

My Action Plan 2011-2012

After attending perhaps the most amazing program of my life, I felt the need to go home and make a difference, using the valuable skills I had learned at BELL, in my community. For my action plan, I originally had three goals:

- To start an environmental community service club at my high school.
- To install solar panels over three of the main buildings at my high school.
- To install CFL light bulbs in any place on my high school campus that does not have them or has regular light bulbs.

When I finished BELL, I contacted my school and discovered that every building that is capable of having solar panels, already has, and every light socket that can hold a CFL light bulb, already does. Having two out of my three goals unable to be performed, I concentrated on putting all of my efforts into creating an environmental club. The first thing I did when I finished BELL was contact my former honors biology teacher and ask her to be the teacher sponsor for my club, which she automatically agreed to do. After I had a teacher sponsor, I contacted the Student Services Administrator, who is in charge of all the clubs at my school, and discovered how to start up a new club. I recruited four of my good friends whom I thought might have an interest in being an officer in the club. My mom and I came up with a name for the club—ECO. It would stand for Earth, Clouds, Oceans, as well as be an abbreviation for “ecology.” The mission statement and purpose of ECO would read, “ECO participates in various events that aim to help and/or improve Chaparral High School (my high school) and/or the local community. Members also become more knowledgeable about environmental issues.” Having all of this done before school started in early August allowed me to get ahead of the game and fill out and submit the new club forms during the first week of school. I was ecstatic

when ECO was approved by the student government and school administration. During the second week of school, the four officers and I advertised the club to the students during Club Rush, where all the clubs try to recruit members for the new school year. The officers and I gathered potential members' emails and emailed them with important club information via our club email, eco@earthcloudsoceans.org. Once the club was more firmly established, we began using several different methods of communication to contact all the members: A Facebook page, a private Facebook group, the school website, email, and texting. After a lot of hard work, ECO was finally up and running by around September. To say that I am astonished by the success and accomplishments of ECO this far would be a huge understatement.

Meetings have been held after school, every other Thursday, since the beginning of the school year. ECO has had about one event every month, with some months busier than others. There are 18—counting the four officers and myself—extremely dedicated and enthusiastic members of ECO. So far this year, ECO has had 14 hours worth of community service projects. Service events have included: picking up trash at school; orchestrating a school-wide recycling drive; planning and filming a humorous and informative video for the school-wide drive; volunteering at the 2012 Waste Management Phoenix Open as “recycling ambassadors”; restoring the habitat of a mountain conservancy by replanting cacti. The school-wide recycling drive, which has been perhaps the biggest accomplishment of ECO thus far, is for collecting bottle caps and soda tabs. For every 1000 bottle caps collected, Arizona Oncology, the largest cancer practice in Arizona, will give a free chemotherapy treatment to a child in need. The Ronald McDonald House accepts pop/soda tabs to sell the tabs to raise funds for families to stay at the House. Brown paper bags were placed in every single classroom in Chaparral to accumulate all of the caps. A promotional video for the drive was shown on the school-wide

announcements. In addition, one non-community service, fun, educational event that we had this year was building solar ovens and baking cookies in them. I took this idea directly from my enjoyable and educational experience of building solar ovens and baking cookies at BELL. This particular event proved to be both fun and educational for the members of ECO. The next and final event for this school year will be next week. A guest speaker—the Vice President of Project Development at US Solar Holdings, an industrial solar power plant developer—is coming to speak to the club.

Both the success, and difficulties, I have encountered with regards to my action plan has taught me that the road to success is granted to have a few bumps, but perseverance, determination, and patience will help to overcome them. I am now truly aware that if I really set my mind to something, anything is possible.

ECO's Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/earthcloudsoceans>

ECO's School Website: http://earth-clouds-oceans-eco.susd.chaparral.schoolfusion.us/modules/groups/integrated_home.phtml?gid=2866286&sessionid=e6994a9e6509748782043d92bb1ca1c9