

CASE STUDY: GALVESTON AND HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS

Program Name: Learning to be WaterWise

Agency Name: Harris-Galveston Coastal Subsidence District

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Contact Information:

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Number of Customers: August, 1994- October, 2001 – 284,982 participants

Program Description:

The Learning to be WaterWise program targets fifth-grade students, combining classroom education activities with hands-on home projects to build knowledge and awareness of water issues and impacts. Measurable, lasting residential water and energy savings result from the home installation of water efficiency technologies by students and parents. Students also complete home water use audits.

Teachers implement the program in the classroom and assign homework activities that use student kits to install conservation technologies at home. Innovative tools such as an interactive website, 3D CDROM learning game, puzzles, contests, videos, a home survey and the kits inspire student and family participation. Sound educational content (which meets state learning requirements), exciting “hands-on” tools for students, and program incentives (opportunity to earn university graduate credit, flexible scheduling for activities) help ensure successful teacher participation and implementation.

Program Beginning: 1994

Target Audience:

Target audience is 5th grade students and their families. The actual number reached per year will vary, but is approximately 45,000

Program Cost and Funding:

- **Materials Cost:** \$32.75 per participant
- **Staff Time:** One full-time coordinator – 40 hrs/wk
- **Funding Source:** Partnerships with municipalities, utility districts, business partners

Program Objective/Driving Force:

Achieve measurable water conservation results while affecting family attitudes and practices by providing effective education combined with actual home installations.

Program Type: Off the shelf. School to home

What Works Best

Hands-on installation projects are very popular, involve the entire family, and serve to both demonstrate the ease and effectiveness of conservation measures, but also provide the specific savings to justify program costs.

What Would Change

Some educational refinements: slightly shorter program length for teachers, more math content.

Evaluation of Effectiveness:

There are built in reporting/evaluation measures. Program effectiveness is measured by the installation data reported by participating students. Water conservation savings are calculated using the data provided by students, and are based on the device installations only. Additional savings can be expected from behavioral and attitudinal changes for the participating families.

Beyond the excellent participation and results data collected, we have the strongly positive teacher and parent feedback that indicates program success.