



## Environmental Club works to make New Trier more green

Students aim to raise awareness about environmental consciousness

by Jasmine Gonzalez

Do you own a New Trier Nalgene and fill it up at one of the many sensor activated water bottle stations located throughout the building? Do you, dare I ask, recycle?

If you answered “yes,” “maybe,” or “unsure” to any of the above questions, then congratulations, you have been an active, or at least semi active, participant in the school wide initiative to be more green.

With the improvements made to the campus and the many campaigns led by clubs and students organizations, this movement is hard to ignore.

Although all students are encouraged to do their part in taking care of the planet, Environmental Club has been a driving force in the many projects that have been undertaken.

This student organization has been around for over a decade and has become more active than ever with the surge in interest surrounding environmental issues. The club currently boasts eighteen active members.

This year, the club is headed by student leaders Stella Cook, a junior, and Will Kincaid, a sophomore. The sponsor is librarian Raquelle Brennan, who brought the club to the Northfield

Campus while social studies teacher Kerry Hall was still the sponsor here on the Winnetka Campus.

Although most students recognize the club for the Nalgene Project that took place during January of the last school year, the club has a very long list of past contributions.

The student leaders and Brennan noted a few of their most significant contributions, including the Earth Day Symposium (student-led by Virginia Wiltshire-Gordon and included various guest speakers from the Chicago area), the establishment of compost of fruits and vegetables within the creation of the IGGS garden (led by former student leader Andrew Katcha in conjunction with the Physical Plant Services and former principal Dr. Dohrer), as well as the participation of New Trier Volunteers in the Going Green Matters Environmental Fair sponsored by Go Green Wilmette.

After the success of the Nalgene project, you may be wondering if Environmental Club has anything in store for this school year. According to Kincaid, this year the club is working to end the sale of plastic water bottles in the cafeteria and replace them with aluminum bottles.

Despite the fact that there are many recycling bins located throughout the building, and plastic is in fact recyclable, that is not doing enough.

As Kincaid explained, “Plastic can only be recycled about eight times before it’s exhausted, whereas aluminum is infinitely recyclable.”



Club members discuss ideas to promote environmental friendliness throughout the school | Gonzalez

Of course, with all of the natural disasters that have been going on, Environmental Club is making sure to do their part. Last year, the club was successful in their sticker sale. This year they will be conducting the same project to benefit hurricane relief funds.

With so many projects and events going on, you may be wondering how everything can come together. The club meets every Monday after school to brainstorm ideas for new projects. Brennan explained,

“The student leaders identify a few goals together and gather ideas and feedback from students in the club. The co-heads lead meetings to generate ideas from students and re-visit these throughout the year.”

With a long record of campaigns and projects to benefit the environment, it’s safe to say that the Environmental Club has made it’s mark at New Trier.

For many students, joining a club is just another way to get involved for the sole purpose of

doing something in school. Although that is how Kincaid got started his first year, the influence and impact of the club made him not want to leave.

Kincaid said, “I originally joined because I wanted to do something for the school. I stayed because I realized how much influence just one club can have on the such a large high school.”

Brennan added, “I think Environmental Club has had a positive impact on New Trier. The students have helped to raise awareness.”

### Do’s and Don’ts of Recycling at School

by Arjun Thakkar

Some students aren’t aware of what can and can’t be recycled. Below is a list of do’s and don’ts:

- Recyclable Materials:
- Paper
  - Cans
  - Plastic
  - Glass
  - Cardboard

\*\*If the above materials contain food materials or grease, they are NOT recyclable\*\*

Glass is recyclable in most cases, even when there is beverage residue, such as juice.

Plastic recyclability varies depending on the type of plastic. Plastic numbers 3, 6, and 7 are non-recyclable in most cases.



## Adventure programs teach conservation values



Gallagher and her Overland crew in the Switzerland Alps | Gallagher

Immersive trips lead to eco-friendly changes at home

by Eleanor Kaplan

In addition to providing kids with crucial leadership skills, outdoor adventure programs, such as Overland and Outward Bound, also promote environmental awareness.

These two to four week wilderness immersion trips instill the value of wilderness preservation in teens by letting them fall in love with the natural beauty of the place they visit.

“We are encouraging students to recognize that this earth is all of our responsibilities and if they love these natural places they can practice taking care of them,” said Lawrence Schuessler, Associate Program Director for the Joshua Tree location of Outward Bound California.

The main summer wilderness experience companies, Overland, Outward Bound, and Nols, exist in places all over the world. They can include anything from backpacking adventures in Norway to kayaking through the Canadian Boundary Waters.

While the main focus of these companies is leadership education, not environmentalism, the natural beauty of the locations often affect the participant’s conservationist behaviors.

Outward Bound California trip leader Shane Wachlin believes that although conservation education is important, nothing beats the experience of just going out into the wilderness.

“If facts and numbers changed people’s actions we would not be dealing with global climate change, dead zones in the ocean, and mass extinction. We protect what we love,” said Wachlin.

Both Overland and Outward Bound teach participants the importance of wilderness preservation with the Leave No Trace principles.

According Schuessler, these include planning ahead, properly disposing waste, minimizing impact, and respecting wildlife and other visitors.

Some participants, like sophomore Mary Baillos, continue to practice the preservation rules they learned on course.

“On all of my trips, we talked about the Leave No Trace

Policy. Even when I am not in the backcountry, I still follow the leave no trace policy,” said Baillos, who completed two trips with Overland and one with Road Less Travelled.

Gallagher has gone on six Overland Summers trips, including one to Alaska and another to Switzerland. The experience has caused her to make eco-friendly changes at home as well. Since returning, she makes an effort to recycle more, walk whenever possible, and produce less plastic waste.

The push for sustainability extends beyond the education of participants for most adventure-travel companies.

Overland Summers logistics coordinator Brett Christensen emphasized that at their base office in Williamstown, Massachusetts, the company is committed to sustainable practices.

“We industrially compost nearly all of our food waste and dishware. We donate and recycle our old gear, including bicycles and kitchenware,” said Christensen.

Wachlin believes that it is important for people to reconnect with nature in order to enlighten themselves on the need for conservation. “We have become disconnected from the land,” he said.

Renowned author of Last Child in the Woods, Richard Louv, calls this disconnection “nature deficit disorder.” Wachlin thinks that because of disconnection “disorder,” people are missing a part of their lives. To make up for this, “We consume more and seek pleasure instead of meaning,” said Wachlin.

Outdoor experiences, he added, save both the environment and the person.

Lilita Wood, High Sierra Program Manager for Outward Bound California said, “Students of Outward Bound have reported a change in their belief in themselves

and an increase in taking action to better the world, for some, that change is in helping the environment.”

Those who have completed outdoor immersion trips have noted changes in their personalities after returning.

Baillos, who spent two weeks in the pouring rain while on a trip to Norway, said that although every day was hard, it made her stronger.

“As I have gone on more and more trips, my resilience has grown,” she said.

In addition to building grit, the trips cause some participants to become more environmentally friendly.

Since completing her course, Junior Elizabeth Gediman said, “I take shorter showers, my family is looking into buying an electric car, and I sign Greenpeace petitions.”

Gediman believes that the next step on her road to environmental preservation is to join groups working to change laws regarding conservation.

Wachlin said that although outdoor trips can make teens more environmentally aware, “They must be buttressed by schools advocating for change and most importantly the students to keep the fire lit.”

For many participants, the conservation fire remains burning once they returned due to their positive experiences and the beauty of their environments.

Gallagher said, “My experience on outdoor programs has made me more aware of the impact I make on the world, and make me both appreciate the world we have and want to protect it at all costs.”