



The Recycling Spirit!

Kids Get in the Swing of Plastics Recycling

Ask the kids at West Gresham Elementary School whether they recycle their empty plastic milk jugs, and you're likely to get an enthusiastic response. That is, if you can get them to stop swinging, climbing and sliding first.

The students at this Oregon grade school were the lucky winners of a brand new playground built exclusively from recycled plastic milk jugs. More than 16,000 jugs were recycled into "plastic lumber" used to construct the playground, donated as part of a plastics recycling awareness campaign.

"We definitely know more about recycling now. This playground helped the environment, and it also helped save the earth," says James Allan, a fifth grader at West Gresham. He adds that the gift of the playground inspired the students at West Gresham to initiate a plastics recycling program of their own: "We wanted to earn the play-

ground we were given so we decided to try and collect and recycle the same number of milk jugs it took to build it."

The students already have surpassed the 16,000 milk jug milestone and they are continuing to collect and recycle plastic containers both in school and at home. Allan reports, "My family now recycles their plastic much more than we used to. Now we take them out, break them down and stomp on them, because that's the way they [the local recycling program] take them."

Plastic lumber is just one of the many products now being made with recycled plastic. Communities across the country are now collecting a variety of plastic bottles that are recycled into everything from shoes and sweatshirts to backpacks and new bottles. With the enthusiasm of people like James Allan and his classmates, plastics recycling can only get bigger.

