

Community Project Proposal for Earthwatch Fellows  
Submitted by: Lynda Moore  
“Climate Change and Caterpillars in New Orleans”

**Project Title: Vermiculture Food Waste Compost Program for Touchstone School**

**Community Project Synopsis:** Touchstone students in grades five and six will plan and implement this project in the spring of 2009. Students will begin by doing a food waste audit for the fifth/sixth grades and be involved in putting the worm composter together. They will then take responsibility for care and maintenance of the worm bin.

**Benefits:** reduction in food waste in landfill and water system, over time plan is for a comprehensive school wide program that will result in waste disposal cost savings, organic humus to be used in outdoor garden program, soil studies and ties to life science curriculum, build awareness of sustainability issues in the school community from grades kindergarten – grade six.

**Community Project Outline:** The project will begin in March of 2009 with expansion to 2 more classrooms planned in March of 2010.

Partner 1: Touchstone School

Principal Ginger Shaffer

Contacted in September 2009

Role: project support and implementation, allotment of necessary space,  
Curriculum planning and oversight

**Pre-project To-Do-List:**

- Students conduct a food waste audit in February 2009
- Solicit parent volunteers to help put system in place (Feb. 2009)
- Students research benefits of food composting in terms of energy savings and water conservation as tie-in to curricular study of energy and water conservation (April 2009)
- Fifth/sixth graders develop plan for maintaining compost bin and discarding food waste daily
- Contact Abundant Earth and place Order – early April 2009
- Implement Food Composting in late April 2009 – plan for and train summer camp program to care for bins over the summer

**Benchmarks of Success:**

- Measureable reduction in school lunch food waste as determined by before and after food waste audit, (Feb. 2009 and June 2009 and then fall and spring yearly thereafter)
- Goal of expanding program to whole school attained within 2 years
- Measurable results in terms of organic humus made available for school gardens
- Number of volunteers participating = 18 students in first year

**Estimated Cost of Project –**

- Worm Composter - \$119.95
- Organic Worm Bedding - \$34.95
- 2 lbs. (2000) red worms - \$59.90
- Shipping - \$47.95
- Total - \$262.65