



## Clay Academy takes first place in recycling challenge

Woodstock District 200's Clay Academy took first place in McHenry County in the Trex Plastic Film Recycling Challenge. They also placed 8th out of 25 schools collecting plastic in the Midwest, in the category of schools with 1-350 students.

Each year hundreds of schools across the nation compete against each other to recycle the most plastic film. Trex, a recycled decking company, hopes to promote a better understanding and appreciation for the importance of recycling, and the value in keeping the nation's landfills and oceans free of plastic debris. The challenge runs each year from November until April, with the winners announced on Earth Day. Trex has rewarded the students with a bench made entirely of recycled materials, which will be placed on the playground.

Under the direction of teacher Catherine Cantwell, Clay students and staff brought in plastic film every week, with additional plastic film donations from several community sources. Clay's daytime custodian, Jake Fritz, and his family farm donated over 600 pounds of plastic film. Woodstock City Hall, and Steel Heart LTD (Harvard, Illinois) also collected plastic for Clay Academy. The total amount of plastic recycled was 1124 pounds – which adds up to approximately 16 pounds per student. The Clay team was assisted by retired WHS science teacher and current Director of McHenry County Schools Environmental Education Program (MCSSEEP), Bill Donato, who helped the students organize the program and served as a liaison between the schools and Trex.

