ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY AND SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE
San Mateo County Office of Education

Sustainable and Climate Resilient Schools Challenge 2020-2021

Kylie Johnson

In partnership with Woodside Upper School

Woodside Elementary School District

Zero Waste and Consumption

Entry Level





Community Awareness and Action



Image Source: CNN

Woodside Upper Elementary School fifth-grader Kylie Johnson from Mrs. Parker's class took steps to build her community's awareness of the waste generated from face masks used during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Kylie chose this project after seeing first hand how littered face masks were affecting birds that live on the beaches in San Mateo County.

For this "Mask Pollution" project, Kylie conducted research on the effects of littered face masks on the environment, and how face masks have now become a common item to find as litter since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Kylie developed a presentation to her class on this topic. In order to spread awareness in her local community Kylie hung over 20 posters across three miles. Both the presentation and the posters included ways for people to take solutionary action, and why sorting face masks into the correct bins is an important way to prevent littering.

Moving forward Kylie plans to continue this awareness campaign by creating larger posters. Kylie also plans to improve the posters by including more images, and inspiring others to take action by sharing the story of how this campaign gained momentum and created an impact in the local community.