

Student effort aimed at cleaner water

Submitted by Romy Tuggle

A new student organization at Gulf Shores Middle School is launching a fundraiser that has never before been done.

The Citizens' Environmental Organization, nicknamed "CEOs," is selling Vapur water bottles with a label designed by the students and funds supporting clean water sources for the one billion people living in water-stressed areas around the world.

Dana Leman of Randomkid.org said no group has ever done a fundraiser using the Vapur water bottles.

The Vapur water bottle is called the "Anti-Bottle." Like other reusable water bottles, this bottle keeps plastic single-use water bottles out of landfills and the environment.

But the Vapur bottle is more convenient because it folds down to fit in a pocket or bag and can safely be kept in the freezer. The bottle the CEOs are selling will also feature a tag with a message and artwork designed by two Gulf Shores students, listing three goals the organization chose as its mission for the fundraiser.

The CEOs are coordinating the project with the help of Randomkid (randomkid.org) with proceeds going to Global Water (globalwater.org) and PlayPumps International (play-pumps.org).

The clean water sources these groups provide saves lives



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Students in the Citizen's Environmental Organization show off Vapur water bottles. Seated, from left, are Peyton Lanier, Trey Williams, and Katelyn Killian. Standing, from left, are Livy James, Hank Griffin, Jewl Kimsey, Shelby Moss, Heather Phillips and Jessica Mattes.

worldwide from hunger, disease, and poverty. The Gulf Shores students will be able to choose a specific project to receive the fundraiser proceeds.

Leman said, "The students from Gulf Shores Middle School are showing an incredible commitment not only to an outcome, but they are also bringing a great benefit to our communities here by reducing oil dependency and landfill waste."

The Gulf Shores group was founded by seventh-grade Life Science teacher, Wil Tuggle. Tuggle attended a summer workshop sponsored by the City of Gulf Shores and Mobile Baykeepers featuring guests Cathryn Berger

Kaye and Philippe Cousteau.

Kaye is an international service learning consultant and a former classroom teacher. Cousteau, grandson of renown ocean explorer Jacques Cousteau, is a correspondent for Discovery Education and founder and CEO of EarthEcho International. Kaye and Cousteau co-authored "Going Blue: A Teen Guide to Saving Our Oceans, Lakes, Rivers, and Wetlands."

They worked with a group of Gulf Shores High School students to train them as "citizen journalists" to report on the Gulf Oil Crisis. As a follow-up to this workshop, Tuggle discussed the world water crisis

with his middle school students and found them excited about doing a service project themselves.

So the Citizens' Environmental Organization was created. Most recently, Kaye asked the seventh-graders to write essays about the crisis, and Tuggle selected several essays for her to use in her writing about student service learning.

The Vapur bottles are available through Gulf Shores Middle School CEO members for \$10 each and are available in blue, pink, orange, and purple. For more information on the bottle's design, visit vapur.us.