

# It was easy being green at city's first annual Green Fest

By Jami Knoth

Mother Nature was kind during the first annual Green Fest on April 18 as she bestowed warm weather and bright sunshine on North Ridgeville. In celebration of Earth Day, the city hosted a festival at South Central Park, which placed an emphasis on protecting the environment.

Booths lined the park and were stocked with information on recycling, organic gardening, composting and pollution. Kids played games of bowl-

ing with plastic water bottles, painted crafts made from recycled egg cartons and were educated on the importance of re-using instead of throwing away.

"We are trying to get the word out that you don't have to throw everything away," Rochelle Blaylock, a member of the North Ridgeville Early Childhood PTA (ECPTA), said. "We are hoping to make this an annual event."

When members of the ECPTA approached Missy Williams of the Parks and Rec Department with the idea of putting on this annual Earth Day celebration, Williams was very receptive. Support of the event came from all over Lorain County, including the Lorain County Metro Parks, Lorain County Solid Waste Management District, Girl Scout troops, the Environmental Protection Agency,



(Above) Mallory Fisher, 3, digs for worms in a bin of shredded paper with her mother, Kristi, at the North Ridgeville Early Childhood PTA booth.

(At right) Erika Shaff's cheeks bear the results of a Girl Scout's fundraising efforts after the artist painted the universal recycling symbol on her. *NRP photos - Jami Knoth*



(L-R) Katie Barlow, 8, Maddy Knoth, 9, Henry Knoth, 6, and Gillian Moreschi, 9, support the idea of a healthier Earth during Green Fest at South Central Park.

Friends of the Park and local vendors.

"The PTA rallied with the Friends of the Park, and the whole festival idea took off," Erika Wuorinen of ECPTA said. "We think it is an excellent way to educate people on opportunities to be green and preserve our planet. It's also a great place to educate kids on basic 'green' philosophy so they can incorporate it into their everyday lives."

After browsing tables of homemade crayons, purses made from worn-out jeans and bird feeders constructed from soda cans, Katie Barlow, 8, was

asked what she learned from the event.

"I like the idea of making new stuff out of old stuff," she said. "That way, we won't fill up the landfills with garbage."

In addition to exhibits tailored to children, others educated the public on pesticides, solar energy and common products, such as vinegar, that may be used as cleaning supplies.

"I learned that cleaning products and chemicals are very harmful to use if they aren't earth friendly," 9-year-old Gillian Moreschi said. "I am going to help keep the Earth clean."