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Recycle Across America™ Receives Grant from Kiehl's Since 1851 Provides National Recycling Solution to 1,000 K-12 Public Schools

150,000 Free National Standardized Labels for Recycling Bins Given to U.S. Schools Designed to Make Recycling Easier, Improve Recycling Levels

MINNEAPOLIS – April 20, 2012 – In honor of Earth Day, environmentally-conscious [Kiehl's Since 1851](#), the New York-based purveyor of fine quality skin and hair care, has donated \$100,000 to [Recycle Across America™](#) to help improve school-based recycling by providing free standardized recycling labels to K-12 public schools across the United States. Recycle Across America™, in partnership with the [National Wildlife Federation's Eco Schools USA](#) program, will identify 1,000 schools to receive a total of 150,000 donated standardized labels.

Since recycling was first introduced in the U.S., nearly every organization, business and school has had to figure out how to label their bins themselves, resulting in millions of ineffective and confusing labels across the country. The lack of consistent messaging on recycling bins has resulted in public confusion, apathy, skepticism, and ultimately, low capture rates. Despite millions of dollars spent on recycling campaigns, competitions and advanced sorting technologies, 2010 U.S. recycling levels were only 34.1 percent and have risen less than 10 percent in the last 15 years according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Nonprofit Recycle Across America™ has created a standardized labeling system for use on recycling bins to help address the issue of confusion at the bin and to present national messaging to help make recycling easier and more consistent for the public.

In a recent case study, consistent labels were applied to recycling bins throughout 15 schools in a Minnesota school district, resulting in a 47 percent increase in recycling rates and a 47 percent reduction of the district's solid waste tax bill. Additionally, costly contamination was significantly reduced.

"What a person does at the bin impacts the entire economics and viability of recycling, and yet the experience at the bin has been very confusing. We are convinced this is why capture rates remain low and costly contamination in the recycling stream continues to be high. When people have to take time to try to learn a different looking label at every recycling bin, they often treat the bin like a trash can," said Mitch Hedlund, founder and executive director, Recycle Across America™. "Standardized labels are a simple solution to improve recycling nationwide. Many notable companies are now using the standardized labels within their organizations and Kiehl's philanthropic leadership giving 150,000 standardized labels for U.S. schools, is starting a trend that other corporations are beginning to follow."

"Recycling can provide tremendous benefits to an organization's bottom-line, our national economy and our environment," said Hedlund. "The EPA indicates that if the U.S. reaches recycling levels of 75 percent it will be the equivalent of removing 50 million cars off the roads, and generate 1.5 million new jobs. When the recycling experience is more consistent, we believe achieving that goal is well within reach."

“We are excited to work with Recycle Across America and further remake the footprint of the American school, shrinking environmental and financial impact by reducing the amount of garbage being hauled away at the end of the day,” said Laura Hickey, Senior Director of Eco-Schools USA. “Eco-Schools USA is at its best and most enriching when it marries environmental literacy training with concrete implementation—in this case, helping schools conserve resources, save money and add to the greater mission of reducing waste in America.”

“It’s wonderful to have the support of like-minded and results-driven organizations that want to implement measurable solutions to finally begin moving the needle in U.S. recycling capture rates. We are incredibly grateful to Kiehl’s for their contribution and Eco Schools USA for bringing this solution to their school partners,” said Hedlund.

To commemorate Kiehl’s Limited Edition Label Art series by “Friends of Kiehl’s,” 100 percent of net proceeds from the company’s fourth Earth Day campaign will benefit Recycle Across America and the school labels campaign. The Kiehl’s Limited Edition series features Earth-inspired designs by socially conscious celebrities including Florence Welch, Mark Ruffalo, Rosario Dawson and Spike Lee. Kiehl’s has established a reputation in the prestige cosmetics market, with approximately 44 stores, 1 spa, and products offered at fine retailers across the U.S.

National Wildlife Federation was named the stateside host for the international Eco-Schools program in 2008, thus establishing a unique school sustainability program that incorporates ‘greening’ physical structures and grounds, conserving natural resources, and integrating environmental education into K-12 curricula. Eco-Schools USA is based on the work of student-driven teams dedicated to issues like recycling and energy conservation, using sample materials, background information and teacher advice provided by NWF. More than 870 schools across 47 states have officially joined the effort so far.

Recycle Across America www.recycleacrossamerica.org is a non-profit solution initiated and funded by the Environmental Advancement Foundation, a 501(c)(3) dedicated to delivering society-wide solutions that eliminate public confusion, stimulate the environmental economy and expedite progress. Recycle Across America is specifically focused on introducing solutions that make recycling more simple, comprehensive, economically viable and prevalent in the United States. Recycle Across America represents what can be accomplished when an industry unites to deliver simple solutions that have a large and measurable impact on society for the greater good. For her work with Recycle Across America and other environmental efforts, founder Mitch Hedlund was recently awarded a [Global Ashoka Fellowship](#).