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## St. Francis environment fair generates a buzz

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Students learn how utensils and trays can be made of cornstarch and sugarcane fiber from J.J. Yosh, left, a representative of World Centric, at St. Francis High School's Jan. 24 environmental awareness fair.

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Students from the St. Francis High School Environmental Club organized an environmental awareness fair Jan. 24 to encourage their peers to turn over a new, more eco-friendly leaf. The fair celebrated all things green, from environmentally conscious furniture to organic food and water conservation.

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“A lot of people are interested in being green, but they don’t know how and they feel helpless,” said junior Allison Lefferts, co-president of the club.

Lefferts and other club members invited vendors and government groups to address how students could better care for the environment.

Kathy Machado, an education outreach coordinator with the Santa Clara Valley Water District, shared with students how her agency provides free low-flow showerheads to residents. Quan Mai, a hazardous materials technician with the county’s department of environmental health, offered plastic bags to hold recycled oil filters. J.J. Yosh of World Centric, a non-profit organization, explained the benefits of using utensils made of sugarcane fiber and cornstarch.

Other merchants offered information on household products, composting and energy use. Toyota, Honda and Volkswagen dealers displayed environmentally minded cars in front of the school gym, and a mountain bike was among the prizes students could win in a raffle.

Senior Joe Mravca said he had heard how some cities are banning plastic bags, but he didn’t know much about it. The presentations gave him more information about that and other subjects.

“This is a great idea,” Mravca said. “It’s cool to be finding out more.”

For junior Caitlin Dinneen, a member of the Environmental Club, the day sparked a sense of urgency.

“We want to change the opinions of people who don’t see the environment as a problem now, because in a couple of years it will be a huge problem,” she said.

St. Francis faculty member and club moderator Roberta Chisam deemed the inaugural environmental awareness fair a success.

“Students asked good questions,” she said. “I’ve been teaching this for 25 years, and students didn’t always get it. They are beginning to get into the environment, and it helps that the world is also getting into it.”

For more information, visit [www.sfhs.com](http://www.sfhs.com).



**In Our Opinion**

[Editorials](#)

Grant Park in Los Altos is becoming a playing area for the classic sand-versus-woodchips debate between residents and city officials.

The city’s process is already well under way to install new playground equipment at Grant and Montclair parks this spring. As part of the renovations, the Los Altos City Council two weeks ago approved a staff plan to replace the current all-sand covering at the Grant Park playground with Fibar-brand engineered woodchips.

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