

## Net Zero Waste

Fort Polk November 23, 2018

The Fort Polk Net Zero Waste (NZW) Team was excited to spend time with local youth at the Fort Polk School Age Center for a hands on activity this past week. In celebration of upcoming Thanksgiving Day, the NZW team and the children worked together for a fun and educational project making paper mache turkeys. The main portion of assembling the turkey involved ripping strips of about 55 newspapers, soaking them in liquid starch, and then pasting them onto a blown up balloon. The turkeys took several days to complete as they had to dry after applying the newspaper and dry after applying paint. The last step brought their meticulous efforts to life when they added the turkey's head and tail feathers.

The children were shocked to know certain facts about the amount of resources that go into making newspapers like producing each week's Sunday newspapers, 500,000 trees must be cut down, and that the average American uses seven trees per year in writing paper, wood, and other paper products. While those 55 newspapers provided by the center would have been recycled, the project demonstrated to the children alternatives to recycling including reducing and reusing materials. The most effective way to reduce waste is by avoiding creating waste in the first place. By using newspaper already on hand-they reduced the need for acquiring new materials; in turn saving precious resources and reducing energy usage.

Pictured top left to right: Gabrielle Mateo, Zachary Olson, Isabelle Mateo and front center is Emma Kunze.

The children were active and engaged, knowing that their actions could have a real impact on the environment in which they live. The youth of today are becoming more environmentally conscious of their decisions. Thanks to outreach and educational activities-light is being shed on the world's current conditions and the role of the youth in environmental guardianship is constantly developing.

