

## For some, Earth Day is every day



Rawlins Daily Times, Jerret Raffety From left, Rawlins Middle School students Briana Hobbs, Aleesha Martinez and others collected recyclables at the middle school earlier this week.

**By Janice Kurbjun**

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Recycling sacks sat outside classroom doors in the spokes of the Rawlins Middle School building Thursday morning.

At about noon, students in Jane Lynn's alternative classroom were released with 50-gallon, heavy duty trash bags in hand to collect the recycling and stow it for Friday's visit from Dave Dingman, the recycling guy. He's also a school board member who's befriended the students in the alternative classroom.

The alternative classroom is comprised of 20 students from sixth through eighth grade who need special attention for varying reasons, but who are not classified in the special education category, Lynn said in an earlier interview.

Recycling at RMS is something the alternative students have been doing since the beginning of the year, when Dingman approached them with the idea.

Thursday's pickup came on the heels of Earth Day, when the district's students dispersed throughout the city to pick plastic bags off brambles, dig cans out of the dirt and stuff crumpled tissue into trash bags.

The alternative classroom alone gathered about 12 bags of trash, Lynn said. She added that they found a few dollars as well, but "that was karma I think," she said.

So, why do they do it?

"I'll be honest. One is to get out of class," seventh-grader Dani Hall said. It takes the students up to a half hour to do each recycling collection. "But I also do it to help our school."

Sixth-grader Alex Tompkins, donning an Earth Day T-shirt given to her and the rest of the class by Dingman on Wednesday, said, "I do it because I want to take care of the Earth and I want her to take care of us."

Other students had similarly wise answers, as they peered honestly and earnestly from behind glasses, locks of hair, perfume, cologne, makeup and all the trappings of middle school students.

They sometimes get help, like when Brittany Clark stepped out of her classroom to help hold a bag open.

At other times, girls exchanged hugs and guys gave high-fives to their passing peers.

Hall grabbed the bag from eighth-grader Stephen DePas when they were finished dumping the copy paper. She

twisted the edge and heaved it over her shoulder.

She tip-toed a pirouette and expressed imbalance on her visage.

Next thing, she was on the floor, giggling.

DePas grabbed the heavy recycling off her and helped her up. Brushing a lock of hair away from her blushing cheeks, Hall snatched the bag, dragging it down the hall.

"You're going to put holes in it," DePas called after her.

She shrugged and heaved it into the holding room along with several other bags ready for Dingman's pickup.

After the completed collection, Hall made one last remark. She referred to the recent Disney flick "Wall-E," which features a trash-collecting robot who solitarily collects trash and builds skyscrapers out the compressed refuse. Hall said the movie has significance in a younger generation watching garbage accumulate in their world.

"I hope that everyone who reads this article will help contribute to recycling and that we're not just on our own," she said. "We're going to inherit the Earth. I don't want it to be dirty and filthy and covered with trash. I want to be able to live in it.

"People need to think about how they want the Earth in 20 years."

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