

## Hard work pays off for Lester B's Eco Team



**By Jeff Doner**

Students at Lester B. Pearson have made it a mandate to help the environment by reducing waste and helping create awareness.

Last week, the school's eco-team celebrated their hard work throughout the year by holding a paperless and environmental day at the school.

Part of the celebration was in response to finding out they were being awarded with a \$1,000 grant from the Ministry of Education to help fund the eco-team's 'Keep it Green' fundraising initiative to replace school water fountains with water bottle fill stations.

Ms. Duggan, a teacher who helps coordinate the eco-team, said the students have totally bought into the concept of working to help the environment.

'We're kind of celebrating our success and the fact that we found out this week that our water station was actually going to become a reality, we wanted to celebrate it by doing a little more to help the environment,' she said.

'These things go along with our eco-team and our initiatives to reduce our imprint that we are leaving in the world and so we've brought a lot of initiatives forward this year. We also had a litterless lunch week where all students were encouraged to bring in reusable containers and the eco-reps handed out tickets to anyone who brought a litterless lunch for prizes.'

The eco-team also handed out reusable water bottles, do weekly presentations for their classes, do daily announcements and run a vigorous fundraising campaign throughout the year.

To purchase their water filling station, Ms. Duggan said the eco-team raised \$650 themselves. That, coupled with the \$1,000 grant and some support from the school, and the filling station is soon to become a reality.

'It felt great because we worked really hard on it and we know everyone wants it, so it felt really good,' said grade 7 student and long-time eco-team member Mateen Mirzaei.

'I want to see more water stations. We currently have one that's paid for, but we'll try to get two more. One for each floor.'

His classmate and eco-team cohort Logan Maier said he was also excited for the water filling station and was proud of the eco-team's hard work.

'It's great because you're helping the environment, saving the world, teaching other people to be more eco friendly,' he said. 'I got involved in the first place because I thought it was weird that people were throwing paper in the garbage and stuff like that and started to think about why. So I got involved with the eco-team.'

Both students said they want to stay involved and help the environment once they graduate and head off to high school.

?I would like to see people just thinking about the environment more,? Logan said. ?Instead of just randomly throwing your waste into whichever container, because people think it's just a little bit, it won't affect anything, but the more you do that the more affect it has.?

Ms. Duggan said the eco-team has been an incredible way for the students to learn new things, while also developing skills for the future.

?Being a good citizen, being a good person, caring about people, the environment, building relationships, to me the eco team is really what we do every week,? she said. ?We brainstorm and work together every week. Through that we're team building and instilling leadership skills in students.

?These are our future leaders of tomorrow and the reason why I became a teacher was because I really wanted to make a difference and I really wanted to help make that difference and little change every day and we start with the students that we teach.?