



FY 2010/11

GRANT #

5008-207

# St. Mel Elementary School

Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery

**Beverage Container Recycling Competitive Grant Program**

## Background

St. Mel Elementary School (school) is a K-8 school of 526 students, located in the West San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles, California. The school was established over 50 years ago and actively serves the local community. In 2008, the school was approved for a \$15,000 Beverage Container Recycling Competitive Grant. The purpose of the grant was to establish a larger, more comprehensive recycling program. The program was coordinated by the school's Recycling Committee utilizing volunteer students for collecting and sorting of the recycling products and volunteer parents to transport the products to a recycling center.



## Grant Project Goals

The primary goals of the project were to:

- Maximize the amount of bottles and cans being recycled, by placing containers in convenient locations throughout the St. Mel campus (church, elementary school, and pre-school).
- Make staff, students, parents and teachers more aware of recycling.
- Increase the amount of bottles and cans being recycled. Baseline data was collected prior to the implementation of the project. Approximately 5,500 plastic bottles and 500 cans were collected from the lunch areas over a one year period.

## Outcome and Accomplishments

- The school collected 86,000 containers; a 2,150% increase in the amount of bottles and cans recycled prior to the implementation of the recycling program.
- Awareness and interest was raised with students in helping with recycling.
- The program expanded to other schools with a "rolling" recycle program; the school loaned bins to other schools until they accumulated enough funds to buy their own bins. The loaned bins were then returned.
- Triggered the lighting replacement program throughout the school to reduce power consumption and greenhouse gases.
- Prompted the installation of programmable thermostats and other green measures throughout the school to also reduce power consumption and greenhouse gases.

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## Lessons Learned and Recommendations

The school was able to purchase supplies at a lower cost than anticipated. General collection bins were modified into recycling collection containers which saved money. The unused monies were then used to expand the collection program to other schools in the area.

After the project was completed, the school had the following recommendations and comments:

- Keep the lids closed on the recycling bins and add a hole to force the user to think before putting the item into the bins.
- A tilt truck is essential when collecting on a school campus.
- Use clear bags to make it easier to see any foreign objects.
- Clean the bins every two weeks to lessen the smell and deter pests.
- Do not drill holes at the bottom of bins, as liquid may leak onto walking surfaces.
- Get students and volunteers involved in sorting.
- Get support from Parent-Teacher Organizations.
- Create contests among classes and incentivize with pizza parties, etc.

## Snapshot

**Grant Program:** Beverage Container Recycling Competitive Grant

**Grant Program Website:** <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/BevContainer/Grants/BevContainer/default.htm>

**Grant Number:** 5008-207

**Grant Type:** Beverage Container Recycling

**Year Awarded:** 2010

**Funding:** Awarded \$15,000, spent \$15,000

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