

THE Green Gazette

VOICE OF THE **PCCS Green Team**
FALL EDITION 2017

Prairie Crossing Charter School Cleans Up

Over twenty charter school community members gathered together to clean up Rollins Road.

The Green Team met up at Rollins Savanna on September 30th to clean up the litter on Rollins Road just east of Drury Lane. Over 20 people attended and were able to pick up litter on about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the designated area. All who attended had a great time and felt a tremendous sense of accomplishment. Some of the more memorable items found was a broken cellphone and a *Just Married* sign.

This was a great event and many of the students responded about how much fun they had. It was also a great way for PCCS to give back to our community and help the environment. Next time, they hope to see even more people participate. Let's keep our environment litter free!

Students informally kept track of the amount of fast food litter (which was quite a bit.) Surprisingly to them, Wendy's came out ahead of McDonald's.

Quotes from the attendants:

"It was really fun...possibly one of the favorite things I have done with Green Team."

"I was surprised by the amount of ribbons and bows we found."

"Being able to hold the snake was great!"

"I think the best find of the day was the fire extinguisher."



Upcoming Event: Day of Service
November 18, 10am-noon

Prairie Crossing Charter School will once again be hosting a National Green Apple Day of Service. **Green Apple Day of Service** brings together volunteers, parents, teachers, students, companies, and local organizations to contribute to sustainability projects in schools that create a lasting impact.



This year our school is asking for volunteers to come together and help make our grounds even better. We will be making tables for the new inclusion gardens and stepping stones for various classroom gardens.

After helping with the school's project, volunteers will have the chance to make their own mosaic stepping stones for a low cost. Mark your calendars -- this activity will take place on November 18; keep a lookout for more information on Prairie Crossing Charter School Green Apple Day of Service.

Email nhershiser@pccharterschool.org with questions or to register! We hope to see you there!



Let's Clear the Air



We all need air to survive. The air that we are breathing now has been recycled over and over again by animals and plants. Just think that the air you're breathing now could be the same air that Abraham Lincoln breathed in or even Sue the T-Rex. So don't you think the air we breathe should be healthy and clean?

Yet, have you ever been outside and smelled exhaust coming from cars or trucks in the pick-up line at our school? Did you know a vehicle that is stopped with its engine turned on for at least 30 seconds is considered idling? And that an idling vehicle emits **20 times** more pollution than one traveling at 30 miles per hour? Idling not only pollutes the air, it wastes gas and money.

That is why the Green Team is taking on Idling! We will be working hard to make sure that the air our students breathe is healthy. Look for more news to come in the future about how idling affects you and what you can do to make our students healthier! Meanwhile, click [HERE](#) to sign the "Turn it Off" pledge and commit to no idling!

Halloween for Heroes

This year the Green Team is teaming up with the Navy to make sure that our service members who are deployed overseas get their treats this Halloween. We are asking for all students and families to donate their extra Halloween candy to our brave service men and women. Details: **Send your wrapped Halloween Candy to the PCCS office Nov. 1-3, 2017!**

Green Halloween

We should have a green Halloween because when you help your environment you help yourself. When we go trick-or-treating we see a lot of litter on the ground. We enjoy Halloween, but not when trash is left behind. We are here to help you have a GREEN HALLOWEEN! Here are 4 easy tips to help make that happen.

Tip # 1



Make your own green Halloween decorations. Halloween is the second biggest decorating holiday of the year, and many of the decorations being sold are made of non-recyclable plastics. If you do buy new items, try to choose durable non-petroleum based items that will last for many years. Otherwise, make a dent in the waste by creating your own homemade decorations with recycled household items.

A few green Halloween decorating ideas:

- Giant Spider: Use black trash bags for a giant tarantula. (stuff with garden leaves--or newspapers but be sure to recycle the newspapers and trash bags when you're done).
- Ghosts: Stuff old bed sheets with leaves or newspaper, tie with a string to form a head and hang from trees.
- Spiderwebs: Make with shredded black pantyhose or cotton balls, instead of the synthetic messy ones from the store. If you're extra crafty, and want a dramatic look, weave a web of yarn near your entryway. Just select organic cotton or other eco-friendly yarns: [Yarn web instructions](#).
- [Eco-friendly Halloween craft ideas](#)
- [Halloween craft ideas from recycled items](#): To make these extra eco-friendly, choose non-toxic paints with low or no VOCs and other [kid and earth friendly craft supplies](#).



Tip # 2. Get your school to hold a green Halloween costume swap

Arrange a [Halloween costume swap](#) at your school. If your school is unable to host do it at your church or community center. You could even do it in your own neighborhood. Swapping costumes can not only save the environment but also help you save some money.

Try going on youtube and looking up how to make your own DIY costume or decorations.

Tip # 3. Know what's in your Halloween face paint

In their 2009 [Pretty Scary report](#), Campaign for Safe Cosmetics sent ten kid's make-up sets to a lab and found that all ten contained lead, which can lead to neurological damages in children, as well as nickel, cobalt and chromium. Six out of ten contained cobalt and/or chromium at levels far exceeding safety standards. These metals are not listed on product labels. Look for organic, non-toxic facepaints that comply with standards set by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics or try these homemade recipes for your green Halloween face paint:

Make your own face paint

- 1 1/2 tbsp. cocoa butter or thick organic lotion
- Organic food coloring or bright flowers and berries
- 3 tbsp. cornstarch

Mix the lotion and cornstarch to create a thick paste. Use your preferred thick lotion that is organic and hypoallergenic to avoid rashes.

Add food coloring a drop at a time to the paste and mix it in until you achieve the desired color. If using a natural dye alternative like berries or flowers you may have to follow a different process to release the color. You can squeeze pomegranate seeds, but a quick way to a deeper shade is to use a blender to make a juice and use a few drops to color your paste. You can also squeeze or juice berries of most types. Boil flower petals in water in a small container in a microwave to release the color. If working with children, using prepackaged food coloring is the easier option. Apply the paint to your face.

Tip #4. Choose green Halloween treats with less packaging

Decrease candy packaging waste by buying in bulk and selecting Halloween candy that uses the least packaging. Candies that come in individual boxes have a chance at getting recycled, whereas those that come in plastic don't. Other waste-less ideas include pencils made from recycled money, small coins or recyclable items that will find a useful place in a kid's life--as opposed to a home at the bottom of the garbage bin. One of our staff



members reports of a neighbor who hands out books every year. Not a bad idea if you live in a neighborhood with light Halloween traffic.

Here are some sources for sustainable Halloween treats: [Endangered Species Bug Bites](#), [Glee Gum](#), [Dagoba Tasting Squares](#), [Justin's' Dark Chocolate Peanut Butter Cups](#)



Pumpkin Composting from our Neighbors to the North (CLC)

Put your old pumpkins and gourds to use, not in the landfill! CLC Environmental Club is hosting a pumpkin drop-off event to help build healthy soils with compost
Saturday, November 4, 9:00-1:00, Grayslake Campus, Parking Lot 3