

## Boulder Valley's New Vista High School launches student 'green team'

### More BVSD-sponsored environmental clubs could follow

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The next generation will benefit or suffer from today's environmental efforts, or lack thereof, which is why the Boulder Valley School District is charging students with being "green" leaders.

A core group of six students at Boulder's New Vista High School has been chosen to run a pilot "sustainability action campaign," and the members have been meeting weekly since August to brainstorm ways their school can shrink its environmental footprint.

The student group calls itself the "Earth Task Force," and Boulder Valley School District officials are hoping it will be the first of many district-sponsored green teams.

"New Vista is the first district-school partnership," said Ghita Carroll, sustainability coordinator for Boulder Valley. "We are giving them some money for coming up with posters and pamphlets, and we're considering doing a pledge card campaign."

Details haven't been ironed out, Carroll said, but the idea is to challenge students to pledge to take Earth-friendly actions -- such as walking or riding to school -- and the district will contribute money toward environmental projects at the school if they hit reduction goals.

In the end, Boulder Valley aims to use New Vista's ideas across the district and launch sustainability campaigns at other schools.

New Vista's team participated in an energy audit of the school Nov. 10 with Xcel Energy, and members are planning a kick-off event at the end of January to get their peers excited about saving, reusing and reducing, Carroll said. The students have created environmental themes for the upcoming months, including Energy February, Waste-Reduction March and Alternative-Transportation April.

Paige Doughty, community action program teacher at New Vista, said the task force plans to show the movie "The 11th Hour" to the entire school for the January event. The film documents the grave problems facing the planet and predicts the future of humanity is in jeopardy.

"We want to get them all on the same page," she said.

For a week in January, Doughty said, the task force will celebrate a theme associated with each month. For example, on the day representing "energy month," the task force will hang clothes on laundry lines around the school with energy facts attached to each item.

They also will have an "eat local" day and a "bring your own coffee mug" day, rewarding students with free coffee if they have their own reusable cup.

New Vista sophomore Malcolm Marshall said he's thrilled to be part of the Earth Task Force and has high hopes of creating change in his school and across the district.

"It's really exciting, and I'm glad we'll be the school to start Boulder off in getting more eco-friendly," he said.

Marshall said that on one of the theme days in January, his team plans to sift through the garbage and find all the products that could have been recycled.

"We are going to keep everything that is recyclable that had been thrown away and string it in the front hallway and say, 'Hey, this is how much we are wasting in a day,'" Marshall said. "I think we are going to make a difference."

New Vista Principal Kirk Quitter said he's proud of his students' initiative to make "authentic changes in our school."

"We are a small school, and we have such a tightly knit community that I think we can make a real change," he said, predicting the initiative's spread across the district. "I think that if we can show we can do this in an organization like the Boulder Valley School District where we have 28,000 students, what business couldn't follow suit?"

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