



DATE: October 9, 2014

TO: Recycling Board

FROM: Gary Wolff, Executive Director
Wendy Sommer, Deputy Director

BY: Meri Soll, Senior Program Manager

SUBJECT: Resource Area For Teachers (RAFT) Update

BACKGROUND

The Recycling Board has awarded grants through the Grants to Nonprofits program for the past seventeen years via an open Request for Proposal process. In that time, the Recycling Board has awarded approximately \$7.25 million dollars in grant funding from the Competitive and Reuse grants program. The Board has requested periodic status reports on grant recipients. Staff has selected Resource Area for Teaching (RAFT) to provide an update and brief presentation to the Recycling Board on reuse and waste reduction activities RAFT has been engaged in as a result of grant funding.

DISCUSSION

RAFT is a non-profit organization founded in 1994 to inspire, engage and educate children through the power of hands-on teaching. RAFT's products (Activity Kits & Idea Sheets), services (professional development and mentoring) and low-cost teaching supplies enrich and improve the education of over 900,000 young people each year. To provide kits and materials at low cost, the organization has developed an innovative supply chain process that converts commonly found or discarded materials from the business community into hands-on Activity Kits, all built with the help of thousands of volunteers. In addition to kits, RAFT provides educators with an abundance of affordable materials and supplies in a large warehouse setting while diverting roughly 400 cubic feet of materials from landfills each and every day.

Since 2004, the Agency has provided seven grants totaling \$213,000 to RAFT. Funding has been used for a variety of projects to improve RAFT's capacity to receive/collect, sort and distribute unused materials from manufacturers and businesses to turn them into innovative teaching supplies and classroom activity kits for teachers. Agency funding has allowed RAFT to increase staffing and outreach activities to expand their operation from the San Jose area into Alameda County. RAFT estimates that each grant received allows them to provide 100 Alameda County

teachers with professional development and materials for classroom teaching as well as collect 15,000 cubic feet of unused materials from Alameda County manufacturers and businesses. Greg Brown, Senior Director at RAFT will be providing the Board with a presentation and update on grant activities.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information only.