

Bowl patrol

Students test toilets for Fix-a-Leak Week

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Charles Auer/Freeman Staff

Camrin Foley, a Hawthorne Elementary fifth-grade student, with one of the toilets he tested with a dye tablet to ensure it wasn't leaking.

WAUKESHA – Hundreds of gallons of water a day are wasted on toilet leaks, and the Waukesha Water Utility is teaming up with the Waukesha School District to keep residents' money from going down the drain.

In honor of Fix-a-Leak Week, students from Banting, Hawthorne, Heyer, Meadowbrook, Prairie, Randall and Rose Glen elementary schools recorded the age of their toilets and measured the tanks to calculate gallons of water used per flush, said Water Resource Assistant Mary Adelmeyer.

"We also got these tablets, and we had to let them sit in the toilet tank for 20 minutes to show if the toilet was leaking," said Hawthorne Elementary School fifth-grader Camrin Foley. "We did two of our toilets, and they didn't have a leak."

According to a document

from the Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense partnership program, a drip as small as 1/32 of an inch can waste 18,500 gallons a quarter. By the time the leak gets up to a quarter-inch stream, your toilet is wasting more than a million gallons every three months.

"Toilet leaks tend to be invisible and are one of the most common leaks," Adelmeyer said. "Leaks can cost families a lot of money."

Students also determined whether their toilets were eligible for the utility's \$100 toilet rebate, which offers \$100 to customers who replace their pre-1994 high-volume toilets with a WaterSense High-Efficiency toilet.

Foley, 10, may be more aware of issues like water conservation than most of his classmates, as his father, Matt Kadrich, works in the Water Utility's distribution department.

"Without conservation, we could eventually run out of water," Kadrich said.

At his house, his family takes measures like cutting down on watering grass, installing low-flow toilets and more.

"I try to take shorter showers too," Foley said.

For more information, or to see if you qualify for the toilet rebate, visit www.ci.waukesha.wi.us/waterhome.

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