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and maintenance projects for potential environmentally preferable choices and savings. It also advocated exploring and instituting water and energy conservation policies and technologies.

"I think we got the grant on the strength of our pilot project," said Fujita, "and the fact that we were able to get the resolution passed."

"This grant is really about continuing to implement the resolution," said Deborah Moore, an Oakland-based environmental scientist and executive director of the Green Schools Initiative.

"Formalizing a program is important because often a good project gets off the ground, but then a teacher or parent leaves and it dies. It is important that it becomes part of the fabric of the school. We want to get to the point where all schools are healthy and green. Part of the grant is going to fund Susan's position."

Moore is speaking of Susan Dvortcsak, a sixth-grade teacher at Topa Topa and the green coordinator for the program.

"Susan started the recycling program eight years ago as a service learning project with the kids," said Fujita, adding she was a natural choice for coordinator, taking on the task of identifying a committed staff member at each school.

"When I came here in 2002 I wanted to tackle lunch food waste," said Fujita, adding the five R's are their bible: reduce, reuse, recycle, rot and re-think. "Kids have found out themselves that there is no 'away' to throw away. Food waste was the highest number on the waste chart."

"This is marrying the issues around nutrition to make them come full circle," said Moore.

Lori Hamour, program director, said they have already done a waste audit in all the schools and the resulting waste stream audit identified 37 immediate changes for the schools, including temperature-controlling thermostats and educational recycling stations, 41 items for short-



Photo by Timothy Teague

**Topa Topa sixth-graders separate out the different types of wet and dry waste and write the totals on their waste audit sheets.**

**Pictured are Sasha Ongley, left, Nicole Golden and, right, Chelsea Cross, 12-year-olds in Gregory Lepine's class.**

term goals such as solar water heaters, and 18 long-term goals using green building practices and furniture from recycled materials. They have also obtained data from all five elementary schools to generate a chart of estimated lunchtime landfill created, 70,952 pounds per year. The chart is broken down into recycling, dry waste, liquid waste, food waste, and unopened food waste.

According to the group,

solutions have already been forthcoming from the kids themselves after doing the audit.

"One solution was to supply separate napkins rather than packets of plastic cutlery and napkins together," said Dvortcsak, "saving the cutlery from going to the landfill when it wasn't really even needed."

"This two-year project has been built on the shoulders of all these programs that went before," said

Moore. "We want to go districtwide, beyond recycling, beyond food, to include the whole environmental footprint."

Food For Thought has just announced the lineup for its bi-annual fund-raising concert, "Locally Grown," June 20 at Libbey Bowl. The bill will include Mason Jennings, Quetzal with Perla Batalla, and the Culver City Dub Collective.

To find out more go to [info@foodforthought](mailto:info@foodforthought).