

## BUSINESS FUTURE IN THE

# CARDS

sponsors provide much of the recycled paper.

In the pilot year, one Alcan employee was assigned to the school as a consultant and another employee was assigned to coordinate collection of materials.

For its part, Cormorant Elementary

**W**orking Together for a Better Tomorrow is an environmental education partnership for Grades 1 through 6 supported by Alcan Smelters & Chemicals Limited and Eurocan Pulp and Paper in Kitimat. Based on a highly successful program launched by Alcan in Quebec, it comes with curriculum support materials and lesson plans geared to each grade level. The program is a full school project for Cormorant Elementary School in Kitimat.

The program engages children in running a school-based recycling company that produces a useful, environmentally sound product and marketing it, with proceeds going back into the classroom and school. The product is a line of greeting cards manufactured by the students from pulp produced from recycled paper they collect.

According to Ken Omotami, Alcan's Director of Environmental Services, "children learn that they can help the environment and that through applying hard work and business principles, they can benefit the school and themselves."

Omotami used his pulp and paper background to modify the program for BC. For example, children incorporate a number of paper samples or dried flowers into the design process rather than using only hand drawings for illustration, as is the case in Quebec.

A different approach was also needed to collecting recycled materials. In Quebec, much of the program is funded by collecting recycled cans. In Kitimat, Omotami says a strong community recycling ethic makes empty pop cans a rare commodity. Also in Quebec, paper grocery bags are used in the card manufacturing process. "Paper bags aren't used much here, too much rain," says Ken. Instead, corporate



Greeting card manufactured by students from recycled pulp.

ents in Kitimat insisted that his successor be ready to take on the program and build it.

Casgrain says the program represents "the future of education" because it gives children real-world experience they will need in a changing society. She says it complements the *Career and Personal Planning* (CAPP) requirements because it emphasizes teamwork and cooperation as well as introducing students to concepts like supply and demand and quality control.

*Working Together* has a Board of Directors that includes teachers, business representatives from Alcan and Eurocan Pulp and Paper, and a community environmental organization called KUTE (Kitimat Understanding the Environment).

Under the Board, a sophisticated greeting card manufacturing company is run by the students with each grade level having a specific control function in the business. There is a teaching component for each section comprised of a set of uniquely designed curriculum resources.

The theme for Grade 1 students is *My School and the Environment*. Casgrain describes it as an awareness-raising process that helps students understand their school as an environmental player in the greater community.

The Grade 2 program is called *Safety and the Environment*. Grade 2 students are "in charge" of all safety procedures and communication associated with the card manufacturing process. They create posters on subjects like the safe use of bleach for pulp making.



Helping the environment and the school.

has been fully behind *Working Together* from the start. Principal Agnes Casgrain spearheaded the translation of the French course materials with a team of teachers at the bilingual school during the first year launch.

So popular is the program among parents that when the previous principal moved to a new position, par-

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## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY BRINGS A COMPANY TO THE CLASSROOM

The Dow Chemical Company of Canada knows that education and business can be a powerful compound if the ingredients are patiently and carefully blended. The company has a standing commitment to a number of education programs across the country that focus on curriculum resources and teacher training.

Dow supports the development of the *Environmental Literacy Series*, which are curriculum resources for Grades K-12, including teaching materials on environmental issues that are provided to school boards across Canada. As a sponsor of the *Knowledge of Environment for Youth* (KEY), professional development conferences for elementary and secondary teachers, the company provides plant tours, lectures and networking opportunities for two eight-day conferences attended by 60 teachers from across Canada.

The company sponsors 10 science communication awards and provides finan-

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cial support for administrative costs for the *Youth Science Foundation*.

As a partner in the *National Network for Learning*, Dow helps deliver innovative science curriculum resources to stimulate student interest in science careers. Dow sponsored the development of a pilot science unit for Grades 4-6 in Southern Ontario.

As a science-based corporation, it might be expected that all of Dow's education initiatives would focus on the science field. However, it sponsors 14 students annually to attend the Terry

Fox Centre, operated by the Council of Canadian Unity in Ottawa, for week-long seminars in journalism and law.

Like a well-stocked chemistry lab, Dow's educational initiatives incorporate samples of all major elements in education.



The Grade 3 phase is called *Production and the Environment*. These students are charged with responsibility to improve quality control in response to customer demand, promote efficiency and secure a good supply of materials to keep the business going.

At the Grade 4 level, *Working Together* shifts to *Publicity, Marketing and the Environment*. Last year, Grade 4 students created radio and newspaper advertising. This year, students will be making marketing calls on local businesses accompanied by a teacher or parent volunteer. Students learn to make the telephone contact and present a marketing "pitch" for their line of greeting cards in the client's office. Marketing has been a strong focus in the *Working Together* program with students placing a sales booth at every major community event.

The Grade 5 theme is *Financing and the Environment*. These students perform financial management for the program, learning about spreadsheets, invoicing and balance sheets. They audit the inventory and supervise the distribution of revenues. Since all grade levels actually make cards in addition to their other corporate functions, each grade level gets half of their profits with the other half going to the school.

At Grade 6, the theme is *The Environment and the Future*. These students look at long-range future options for the *Working Together* project. When asked if that made them "the suits", Casgrain said, "Well, yes, but not if you've seen them."

Casgrain says she "can't say enough about Alcan who helped us with the

technology and all business training aspects of the program." She adds, "They're just in it for the kids; there are no big Alcan signs around the school."

*Working Together* is a total community effort. All 165 students are involved as is every teacher, the major employers, parents' groups and customers throughout the community.

Key to its success, says Casgrain, was the effort put into building support at the early stages. All classroom materials were placed before the School Board for approval. All staff had an opportunity to assess and question the program and parents advisory groups were extensively consulted.

"It's here to stay," says the Principal.



## **TREEVIA ANSWERS**

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1. During World War II, many countries recycled paper, as it was in short supply.
2. b) Paper, including newspapers, fine paper, cardboard and boxboard, makes up between 35% and 50% of the material in landfills.
3. Scientists conducted an "archaeological dig" at a landfill site outside New York City. Drilling down with coring devices, they found 40-year-old newspapers that could still be read.

- *Courtesy of Canadian Council of Forest Ministers*