



**PRESS RELEASE - For Immediate Release**

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## **Update: CEC’s “Rethink the Drink” bottled water reduction pilot project**

**Santa Barbara, CA, June 6, 2011:** Since installing six refill stations on local elementary, junior high, high school and college campuses at the beginning of the year, the Community Environmental Council (CEC) is reporting that students have used the stations **46,827** times as of June 6 – dramatically reducing their use of disposable plastic water bottles.

CEC launched its “Rethink the Drink” campaign in January, installing six refilling stations at Santa Barbara High (two units), Santa Barbara Junior High, Franklin Elementary, Montecito Union Elementary and the Westmont College gym. The refill stations dispense cold, filtered water with both a regular water fountain spout and a quick-fill mechanism, and electronically display the number of times they’ve been used.

Prior to the project, a waste audit of Franklin Elementary showed that student, faculty and staff were using (and throwing away) 275 bottles of water per week. Since installing a refill station, they used fewer than 50 a week. Over the course of a school year, that’s the equivalent of going from more than 11,000 bottles to less than 2,000.

Franklin Principal Casie Killgore says, “It is such a wonderful thing to teach students about saving the environment by them taking part. Students as young as four have learned about how they are saving the earth by using canteens and the refill station.

Our kids are healthier and have decided they'd rather drink water than bring anything from home because the canteens are cool and the water tastes good!"

To encourage the students to use the refill stations, CEC and its project funders distributed reusable stainless steel canteens to all 600 students and staff at Franklin Elementary. At Santa Barbara High, 200 canteens were distributed with the help of the Dons Net Café student entrepreneur class, and Santa Barbara Junior High raffled over 50 canteens to students. Using its own funding, the Montecito Union School PTA's Green Team distributes canteens at the beginning of the year to every student and staff member.

In addition, CEC attends classes and rallies to educate the student body about the negative health and environmental impacts of bottled water, such as:

- The production and transportation of bottled water is very energy intensive. More than 17 million barrels of oil each year are used to bring bottled water to our stores -- enough to fuel one million vehicles for a year.
- Bottled water is not safety-tested as often as tap water, and can cost more than one thousand times the price of tap.

"Despite being recyclable, most bottled water is consumed on-the-go, and fewer than 30% of the bottles are recycled," said CEC's Rethink the Drink Program Manager Kathi King. "The rest end up in landfills or as trash in storm drains and watersheds."

This week, CEC is releasing "Pointless Plastic," a short video highlighting the need to reduce dependence upon bottled water. To view the video, go to <http://www.cecsb.org/rethink-the-drink>.

Rethink the Drink's funding partners are the Orfalea Foundations, the Ann Jackson Family Foundation, MedBridge Development, and the Montecito Union School Green Team.

### **About the Community Environmental Council**

The Community Environmental Council is an environmental non-profit established in 1970. CEC's mission is to identify, advocate and raise awareness about the most pressing environmental issues that affect the Santa Barbara region. We currently focus all of our energy on building a community-based movement that weans the region off of fossil fuels in one generation — *Fossil Free by '33*.

Website: [www.cecsb.org](http://www.cecsb.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/rethinkthedrink](http://www.facebook.com/rethinkthedrink)

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