

## Schools take ``trash talk'' to new level

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Four Blount County schools were talking trash this past school year, and one of those schools has emerged victorious in a unique version of what could be called their very own junkyard war.

The four schools -- William Blount High School/Vocational School, William Blount Middle School, Carpenter's Middle School and Mary Blount Elementary School -- competed against one another for empty ink jet and laser printer cartridges in a contest sponsored by Cash4Cartridges, a local recycling firm.

The contest was close, but William Blount Vocational School took first place in the competition by recycling \$554.50 worth of junk that would otherwise be tossed into the landfill. In addition to the money raised for classroom activities, sponsors Denise Long and Melanie Pritchard earned first prize, a GBC Docuseal 125P Laminator which has a retail value of about \$250. William Blount Middle School was hot on their heels with a total of \$509 and will receive a nice consolation prize, said Brian Crane of Cash4Cartridges.

### Easy money

Long and Pritchard teach keyboarding and career management success, freshman-level classes that prepare vocational students for future careers. Pritchard also sponsors the school newspaper.

Long said she became aware of the Cartridge Recycling Competition last summer at the Blount County Teachers' Fair. Crane had set up a booth to promote the competition.

``With career management success, one of the strands that we're supposed to teach is giving back to the community," Long said. ``We also teach keyboarding and use ink cartridges galore, and we decided that would be a good way to try to raise money without selling candy or coupon books or something like that."

Long said she was surprised at how much money the class raised by recycling the cartridges, which were obtained from the school and by students from their parents. Some of the parents collected the items from their workplaces, as well, Long said.

``We've had some really good support from the community with it," she said.

Crane said the winning class was the one which earned the most money with their ``junk." Crane picked up the empty cartridges several times throughout the school year, wrote a check for the value of the recycled items at the time of pickup and the participating classrooms then used the money as they saw fit.

Long and Pritchard said their students bought trees and planted them at Mary Blount Elementary School, contributed to a family whose home burned, mailed shoe boxes of items to military personnel who had been deployed and bought more ink cartridges for the classroom.

``This is the easiest way to make money that I've ever done," Long said. ``The kids bring in the cartridges, I pile them up under the table and call Brian when I can't get to the table. He comes and picks up the cartridges and writes me a check. It's helping the environment plus raising money. It's a wonderful way to supplement your classroom, that's for sure."

Crane said this first competition was much more successful than he thought it would be and plans are to continue next year with a new contest.

``We gave almost \$1,300 to the schools, and we're happy that money was given back to them rather than thrown in the garbage can," Crane said. He hopes to add more schools to the list of competitors next school year, he said.

For more information about participating in the second annual competition, call Cash4Cartridges at 984-9020 or visit the Web site at [www.cash4cartridgestn.com](http://www.cash4cartridgestn.com). Crane will also have a booth set up at the Blount County Teachers' Fair in July, he said.

Cash4Cartridges is a home-based company in Maryville that collects and recycles used inkjet, laser and copier cartridges. Any person or organization who wishes to recycle with the company, regardless of their relation to Blount County Schools, is invited to contact Crane at 984-9020.

The company saved area businesses, individuals and schools \$11,431.40 in 2002.