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Small Actions Creating Big Change: Students Leading an Eco-Friendly Movement

[How Chadwick International Students Are Creating Change in Their Local Community · Part 2]

Students at Chadwick International in Songdo International City, Yeonsu-gu, Incheon, are taking on the role of “environment protectors” for their city. Through small yet meaningful actions to preserve Incheon’s natural environment and wildlife, these students are working to build a more sustainable future.

Protecting the Ecological Treasure of Tidal Flats: The BE:CO Club



The student-led club BE:CO, formed in 2021, was created when students learned that Songdo International City — where Chadwick International is located — was developed by reclaiming tidal flats. Motivated to protect Incheon’s remaining tidal flats, they launched the club to take action.

BE:CO students partner with the local environmental organization, Incheon Green Union, to carry out tidal flat conservation activities. To protect the black-faced spoonbill — Incheon’s

“flagship species” and a Class I endangered migratory bird — students visit the Songdo tidal flats to remove debris such as discarded nets and traps that could entangle the birds while they feed on small fish or shrimp. They also clean up trash around the “Namdong Reservoir” area in Namdong-gu, one of the species’ major breeding sites.

After witnessing the amount of waste left in tidal flats and parks, students became interested in repurposing materials to reduce environmental impact. As part of their “Sustainability Project,” BE:CO students upcycle everyday discarded items, such as turning used banners into bags and coffee grounds into clay-like material for eco-friendly keychains. They sold these handmade keychains at a school booth and donated the proceeds to Incheon Green Union. Since last year, they have also been growing and harvesting natural scrubbers as an alternative to sponges that generate microplastics.

Student Sunny Choi (16) shared, “Seeing abandoned fishing gear piled up across the tidal flats made me realize the severity of environmental pollution. We hope that our small actions and efforts will contribute to ecosystem restoration, and we remain committed to continuing our environmental protection activities.”

“Protecting Our Precious Planet” — Youth Environmental Activists Around the World



Chadwick International students who belong to Greener is Cleaner, an environmental organization involving youth activists from 41 countries, are also leading sustainability initiatives on campus. To help fellow students take an interest in environmental protection and make it easy for them to practice, they organize various campaigns each year for Earth Day (April 22). These include encouraging students to walk or bike to school to reduce carbon emissions, and promoting reduced food waste by taking only the amount of lunch they can finish.

The Upcycled Design Project, taught in the school's design classes, was also proposed directly by Greener is Cleaner students. In this course, students create ID holders or paper file folders using discarded clothing or plastic materials.

Greener is Cleaner students have even installed their own solar charging system on campus. The solar panels, designed and installed by the students themselves, generate electricity used for charging mobile phones and powering electronic devices used by the school community.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the students hosted online seminars that brought together Greener is Cleaner youth activists from around the world. They shared their fears and feelings of helplessness as members of a future generation facing the climate crisis and environmental degradation, and discussed what actions young people can take to protect biodiversity.

Student Kyla Kim (17), who has served as the Korea chapter leader of Greener is Cleaner since 2022, said, "Environmental issues cannot be solved by the efforts of individuals, organizations, or a single country alone. We hope more young people will participate in environmental protection and work together across borders to overcome the climate crisis."