

# Project Title Recycling Rangers

School Barrett/Long Branch

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## Brief summary of the project

5th graders are tasked with emptying all recycling bins in the school. Teams of 2-4 5th graders are responsible for emptying the upper floor and trailers, while another 2-4 students are responsible for emptying the lower level recycling bins into big, hallway toter bins. The teams are to empty classroom bins for two days, and then the third day the teams empty the big, hallway recycling bins into the big blue roll-away recycling bins behind the school.

Each Spring, 5th graders train all interested 4th graders to take over. After a training period of 6-8 weeks, 4th graders are either able to recycle independently, need more training, or are not invited back. Typically, 4th graders "fail" training only by not showing up. In May 5th graders usually retire, depending on how many 4th graders are interested and "pass" training. In the Fall, the 4th graders return as 5th graders and continue recycling.

The Recycling Rangers are noticeable in the school because of their hats. When 4th graders "pass" training they are given hats. Hats have been purchased from APS vendor Howard Boland ([howardboland@cox.net](mailto:howardboland@cox.net)) for about \$11 a cap for 50 caps. They are blue and say "Recycling Rangers" on the side with a green recycling logo on the front. When 5th graders retire, they get to keep their hats.

## Getting Going

**How did the project start?** The program was started at Long Branch by former 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher Lori Lowe and continued by Greg D'Addario ([greg.daddario@apsva.us](mailto:greg.daddario@apsva.us)) from 2014-2019. It is currently run by Katie Pawlowski ([catherine.pawlowski@apsva.us](mailto:catherine.pawlowski@apsva.us)). It is anticipated that this program will be run at Barrett Elementary school in SY 2020-2021!

**Who were important people to contact at the beginning?** Parents and teachers. Also hat vendor if you're running low on hats!

**What are the threshold resources that need to be identified at the beginning before proceeding further? (For example, robust parent volunteer network, elevated loading docks, nearby outdoor spigot.)** Need to have rolling recycle bins or a way for recycling to be collected by students.

**What are the policies (if any) from APS or elsewhere that may affect the project and need to be considered?** Policy Implementation Procedure E-3.30 PIP-2 Trash and Recycling

**What budget and/or funding sources were needed?** Funds to purchase hats and tubs to collect recycled materials

## Implementation

**Did you pilot or test the project and then scale it up? If so, describe your process.** There is no pilot project, except you might consider the program at Long Branch the pilot. We will scale up to implementation at Barrett in SY 2020-2021, but that's just because the teacher moved to Barrett for SY 2019-2020.

**As you rolled the project out, how did you present this to students and encourage their participation?** We always have a meeting with 5th graders at the beginning of the year. Present to all 4th graders prior to Spring Break to interest them in training for the next year.

**Approximately how many students were actively involved, and how many were affected?** About 20-30 students a year were actively involved and all students in the school are affected.

**What obstacles were overcome? Are there continuing obstacles? What lessons did you learn from doing this?** Continuing Obstacles: Locked teacher doors after school, non-recyclable materials in recycle bin. Lessons Learned: Need to educate students and teachers about what can go in the recycle bin. Another potential obstacle post COVID-19 is students may need to wear gloves during this to prevent COVID-19 and other disease transmission. At any rate, students MUST wash hands after collecting recyclable materials from the school.

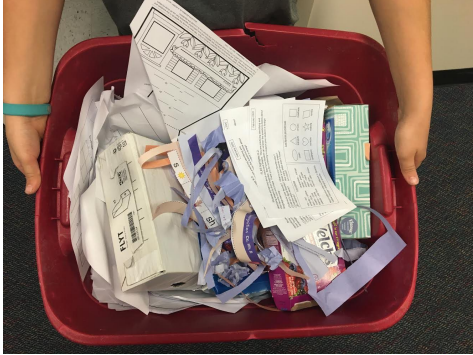
**A HUGE challenge at the elementary level is the "new" bins that have both a side for recycling and a side for trash. Elementary students, teachers, and community members do not follow the sorting resulting in generally unusable recycling materials. It is much better to have one big blue recycling bin and one big black trash can to meet the co-location requirement from Arlington County.**

**Will the project continue into future years? If so, how will you keep continuity? Do you plan modifications?** Yes! The project is easy to continue into future years because 5th graders train 4th graders. The only modification that has ever been considered is setting up a student monitoring lunch recycling for each grade level.

**What effect has it had on the school?** Long Branch continues to have one of the highest, if not the highest, rate of recycling across all of APS.

Are there photos that could help others visualize how this worked for you? If so, please insert them here.

Classroom Bins get emptied into:



Those bins get emptied into Hallway Toters:



Hallway Bins get emptied to outside bins for pickup by APS Contractor:



## Replication

**Do you have resources you used that would be helpful for someone trying to replicate this project?**

**Would you be willing to share them?** Yes! Greg has templates of letters to send to 5th grade students/parents, 4th grade students/parents interested in training, and much more! Example of scheduling documents, invitation to thank-you pizza party at the end of year, etc.

**What else should someone wanting to implement a similar project at their school know?** Kids are incredibly interested in and invested in recycling. It's not hard to do and incredibly rewarding for both students and teachers.