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'Ethical electronics recycling' nets over 10,500 lbs.

Last Saturday afternoon, December 6, the parking lot of Cedar-brook Elementary School, normally empty on a weekend, was crowded with people and piled high with "e-waste" - old computers, TVs, radios, stereo equipment, toasters, and other used electronics that had reached the end of their useful lives. Despite the bitter cold, hundreds of residents of Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties stood in line for up to 30 minutes for the chance to recycle their old electronic devices ethically.

By the end of the day, over five tons of used electronics were packed up for shipping to facilities that will redistribute the useable items to people who can use them, harvest working parts from broken components, and forward unsalvageable items to carefully chosen U.S. operations that recycle e-waste in accordance with the highest international standards.

The collection event was the culmination of a 4-day environmental education program hosted by the Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Water-shed Partnership. Last week, Christopher Swain - the first person in history to swim the entire lengths of several dirty waterways including the Columbia River, the Charles River, the Hudson River, and Lake Champlain - met with over 750 students at Cedarbrook Middle School, Glenside Elementary School, Cheltenham High School, Elkins Park Elementary, Arcadia University, and the High School of the Future, to share stories about his swims and help students problem-solve ways to protect their ocean and their world.

The speaking tour and e-waste drive in Cheltenham was just a warm-up for Swain, who is preparing for a 1,000-mile swim down the Atlantic coast from Marblehead, Massachusetts to Washington, D.C. The ocean swim is part of his TOXTOUR project, an ongoing campaign to collect and recycle, ethically, one billion pounds of e-waste, to prevent toxic chemicals and heavy metals from fouling the world's waterways and ecosystems. As part of this effort, he has also pledged to visit over 2,000 classrooms along the east coast in order to help students devise projects to protect their own local waterways.

Cheltenham students will be monitoring Swain's progress via his website and other online tools, and plan to welcome him back to their schools when he swims past the mouth of Delaware Bay in the winter of 2009-2010. In the meantime, the students will continue their work with the Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Water-shed Partnership to ensure that the water flowing from their neighborhoods into the Atlantic gets a little cleaner every day.

For information please contact: Sarah RobbGrieco at sarah@tffwatershed.org, or Christopher Swain at www.toxtour.org.

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