

## **'Mr. Eco' visits Siskiyou Schools to Share Message**

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Students at schools all around Siskiyou County were treated to entertainment with an important message last week with a visit from Mr. Eco and the EcoHero Show – a hip hop style performance that promotes environmental awareness.

Mr. Eco – known outside of the show as Brett Edwards – is a Fresno, California native and graduated from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo with a degree in business and entrepreneurship. He came up with the Mr. Eco character while still in college as a way to combine his passions for sustainability and hip hop. He began performing for students while still a student himself.

The show was brought to local schools thanks to the efforts of the County of Siskiyou. Arthur Boyd, Siskiyou County's Recycling Coordinator, said that he heard about the EcoHero show at a conference for the Rural County Representatives of California's Environmental Services Joint Powers Authority. Another county reported success with the show, and Boyd was immediately intrigued. He noted that kids often take the messages from the show home, which will encourage families to practice environmentally conscience habits like recycling together.

Mr. Eco related to the students at Jackson Street School that he grew up watching shows on the Discovery Channel and Animal Planet and was especially a fan of the late Steve Irwin - also known as "The Crocodile Hunter." Those shows sparked his love for nature and the environment.

Since parlaying his talents into the EcoHero Show, Mr. Eco has gone on to perform for hundreds of schools around the U.S. and abroad. His passion for caring for the environment does not end with his character. He took a 21 day sailing trip from Bermuda to Iceland with the 5 Gyres Institute – a nonprofit devoted to reducing plastics pollution.

Mr. Eco explained to the students that, during the trip, the crew skimmed the water with a large net to see if any plastic was floating on top of the ocean. They discovered an enormous amount of microplastic he said – tiny pieces of plastic that have broken down from larger pieces and get ingested by birds and fish that think the plastic is food.

One of the lessons students learned during the EcoHero show is that all storm drains eventually drain to the ocean, so it is important to be aware of what we put in them.

Some of Mr. Eco's songs include "Bag Monster," "Litterbug" and "Recycle Robot." The students learn about waste diversion, the importance of using reusable products and how to care for the environment. One of the show's main messages is that anyone can be an "eco hero."

The EcoHero Show will be visiting 220 schools throughout California this year. Mr. Eco said that the reaction from the students is what inspires him to keep the show going. He added that parents often reach out to thank him for his efforts, and that watching the kids have a good time and then put the show's lessons into action is a great reward.

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