

Teaching and empowering the next generation  
to value and sustain their natural world.



# Message from Mitch Barlas, Director & Founder

Hello Friends,

Over the last 8 years the Power2Sustain project has strived to provide environmental literacy to K-12 students in the US and abroad, free-of-charge. Our goal has always been to provide resources and tools to empower children, their families and their communities to make small but significant behavior changes that positively affect our natural environment. While this past year, we have experienced yet another time of challenge and uncertainty, our mission and outreach remained strong. While there were setbacks, we found ways to continue to teach and empower.

One area in particular that was challenging was what students and families most likely experienced when going grocery shopping. Supermarkets told us to leave our reusable bags at home! While we now know that the primary (and most likely main way) that covid is transmitted is through the air, and not through touch, and that these rules probably did nothing to keep us safe, it affected the progress many people and areas of America had made with bringing our own reusable bags.

Leave it to our brilliant students and teachers to grab onto this fact, and continue to use and support reusable bags, and other products. Teachers across the country made the decision to continue to teach about environmental sustainability and reuse in particular, despite the negative messaging and pushback.

We received several emails from classroom teachers who participated in the P2S program this year, sharing that their students understood that covid could not be transmitted through touch (especially by a reusable shopping bag,) and whom went to their local supermarkets and asked to speak with the manager. They shared articles from studies that said it was fine to bring and use a reusable shopping bag to the supermarket. While mostly unsuccessful at changing the policy of these markets, the students knew the science and that they were correct, and learned valuable lessons about advocacy and perseverance.

During this past year, I am proud of the many students, teachers and schools who continued to use the Power2Sustain lessons and activities, including the end project of distributing Bagito reusable shopping bags to students and families, despite the obstacles. This generation of students has been blessed with an instinct that something is amiss with our planet, and a passionate motivation to do something about it!



# Teach

- The Power2Sustain project reached 3058 students, 96 teachers and 44 schools this year.
- Schools in 10 states participated, along with Masai Mara students in Kenya, Africa.
- After the project 82% of participating students could successfully identify 3 or more ways that they can change their behavior to have an immediate impact on our environment.

# Empower

- Over 1600 Bagito Original Reusable Shopping Bags were distributed and put in use 14 municipal areas and one foreign country, potentially eliminating 100,000 single-use shopping bags from entering the waste stream.
- 76% of surveyed families of participating students said that their children had influenced the family with one or more environmentally sustainable practices at home.

# Change

- Power2Sustain engaged with the US Embassy in Madagascar on a grant application to run the program for 5000 students in the Mad. While we did not receive the grant (due to an unprecedented number of application and prioritization for food and health, we did inspire them to change the grant criteria for next round weighting sustainability projects higher!



# 2021 by the Numbers

**3058**

Students taught

**96**

Teachers  
participated

**44**

Participating schools in  
10 states plus Kenya

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**Revenue: \$26,470**

**Expenses: \$22,588**

Program: \$19,388

Admin: \$3200

**Net Assets: \$45,201 2021**

\$43,866 2020

Change: **+\$1336**

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## Project voices:

"I can't believe that Trader Joe's would not let us bring our reusable shopping bags inside. At least we convinced them to let us put our groceries in our bags outside!"

**Marisol R., 6th grade  
student, Fresno, CA**

"This program was a savior this school year - kids were messaged that reuse was out and that single-use was back. In our classroom we looked at the facts and saw that there was NO problem with reuse during the pandemic."

**Rachel P., Teacher, 10th  
grade, Portland, OR**

I am grateful to my child's teacher and to Power2Sustain and Bagito for informing our family about how easy it is to make simple changes to help our planet."

**Rodrigo W., Parent,  
Newark, NJ**

# A Project Snapshot 2021



118 High School Students



6 teachers

## Montana Schools Reuse Project Spring 2020

### Water is Life Fresh water on Earth Grades 4-5

National Science Standard 8-12:23-58  
Understand and carry out scientific inquiry  
Understand biological evolution, interdependence of organisms, behavior or organism.  
Develop skills in technological design and understand relationships between science and technology  
Understand natural resources environmental quality, natural and human-induced hazards and local, national and global environmental challenges.  
Understand science as a human endeavor and nature of scientific knowledge

Common Core 6-8.1  
Understand Measurable Attributes of Objects and the Units, Systems, and Processes of Measurement  
Common Core 6-8.2  
Apply Appropriate Techniques, Tools, and Formulas to Determine Measurements  
Common Core 3-5.1  
Understand numbers, ways of representing numbers, relationships among numbers, and number systems. Understand the place-value structure of the base-ten number system and be able to represent and compare whole numbers and decimals. Recognize and generate equivalent forms of commonly used fractions, decimals, and percentages.

Stewardship/Sustainability Goal: (Teacher created)

**Pre-activities:**  
Students should understand/review basic concepts of the need for fresh water by human and other species in order to survive

**Objectives:**  
Students will calculate the percentage of fresh water available for human use and explain why water is a limited resource. By estimating and calculating the percent of available fresh water on Earth, student understand that fresh water is a limited resource and must be conserved and protected

**Background Info:**  
Students may know that Earth is covered mainly by water, but they may not realize that only a small amount is available for human consumption. Ironically, on a planet approximately 71 percent water, this resource is one of the main limiting factors for life on Earth. The Water Availability Table summarizes the major factors affecting the amount of available water on Earth. If all the clean, fresh water were distributed equally among people, there would be about 1.82 million gallons (7 million liters) per person. This is only about .003 percent of the total water on Earth. On a global scale, only a small percentage of water is available, but this percentage represents a large amount per individual. The paradox is that, for some, water may appear plentiful, but for others it is a scarce commodity. Why are some people in need of more water? Geography, climate, and weather affect water distribution. Agriculture, industry, and domestic use also affect availability

**Lesson:**  
Students will estimate the proportion of potable water on Earth and compare it to the rest of the water on the planet. Students work in small groups. Instruct them to draw a large circle with a marker on white sheet of paper.



BigSpeak is a registered non-profit organization teaching K-12 students to value and sustain their natural world.  
For more information please visit: [www.BigSpeak.org](http://www.BigSpeak.org)



200 reusable shopping bags



26 parents