

Neat Earth Day Idea

Around this time of year, Howard County government offices get calls from people who want to “do something” for Earth Day. This is wonderful and we’re glad to help! April is a great time to do outdoor projects and we’ve got some coming up. The [Upcoming Events](#) calendar has some interesting ideas. Check it out for Greenfest (April 2), Project Clean Stream (April 2 and 3), and tree planting projects (CA April 9, Rec and Parks April 30).

On Thursday, April 14th, Howard County is doing what we have named the 20 Minute Cleanup. Basically, County Executive Ken Ulman is asking everyone to get outside for a short time and pick up litter around their neighborhoods, offices, schools, whatever they can do. If we all do a little, we can really get a lot of trash out of our environment and make our County look nicer.

Some students at Veterans Elementary school have come up with an interesting twist on the 20 Minute Cleanup. Last week I met with their 4th grade environmental club, the “Green Geckos.” The whole school is going to get outside on April 14th and clean up around the school. Each grade will clean up a different area. Then, they are doing an Earth Day Pledge Contest. Students can pledge to “Clean up trash from my neighborhood over Spring Break.” The Green Geckos have already collected used paper from the recycling bins for the students to write the pledges on. If the students do a litter cleanup at home and have their parents sign, they will be entered into a drawing to win 4 tickets to the Baltimore Zoo. The prize is being paid for by the PTA.

A similar easy pledge idea is for students to write an Earth Day pledge of their choosing and then they cut them out in the shape of a leaf and add it to a blank “tree” that is posted in the school somewhere. How inspiring it would be to see that tree full of pledge “leaves.”

We’ll see how it goes at VES, but what a creative way to take a school activity and bring it home. Can’t wait to see what happens and I’ll add an update to this post afterwards. Feel free to borrow the pledge idea for your school.

The 20 Minute Cleanup is a flexible and easy project. We’re aiming for April 14th, but if that particular day doesn’t work for you, any day that week is fine. There’s still plenty of time to form a team or do a cleanup on your own. Offices, schools, HOA’s, sports teams, Scouts, anyone can get outside for 20 minutes and make a difference. Please email your results to 20minutecleanup@howardcountymd.gov and we’ll thank you on GCS and let you know the overall results.

*Elissa Reineck
Environmental Volunteer Coordinator
Office of Environmental Sustainability*