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NEWS RELEASE

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New recycling program seeks to liberate trapped water

PROSPER (June 5, 2018) It's often a mindless toss, a plastic water bottle with a little bit of water gets thrown into a trash receptacle, an action that wastes the water in the bottle, misses the opportunity to recycle the plastic and takes up part of the dwindling space in a landfill.

To address those three wasteful issues, an idea to prevent them all at once sprang up in Prosper. Called the Release, Renew, Recycle Environmental Protection Program, the idea involved providing a place for the remaining water in plastic bottles to be usefully deposited, a place for the plastic bottle to be recycled, and through that activity, prevent the bottle from ending up at the landfill.

Tristan Cisco, Prosper's Water Education Coordinator, solicited the assistance of the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service, Collin County Master Gardeners, Cristina's Stone and Garden Company, iCandy Grafix Company, members of the National Art Honor Society at Prosper High School, and the Town's Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments.

The idea was to create large planter boxes, design some artwork and decorate them with recycling messages, add soil and living plants in them, and place them near places where plastic water bottles are in common use. The result was a way for anyone carrying a near-empty bottle of water to "release" the water into the planter, "renew" the plant life in the boxes by pouring the water into the planter, and "recycle" the bottle in a strategically-placed recycling bin.

"So much of the plastic we use does not get properly recycled," said Cisco. "And, worse, half-filled bottles of water are thrown in the trash. The water winds up trapped in a plastic bottle at a landfill for who knows how long. It's a wasteful practice that we're trying to address."

The wooden planters, constructed by Public Works, feature artwork designed by the students, enrolled in the gifted and talented program, illustrating their purpose and wrapped with durable graphic vinyl by iCandy Grafix. The plants were chosen by the master gardener group and obtained from Cristina's Stone and Garden. Conceptual assistance was provided by the Agrilife Service. Currently, there are five Release, Renew, Recycle planters at Frontier Park, in close proximity to the athletic fields, where Parks personnel have observed countless water bottles in use.

"We're hopeful that the idea catches on," added Cisco. "If we can divert the water in the bottles and then the bottles themselves, then we've met our goal. Hopefully, we can identify other locations around Town that would be ideal for more planters."

While the planters provide a perfect place for the water, trees, grass and shrubs can also benefit from watering, even in the small amounts left in bottles. Placing empties in the recycling bin ensures that the landfill remains free of items that can be reused in some way.

"Parents can use the program as a learning opportunity, enlightening their children, no matter the age, on the importance of water conservation and recycling," she said. "Participating in this program requires little to no effort yet can produce a huge impact on our environment. Anyone can do it."

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ABOUT THE TOWN OF PROSPER – The Town of Prosper is a fast-growing suburb with small town charm, located 30 miles north of Dallas at the crossroads of U.S. 380, Preston Road and the Dallas North Tollway in Collin and Denton Counties. Prosper sits on 27 square miles and is home to more than 20,000 people. A home-rule municipality, governed by a council-manager form of government, the town has full-time fire and police departments, including its own dispatch service. As the Town grows to its projected build-out population of 70,000 residents, Prosper's vision is to remain a "Place Where Everyone Matters."