

The Colorado Springs School
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NEWS

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The Colorado Springs School Joins Green Cup Challenge *February to be Month of Saving Energy and Money*

Colorado Springs, Colo. – The Colorado Springs School (CSS) is pleased to announce its participation in the annual **Green Cup Challenge**, competing with 125 schools in 24 states across the country. According to the Green Schools Alliance’s website, “the Green Cup Challenge™ (GCC) is the first and only national student-driven, interschool Climate Challenge that supports student efforts to measure and reduce campus electricity use and related greenhouse gas emissions, and to encourage water efficiency, waste reduction, and recycling.” The requirements for this year’s Challenge, sponsored by the Green Schools Alliance, are to measure and reduce energy consumption throughout the month of **February** and compare the data with three years worth of past utility bills.

“As a member of the Green Schools Alliance, The Colorado Springs School is part of a group of schools that are working together to promote sustainable practices within a school and a sense of responsibility within its students. Being a member of the Green School Alliance and participating in the Green Cup Challenge is part of our hope to build in our students a sense of responsibility toward others,” said Kevin Reel, Head of School at CSS. “Our largest concern is that we have been implementing energy-saving initiatives for several months and may have given ourselves a difficult baseline value to beat; but regardless of who ‘wins’ the ‘challenge’, we all win when students learn and grow.”

This year, CSS became a member of the Green Schools Alliance, whose goal is to empower schools to take action on climate change and the environment. Begun in 2007, the GSA has been working to use schools’ influence to encourage young people to take responsibility for the impact they have on the environment. CSS students in the E-Club, or Environmental, Ecology, Economics, Energy, and Entrepreneurship Club, will be leading the charge in making sure the school significantly decreases energy and natural gas consumption. The club is comprised of students Nick

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Johnson, Sarah Hamilton, Paige Adam, Kevin Araje, Mani Morse and Gabe Yaakob and faculty sponsors Sam Johnson (Upper School Science), Miller Adam (Upper School Photography), Dr. Paul Young (Upper School Economics), and Ron Marko (CFO and Facilities). Other schools in Colorado competing in the Green Cup Challenge are Alexander Dawson School (Lafayette) and Fountain Valley School (Colorado Springs).

“For several years I’ve identified myself as an environmentalist and was excited at the prospect of joining this club when it began,” said Nick Johnson, a senior at CSS (not related to science teacher, Sam Johnson). “It’s important to let other students know about saving energy and the environment, and this is a great way to get that message across.”

The E-Club plan for the Green Cup Challenge this year deals mainly with light bulb and computer usage in the school buildings. So far they have examined how many light tubes are really needed in each classroom, and in some rooms the number is about two thirds of what are present. Many teachers have now begun to use about two thirds of the available power to make up for extra bulbs. The club is also raising awareness about turning the lights off if a classroom is left empty for more than a minute. In addition, Joe Thomas, the Technology Coordinator, was consulted about getting computers turned off at night, and putting them to sleep after 15 minutes instead of after 6 hours or more.

Earlier this year the E-club kicked off their new club with a parking lot experiment. E-club members conducted an energy audit by measuring the tire pressure of vehicles in the parking lot. The experiment took place when gas prices were hovering at about \$3 per gallon. Students used a formula to determine fuel efficiency with a measured tire pressure. Grade cards were left on vehicles in the parking lot, informing drivers of where their tire pressures ranked and what that meant for their fuel efficiency. In the club’s survey of 32 cars, 14 vehicles fell in the normal range, while 1 was over pressured and 17 vehicles were under pressured. By classifying the vehicles in a range from compact to SUVs, the club was able to extrapolate that the average loss of an under inflated vehicle was \$4.20 per visit to the gas station. Students raised the awareness amongst their peers that proper tire inflation is beneficial to optimizing gas mileage and the life of a set of tires.

“We want to instill behaviors in our students that will encourage them to stay ‘green’ the rest of their lives,” said Sam Johnson, Upper School Science teacher and faculty sponsor of the E-Club. “The

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school has already made major efforts to lower energy costs and reduce its carbon footprint. Now it's time for the students to catch the spirit!"

CSS began the quest "to go green" more than 5 years ago and has made incredible progress since then. In an effort to reduce energy costs and eliminate excessive uses of natural resources, CSS has reduced more than 20% of its average natural gas, water and electrical usage annually since 2004. The return on investment has been outstanding; with an average annual cost investment of \$4,000, CSS has been able to reduce energy costs by more than \$25,000 every year over the past 4 years. Joining the GSA and participating in the Green Cup Challenge is now encouraging Upper School students at CSS to reduce their carbon footprint and save money along the way. CSS also has several Children's School Green Initiatives and a Middle School Green Committee to encourage students of all ages to preserve the environment and understand their impact.

For more information on the Colorado Springs School and its efforts in the Green Cup Challenge, contact Jessica James at jjames@css.org or at 719-434-3506.

Interviews and photo opportunities with the student club can be scheduled.

About The Green Schools Alliance (GSA)

GSA was created by schools, from schools and is working with and through schools worldwide to take action on climate change and the environment. Visit www.greenschoolsalliance.org for more information.

About The Colorado Springs School (CSS)

CSS offers an experiential educational curriculum for Pre-Kindergarten – 12th graders. Through superior academics and mentoring, The Colorado Springs School prepares students to think independently and to meet the needs of a dynamic world with leadership, ingenuity, problem-solving skills, and personal integrity.

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