

*Eco-Tip for 4/29/18*

### **Awards Programs Recognize and Inspire**

By David Goldstein, Ventura County PWA, IWMD

In his “4R Grandkids/SaveOurWater” blog about Ventura County’s natural resources, Charles Spraggins recently groused about the types of measures celebrated at last week’s Earth Day events, saying, “What is saved by ‘sustainable living’ is consumed anyway via growth and development.”

However, sometimes the examples of sustainable living make an impression on others and result in real change. Leadership by some can influence practices of many others, and our society as a whole can make progress toward environmental goals. Environmental awards programs often serve this function of multiplying conservation efforts, validating and publicizing accomplishments of environmental leaders in hopes of influencing others to improve their own efforts.

One example is recent recognition the Ventura County Board of Supervisors provided to an exemplary environmental effort in each supervisor’s district. Supervisor John Zaragoza honored the non-profit Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation for “promoting environmental awareness and responsibility,” including work on a recent report. Supervisor Peter Foy awarded Rustic Canyon Golf Course for a water reclamation project. Supervisor Kelly Long recognized the Hedrick Ranch Nature Area Restoration Project for a restoration project. Supervisor Linda Parks recognized the Ventura County Watershed Protection District (WPD) for its study showing the value of using raptors instead of anticoagulant rodenticides. Supervisor Steve Bennett awarded The Thacher School for sustainable practices including solar power, horse manure and food waste composting, reducing water usage, using greywater, and recycling.

The Thacher School’s recycling also earned them another award recently. Competing against 324 California schools during the month of February, the school recycled the most mixed recyclables both in total weight and on a per capita basis. Keep America Beautiful, the non-profit organizer of the “K-12 Recycling Challenge” and “Recycle Bowl” competitions, says on its website the reason for the competition and awards is to “engage students.” The Thacher School’s website, noting their award of “Green Achiever” status in a California Department of Education recognition program last year, describes the reason behind the school’s sustainability programs more inspirationally as preparing “students to take action, develop bold solutions, and act as lifelong stewards of the planet.”

Two weeks ago, a student at Sunset Elementary School in Ventura got an early start at being a planetary steward when her poster and slogan won a local competition to decorate the side of an E.J. Harrison recycle truck. Isabella Coleman’s “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: The three R’s are radical!” won her Island Packers tickets to the Channel Islands, presented at an Eco-Hero show at her school, featuring rap songs, dance, and teacher and student participation.

Last week, the Department of Education recognized Meiners Oaks Elementary and Sunset Elementary School with silver awards for “conserving natural resources while promoting health and environmental literacy.” In both cases, the schools’ gardens and food waste recycling programs were assisted by Laurie Hammer, of the non-profit Food Forward.

May 15<sup>th</sup> is the nomination deadline for prestigious awards aimed at the heart of wastefulness. The California Product Stewardship Council’s Arrow Awards focus on waste prevention, awarding in the categories of product stewardship, system and design innovations, coalition building, and service and take-back. Companies selected for these awards win not only an artist-made plaque to display and a credibility-building public relations boost, but also an opportunity to inspire others to take similar action, developing solutions for stewardship of the planet.

*On the internet:*

<http://www.vcnewschannel.com/news/257-county-supervisors-honor-five-environmental-champions-with-earth-day-awards>

<https://www.thacher.org/page/community/sustainability>

<https://calpsc.org/about-us/arrow-awards/>