by the end of the school year. The Project Green Challenge taught us much about how institutions of power tend to put off ongoing issues as shown in the delayed response time of the administration. The Green Gurus plan to voice our concerns to the broader community of South Florida and continue to advocate for sustainability over incompetence.