



King County

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Department of Natural Resources and Parks

News Release

Date: April 20, 2010

Contact: Doug Williams – 206-296-8304

King County launches recycling campaign: 'Bag your bags! Bring 'em back'

**Kennydale Elementary School competition seeks to raise awareness
of recycling plastic bags at the grocery store**

How many plastic bags can 625 elementary school students collect in a month? For one month, King County challenged Renton's Kennydale Elementary School to collect as many used plastic bags as possible for recycling.

Today at a school assembly, King County will crown the winning grade and announce the launch of the "Bag your Bags! Bring 'em Back" campaign. The campaign is a partnership between the King County Solid Waste Division and local grocery stores to educate residents on how to properly recycle plastic bags.

"Many people don't know that the best way to recycle plastic bags is to bring them back to the grocery store," said Patti Southard, King County Solid Waste Division project manager.

"Plastic bags and film collected at grocery stores stay cleaner and are easier to process than if you use your home recycling cart. The bags are made into new products like decking, benches, playground structures and new plastic bags," Southard said.

Approximately 61,000 tons of recyclable plastic bags and film are thrown into King County's landfill every year. For the next six weeks, participating grocery stores will encourage shoppers to stuff all their used plastic bags from home into a single bag, tie it up and drop them into a plastic bag collection container in the stores.

"No matter how hard we all try to remember our reusable bags, the fact is that most people still have a collection of plastic bags at home," said Southard. "The great thing is that plastic grocery bags are not the only type that can be recycled. You can also bring back clean and dry produce bags, newspaper bags, dry cleaning bags, and even the plastic wrap from products such as paper towels and toilet paper."

At the school assembly today, each grade level will fill wheelbarrows with the plastic bags they collected. The bags will then be dumped into a collective pile and each grade will share the total weight of plastic bags they collected. The winning classes will win a green pizza party and the school will win a new playground bench made from recycled plastic lumber.

"We're thrilled that Kennydale Elementary School was chosen for this effort," said Kennydale Elementary School Principal Bill Tarter. "Our collection bins have been overflowing since the very first week of the competition! I love the idea of kids showing adults the road to sustainability."

"It's wonderful to have Renton children serve as a role model for the rest of the region," added Renton Mayor Denis Law.

Participating "Bag your Bags! Bring 'em Back" retailers include Fred Meyer, QFC, Safeway, Top Food & Drug, Town & Country Markets, Metropolitan Market and the Duvall Family Grocer.

For more information, visit www.bagyourbags.com.

#