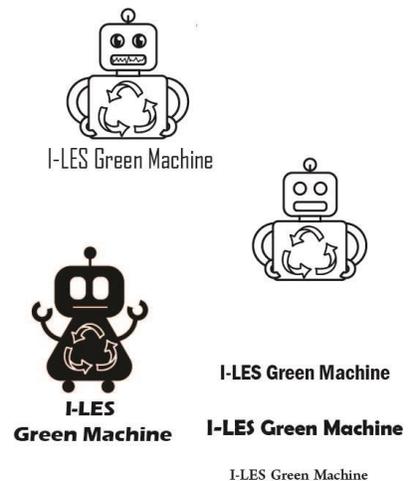


NH The Beautiful School Recycling Innovation Grant Essay
Inter-Lakes Elementary School
Meredith, New Hampshire
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That low rumbling sound that can be heard on Friday mornings is the sound of the Inter-Lakes Elementary Green Machine Recycling team as they tug rolling carts loaded with recyclables behind them on their way to the recycling dumpster in back of their school. Recycling has become an important habit for the members of the Green Machine and somewhat of a proud tradition as the Green Machine has been tending to the recycling needs of Inter-Lakes Elementary for more than ten years now. Speaking of proud traditions, the Inter-Lakes School District has recently been recognized as one of the “greenest” districts in the state of New Hampshire with such green initiatives as an enormous solar panel array that is used to provide power to our high school, as well as energy efficient windows and an auxiliary wood pellet boiler that have both helped make our elementary school a highly energy efficient building. In addition to these amazing initiatives, Inter-Lakes Elementary School is fortunate to have their very own student run greenhouse and composting shed. All of these initiatives have helped foster a sincere sense of stewardship in regards to our community, as well as our planet.

My name is Steve Watson, I am the fourth grade special education teacher at Inter-Lakes Elementary, and I have been the Green Machine coordinator since its inception back in 2006. Since that time there have been more than 100 members of the Green Machine who have proudly and diligently collected their school’s recyclables on the way to becoming more responsible and environmentally aware student citizens. Over the years there have been many highlights with my Green Machine crews: chocolates for the crew from Mrs. Hanney and Mrs. Stutzman in the main office, words of encouragement from our principals, Dr. Kelley and Mrs. Wrath, laughter filled trips to the recycling dumpster with a stop in the the greenhouse on our way back into school, and creating Green Machine stickers with Mrs. Glover in the computer lab.

In addition to recognizing the importance of recycling we have tried to work curriculum connections into our recycling program whenever possible. For example, we have weighed and tracked how many pounds of cans, bottles, cardboard, and paper our school has recycled each month, and created a large bar graph in the school hallway to display the data that was collected. This year we have teamed up with our high school’s graphic arts department. The talented members of the graphic arts department have helped design our first logo, and eventually our first crew t-shirt. The crew members got to choose from the logo designs pictured on the right, and in the spirit of democracy voted on which one they would like as the official Green Machine logo.



Sadly, this will be my last year with the Green Machine as I will be leaving our school and moving to a new school in our district. While I am confident the Green Machine will live on without me I would love to leave them with a \$500 gift that could possibly cover the cost of, among other things, the crew t-shirts, work gloves, and new rolling recycling bins that might muffle the rumbling just a bit. On second thought, that rumbling sound is the Green Machine’s way of letting the students of I-LES know they’re on the way. So rumble on Green Machine, rumble on.