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STUDENTS' RECYCLING EFFORTS TRIPLE EXPECTATIONS

GLENDALE, Ariz. -- Fifth graders at Desert Mirage Elementary School know a thing or two about recycling. Actually, they know 11,216 things about recycling. That's how many plastic items they collected and avoided sending to the Glendale landfill.

The heaping piles of recyclable plastics, weighing in at 520 pounds, were collected by the students in response to a challenge put out by the city of Glendale Sanitation Department. City workers wanted to make sure the public knew the city had expanded the kind of plastics it accepts for recycling. The city staff also knew the best place to start was with kids.

Still, the Sanitation staff was amazed when students had already tripled their expectations in the first week of the two-week challenge. More than that, the students took it upon themselves to begin teaching others the recycling rules they'd learned – namely that any plastic item bearing a recycling symbol with a 1 through 7 can go in the curbside recycling bin in Glendale.

Teacher Beth Adamczyk said, "The kids are so excited. They are talking to everyone about the expansion of the Glendale recycling program. They have the whole school on board with them, their families, their neighborhoods. I have never seen these kids so motivated and excited."

The students who won the challenge earned a pizza party for their efforts. All the competing classes will get snow cones and a trip to see the next step in recycling when they take a field trip to Glendale's Materials Recovery Facility.

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