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BCS students get to the 'root' of the problem Student activists plant tree at school to remind others of trees' importance

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BIRMINGHAM - Birmingham **Covington** School fifth-graders Hannah Balicki, Julia Kiehle and Dylan Walton are concerned Oakland County. "More than 13, 000 trees are cut down in Oakland County each year, so we wanted to try to plant some 11, of Beverly Hills.

BCS teacher Pauline Roberts said the 5/ 6 team at BCS really wanted to incorporate service learning into the curriculum th the environment.

"We entered our children in the Siemens We Can Change the World Challenge, which encouraged the kids to research the problem and work closely in teams to solve the problem. The competition appealed to us because it really required the kid: like digital literacy, creative thinking, teamwork and problem solving," she said.

For their environmental project, Balicki, Kiehle and Walton chose to address the issue of the disappearing temperate fores:

"The temperate forest is disappearing, and we felt like it needed to change," said Kiehle, 11, of Bloomfield Hills.

To educate the local community about the importance of trees and why they should also be concerned, the three students site. They researched grant opportunities and even asked the school's Proud Dads organization to foot the bill for a tree to make the community even more aware of the importance of protecting trees.

On May 15, Gary Stevens - who works in the facility operations department for Birmingham Public Schools - helped the thri crabapple tree on school property while their classmates looked on.

Walton, 11, of Bloomfield Hills said trees help benefit the environment and help the community. "They help by cooling sidew costs, they are a barrier to wind and erosion, plus they are beautiful. Each tree can also clean as much carbon dioxide as : which is more than the average person drives a year," he said.

During the tree planting ceremony, Roberts noted that the three students worked very hard this year to get the tree planter

"This is our first step toward changing the future, who's going to be next?" she asked her students.

Other students in the class are focusing on rain barrel, recycling, carpooling and rain garden projects, just to name a few.

"Our goal this year has really been to make our students more aware of their responsibilities as stewards of the Earth, to i make a difference, and to help them give back to the local community," she said.

You can reach Staff Writer Mary Beth Almond at malmond@candgnews.com or at (586) 498-1060.

Caption:Above: Hannah Balicki, Julia Kiehle and Dylan Walton stand by the tree they planted. Right: Tom Spicer, a contrac Gary Stevens plant the tree.

Photos by Deb Jacques .

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