

Rahway Water Champions Project

Situation



Rahway Water Champions outside of the Waiting Room Restaurant in the City of Rahway, NJ.

In 2009, EPA Region 2 approached New Jersey Water Savers to participate in a program to engage local high school students in the promotion of WaterSense® and water efficient products. It is through these efforts that the students will be able to gain knowledge, take action, and have fun, while achieving measurable reductions in water consumption. Through New Jersey Water Savers, the Rahway Water Champions Project was expanded to include an intense educational component prior to arming the students with a promotional strategy.

The Rahway Water Champions Project has the potential to place high school students at the center of the stakeholder-driven learning community. The faculty advisor and students will engage with numerous civic customers to promote increased capacity for behavioral change that will lead to more sustainable uses of water resources. There will be a wide range of locally determined stakeholders, including the students themselves, faculty advisors, citizens, parents, and local businesses, such as WaterSense® promotional partners (e.g., state, county, not-for-profits, utilities, etc.), retailer/distributor partners, manufacturer partners, and other professional partners (e.g., landscaping professionals).

Action

During Spring 2010, an Americorp Watershed Ambassador, along with New Jersey Water Savers, worked with approximately fifteen students from Rahway High School's Social Action Club to develop this project. The group conducted pre-installation water audits and a pre-installation cost/benefit analysis for one set of highly utilized restrooms in the school. They have also performed water saving calculations for the entire school.



A Rahway High School Student notices that one of the school's faucets uses 2.22 gallons of water per minute.

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Impact

Based on the water audit conducted by the students, the students estimate that the water savings in the school bathrooms could be as follows:

- Toilets: Approximately 63% water savings using new water efficient 1.28 gallons per flush (gpf) toilets. The current toilets use 3.5 gpf.
- Faucets in the bathroom sinks: Approximately 46% water savings using new 1.5 gallons per minute (gpm) faucets. The current faucets use 2.78 gpm.
- Urinals: Approximately 95% water savings using new high efficiency 0.125 gpf urinals. The current urinals use 2.5 gpf.

The Rahway Water Champions early estimates forecast a monthly water savings of up to 136,000 gallons and a savings of \$544, with an annual savings of up to 1.6 million gallons of water saved and a \$6,500 corresponding reduced water cost.

During Summer 2010, American Standard donated fixtures to update the first set of restrooms. The students pitched the idea of updating the entire school with the help of New Jersey Water Savers, American Standard, a Union County Freeholder, and the Rahway Board of Education. American Standard has committed to supplying the product. In Fall 2010, the students will do a post-installation audit on the first set of restrooms and present their findings to project partners.

New Jersey Water Savers Partnership

New Jersey Water Savers is a partnership between the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency. This partnership was created to provide leadership to promote water conservation throughout New Jersey. For more information on our partnership efforts, visit us at www.water.rutgers.edu.

