

# OUR EXPERIENCE OF THE LOCAL LANDFILL

Lewis Carroll and MILA Elementary 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Gifted Students:

Jeffrey, James, Brooke, JanCarlos, Kellie, Kal-El, Gavin, Keanu, Mahtahc,  
Caitlin, Karson, Summer, Alex, and Kaedon

Gifted Teacher – Leslie Lyons

# OUR EXPERIENCE

- At the landfill we took a tour and saw where specific items go (tires, concrete, appliances, and more)
- We went to the top of the landfill and saw how trash is managed, regulated, and monitored.
- After that, we had lunch and played a game about what you should and should not recycle.
- In the game we recycled: paper, the clean top portion of a pizza box (not greasy), cardboard, and plastic containers.
- We did not recycle: Styrofoam, the greasy bottom portion of the pizza box, and used straws.
- We learned a lot from the trip and now we know so much more about recycling!

# WHAT CAN WE DO AS INDIVIDUALS?

As Individuals, we can make a difference by:

- Telling others what is recyclable and what is not
- Recycling ALL THE TIME during our daily lives - at home and at school
- Teaching our families what we have learned and apply it to our home life
- Teaching our friends what we have learned and apply it to our school life
- Asking permission to label the trash cans and recycling bins that we encounter in our lives to help others learn. For example: label the recycling bin with pictures of recyclable items.
- Reusing materials for different purposes
- Reducing our consumption of products that are made of all new materials
- Instead, focusing on buying products that are packaged in recycled material

# WHAT CAN WE DO AS A SCHOOL COMMUNITY?

As a school community we can make a difference by:

- Hosting a recycling awareness event at school to educate everyone. A game similar to what we played with our tour guide could be done.
- Asking the principal to make it a requirement for a certain (young) grade level to take a field trip to the landfill each year so that everyone, not just Gifted, gets a chance to experience it.
- Creating and distributing products (t-shirts, water bottles, etc.) that promote recycling. These products should be made with recycled materials. A fundraiser could be started to pay for these.
- Begin teaching students about recycling from the very beginning (Kindergarten or 1<sup>st</sup> Grade). Make it school-wide policy.
- Making and distributing a clearly stated handout or pamphlet that clarifies what you can and cannot recycle.
- Creating and sharing a PowerPoint all about the 3 R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and what is recyclable or not. Share it with all the teachers at the school for them to share with all of their students.

# RECYCLE OR REUSE?

## Please place in the Recycling Bin:

- Clean plastic bottles and containers
- Paper, newspaper, cardboard, and cartons
- Steel and Aluminum Can
- Balled up Aluminum Foil
- Clear and colored glass bottles and jars

## Reuse or Throw in the Garbage:

- Anything with food still stuck to it.
- Used sandwich baggies
- Used straws and to-go cup lids
- Plastic shopping bags
- Styrofoam

Alex

I was expecting more stench before the trip, but it wasn't as bad as I expected. My expectation was a clear understanding tour of the landfill and pleasing views of the trash. They were definitely met. I was pleased with our tour guide, Andrea, she gave us an ice clear speech of how the landfill works.

Tours usually make me bored, but this just caught my attention. Two things I learned from Andrea was that the current landfill can only hold 1.5 years left for storage until it shuts down, it was built in the 1960's. Second was that I learned that in 1992, Palm Bay had a circus. An elephant passed away from the show, so if you were to go landfill diving, you might find a 5-ton elephant in the trash, unharmed! Decomposition is almost non-existent because under the layers of trash in the landfill, there is not enough air to decompose the trash.

I, as an individual, could put up more recycling centers and bins to fully take the challenge of encouraging citizens to recycle more. My school could recycle paper, plastic, metal, etc., and provide us with more education on recycling.

Caitlin

When we left for the landfill I thought it was going to be a big pile of trash. It was but I expected more trash and a bigger area! My expectations were met, just not in the way I thought they would.

I got a little grossed out on the tour because of all the trash, but it got better. Andrea (our tour guide) taught me that when tires are buried they find their way back up, and that the water in our sprinklers comes from the dump's dirty water that gets cleaned before being sent to the sprinklers.

I by myself, can tell others to recycle and get them to recycle all the time! My school on the other hand, can recycle everything recyclable instead of throwing it all in the trash can.

# Our Reflections

Brooke

My expectations of the trip before we left was that trash would be all over the floor and it would smell very bad. My expectations were that it would stink and be messy. Yes, because when we drove by the mulch, I could smell the decaying mulch! No, because there actually wasn't as much garbage on the floor as I thought there would be. When we went on top of the hill, I expected it because the tour guide told us we were going on top of it.

The tour made me feel like I needed to get off the bus and collect all of the trash on the floor. Two new things I learned from our tour guide were that we can make many things like pencils out of paper. I always thought that they were plastic but then she said it was money! I was surprised at that. Another thing I learned from the tour guide was that they collected tires. I actually didn't know that and as I was looking at them as the bus was driving around the mountain of tires. I thought that a lot of them looked old or flat. It was fun and I think we had a good tour guide.

What I can do as an individual to help minimize the use of the landfill and maximize the rate of recycling is to put trash in the trash can and recycling in the recycling bin. I could also spread the word and go to other places such as the beach to pick up trash and help the environment. It will also save sea animals such as turtles so they don't eat the plastic and so birds don't get stuck in it and die! I had a lot of fun and it inspired me to recycle more. My school can help as well and maybe we can plan a field trip to go to the beach and pick up trash.

Gavin

Before we left I thought it would smell. When we went to the top of the landfill it didn't smell at all. Surprisingly, the only place that smelled was the wood chip pile. The mulch was decomposing.

Two things I learned were that the landfill has a clay seal at the bottom of it so the leachate (run-off liquids) does not go into the ground water. I also learned that leachate looks like oil and is treated and turned into water.

I can help save the landfill by recycling used paper by doing online tests and reusing text books.

James

I thought that the landfill would be fairly large and almost full. I thought that it would be very smelly and there would be tons of birds. Those expectations were met from the tour of the landfill.

The tour made me feel bad that the only way to use trash is to throw it away. Two shocking things I learned from our tour guide, Andrea were that they're making a new landfill estimated to last for forty-five years. She also told us that Styrofoam can't be recycled.

What I can do as an individual to help maximize the rate of recycling is using trash for other things. For example, I can use tires for an obstacle course, use old glass as walls for a house, or use pieces of discarded metal as building materials. Our school can do community service to help maximize the rate of recycling.

JanCarlos

I expected the field trip to be boring, but we got to see lots of things, like how they turned trees and leaves into mulch. We also got to see the machines working. It was not boring.

I felt pretty happy seeing all the machines at work. I learned two cool things that shocked me. You can collect energy from the bacteria inside the trash. They use a huge machine to crush the trash!

We can minimize the use of the landfill by making trash into new things like art, or turning a box into a drawing board. Our school can stop wasting paper and use dry erase boards to save paper and pencil.

Jeffrey

My expectation of the trip before we left was that I thought it was going to be a lot smellier. I also thought we were going to see big bulldozers and other vehicles that are to move or crush the garbage. It ended up not smelling as bad as I thought it would be. We also did get to see bulldozers. We even got to go on the top of the landfill and we saw big machines that flattened out trash. Most of my expectations were met by the time our field trip was over.

The tour was cool. It made me feel special because we got to go on the top of the landfill and see other cool areas. The guide also told us they were making another landfill. Our guide Andrea said that the landfill we are using now only has about one and a half more years. Two things that were shocking that I learned from our tour guide Andrea is that there is an elephant buried in the landfill from a circus in the 1990's. Another surprising thing I learned was that they can't bury tires. They can't do that because the vibration from trucks will make the tires rise and pop out of the ground.

As an individual, I can recycle some of the products I throw away. I also could reuse items like plastic bags or water bottles or other items like that. To reduce the use of the landfill to maximize the rate of recycling to help, my school could use more recyclable materials and reduce as much as possible.

Kaedon

My expectations were that the park was going to be a small community park and that we would see a bunch of tires and plastic bags. All of my expectations were met by the tour.

The tour made me feel calm and happy. I learned that we drink ground water and that a landfill can go for forty years

As an individual, I can go on the computer, make some informative newspapers, and hand them out.

**Kal-El**

Before we went on our trip to the landfill, I expected it to be very messy, with piles of trash everywhere. Once we got to the landfill, I was surprised! Everything was clean and in assorted piles

The tour made me feel kind of bad, since we are making landfills, eventually we won't have any space left on Earth. There are two types of trucks that come in with trash. The newest landfill will last about 45 years, and the current landfill will last 1.5 years.

What I can do as an individual to help minimize the use of the landfill and maximize the rate of recycling is tell family and friends what can and can't be recycled. Schools can teach about recycling and what happens if we don't.

Karson

My expectations on the trip before we left was that it was going to be boring and very odorous. When we went it wasn't as stinky as I thought it would be. Also it wasn't actually that boring, it was interesting. I learned that they can't bury tires because they will pop right back out and they can't burn them either because the fumes from the tires are poisonous.

The tour made me feel more educated because I learned about stuff I never knew before. Our guide Andrea taught us some amazing things like you can get in there for free because you pay for taxes and your taxes go to the dump to help out. Another amazing thing is that the land field can last up to at least 1.5 more years, but they do have a second one in progress in case the one they have now does not last as long as they say it should.

What I could do to minimize the use of the landfill is to put posters everywhere that catch people's eyes and then put in capital letters "RECYCLE TO HELP OUR ENVIRONMENT". I wish I could do more to get people to recycle. But if a kid doesn't listen there's only so much you can do. In addition, we could make a fun game to teach kids what to recycle. The students could maybe tell their parents about it and they might recycle more at home.



### Keanu

Before I went to the landfill, I thought that we were going to see rats and snakes but we saw many different types of birds. I had a better learning experience than I thought I would.

The tour shocked me! I learned that nothing can decompose there and I was super shocked after I heard that. It was over a thousand feet above sea level.

To help I could pick up trash and recycle more things to make the earth cleaner and even better. My school can hold a trash fundraiser and pick up trash.

### Kellie

I expected the field trip to be stinky, gross, and boring. The trip turned out to be fun and it didn't smell as bad as I thought it would. I really enjoyed the field trip.

The tour got boring at some parts and others I was excited. Andrea said that, "Tires can't be placed on the dump because they would rise up and pop out." She also said that, "The new landfill will last about 45 years, the one currently has about 1.5 years left."

As an individual, I can recycle more and get my family to do the same. My school can teach the lower grades the importance of recycling and maybe the school can increase recycling so the landfill will only be used for reasonable things like diapers or dirty pizza boxes.

### Mahtahe

I was expecting it to be more stinky than usual when we got to the dump, but it actually was not as bad as I thought it would be. I was happy about that!

The tour made me happy because people were actually recycling and doing what they are supposed to do. Our tour guide, Andrea, gave us cool fun facts, but these are my favorite two: "Those trucks with the spiky wheels compact and crush trash" and "Landfills can last many years and can get to 250 ft. tall."

To minimize landfills and maximize recycling you can reduce, reuse, or recycle your products. To minimize landfills you can buy things that can be recycled like paper plates or cardboard, etc. My school can start a recycling program to increase the recycling percentage.

### Summer

At first, I thought that the landfill would have more of an odor. It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. I was more than glad about that.

The tour made me disgusted because of how much human waste there was in the landfill! Two cool things I learned was that we have about one year left in the current landfill. Another interesting thing I learned was there is a two-ton elephant named Kelly buried in the landfill.

As an individual, I can tell people about what I saw and how we can get a higher rate of recycling. My school could have a fundraiser to encourage people to recycle.

THE END!  
HAPPY RECYCLING!

