

## **DENR engages kids, youth in solid waste management activities**

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) launched Friday its nationwide Solid Waste Management Advocacy Campaign to spur behavioral change towards the environment and mobilize the public, especially children and young people, on the proper handling and disposal of solid waste.

Through the DENR's Strategic Communication Initiatives Service (SCIS), the campaign was developed to fast track its collective and ultimate objective of a healthier, greener, and cleaner Philippines amid the growing environmental threats in the country and the world.



"Creating a better and healthier environment through efficient solid waste management is one of the biggest challenges that we, at the DENR, are faced today," Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said during the campaign launch on Oct. 15 at the DENR Central Office.

"We really need the support of the people, especially our youth sector. It is important, therefore, to impress to them that unless we do something right today by diligently practicing sound solid waste management, the future will be bleak," he added.

To spread awareness and encourage public support to the campaign, the DENR will strengthen partnerships and collaborations, technology, as well as information, education and communication.

"While this program is intended to be a whole-of-nation approach, we designed this to be more focused on the youth who would later serve as our environmental champions," said Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units (LGUs) Concerns and SCIS Supervising Undersecretary Benny D. Antiporda.

Included in the DENR's solid waste management campaign is the Basura Buster, a free, web-based game application for children ages 5 to 8 years old.

The application, which can be downloaded on Android devices through the Google Play Store, allows players to earn points by properly segregating different kinds of trash in an educational and entertaining way.

Through its social media accounts, the DENR also hopes to influence behavioral change through a series of videos that show proper solid waste management practices in day-to-day situations.

These include segregating garbage, bringing of own eating utensils in restaurants, and selling trash for cash or “Pera sa Basura.”

The SWM Advocacy campaign was launched via a blended platform with officials and personnel of the DENR Central Office, regional and field offices, Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Offices, Community Environment and Natural Resources Offices, bureaus and attached agencies.

Department of the Interior and Local Government Assistant Secretary for Special Concerns—Local Government Sector Atty. Odilon L. Pasaraba and Mother Earth Foundation chairperson and National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) Alternate Representative of non-government organizations Sonia Mendoza have also expressed their support through video messages.

Also present were representatives from the NSWMC, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, LGUs, and other stakeholders.

Meanwhile, as part of the Manila Bay rehabilitation, the DENR-NCR in partnership with the Basic Environmental Systems & Technologies Inc. will bring the recently-launched Trash to CashBack program to the DENR-NCR field offices in Metro Manila.

The Trash to CashBack program has set up a drop-off center called "My Basurero Eco-Community Center" at the DENR National Ecology Center in Quezon City where the public can exchange segregated and recyclable waste for environmental points that can be converted to consumer goods by partner outlets.###