



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **More than 1.3 Million Used Aluminum Beverage Cans Collected in Can Manufacturers Institute and Scrap University Kids Elementary School Recycling Contest** *'Million Cans Recycling Contest' Exceeds Expectations*

WASHINGTON — May 23, 2024 — Can Manufacturers Institute (CMI) and Scrap University Kids today announced that more than 1.3 million empty aluminum beverage cans were collected during the first [Million Cans Recycling Contest](#).

This student-focused competition, which ran from October 15, 2023, to May 16, 2024, challenged second- and third-grade students to see which school could recycle the most used aluminum beverage cans. Collectively, eight schools from Alabama, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas collected more than 1.3 million cans.

Schools were selected in communities where there are low recycling rates and no curbside recycling systems. This ensures the cans the schools collected likely would have not have otherwise been recycled. Further, it proves this can-only model, leveraging the relatively high market value of used beverage cans, works where no or limited recycling exists.

“The Million Cans Recycling Contest surpassed its one-million-mark goal thanks to the efforts of students, teachers and parents at the participating elementary schools, as well as the support of each CMI aluminum beverage can sector member that was partnered with a participating school nearby one of its facilities,” said Scott Breen, CMI’s senior vice president of sustainability. “The Million Cans Recycling Contest demonstrates there is an effective way to actively engage young learners on recycling in a hands-on way while delivering valuable funding for their school.”

Schools that competed earned this valuable funding from selling the used beverage cans to local scrap yards. The money can be used to support various educational activities and partnerships, further enriching the learning experience for students.

The contest successfully diverted more than a million empty aluminum beverage cans away from landfills. Recycling these cans saves energy equivalent to what it takes to power a U.S. home for almost 60 years. The metal from these used beverage cans once sold also is worth nearly \$21,000 in value.

Additionally, CMI provided more than \$12,000 in funding that schools received if they met certain challenges or targets during the competition. For example, the top-three schools received grand prizes for collecting the most cans per student participating:

- **1<sup>st</sup> Place:** [Yankeetown Elementary](#) in Newburgh, IN, will receive a \$3,000 prize.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Place:** [Lewisburg Elementary](#) in Logan, KY, will receive a \$1,000 prize.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Place:** [Rich Pond Elementary](#) in Bowling Green, KY, will receive a \$500 prize.

# The Million Cans Recycling Contest

## Aluminum Beverage Cans Recycled Between October 2023 and May 2024

School	State	Grade	Students	Cans	Cans/Students	Ranking
Yankeetown Elementary	Newburgh, IN	3rd	46	163,590	3556	1
Lewisburg Elementary	Lewisburg, KY	3rd	65	177,800	2735	2
Rich Pond Elementary	Bowling Green, KY	2nd	134	241,010	1799	3
Our Mother of Perpetual Help	Ephrata, PA	3rd	23	39,620	1723	4
La Vega Elementary	Waco, TX	3rd	267	429,380	1608	5
L.E. Willson Elementary	Sheffield, AL	3rd	55	71,750	1305	6
Pleasant Hill Elementary	Olive Branch, MS	3rd	177	204,750	1157	7
William M. Reeves Elementary	Summerville, SC	3rd	151	46,200	306	8
				<b>1,374,100</b>	<b>Total</b>	



An honorable mention was also given to La Vega Elementary in Waco, TX. The Texas school collected more than 427,000 cans, more than any other school thanks in part to their large student population.

Beyond the financial funding, CMI also paid for every student in second or third grade participating in the contest to receive a copy of the children’s book, [The Girl Who Recycled 1 Million Cans](#).

“This contest was inspired by our children’s book. The story became a reality thanks to the spirit of schoolchildren who collected more than a million empty aluminum beverage cans throughout the school year,” said Jessica Alexanderson, president of Scrap University Kids. “The book taught a valuable lesson that recycling used beverage cans comes with some significant economic and environmental benefits. These students worked hard and were inspired to become life-long recyclers.”

In total, eight participating schools competed in the Million Cans Recycling Contest with CMI members’ support:

- **L.E. Willson Elementary**, Sheffield, AL
  - Aluminum Beverage Can Industry Champion: Constellium
- **Rich Pond Elementary School**, Bowling Green, KY
  - Aluminum Beverage Can Industry Champion: Crown Holdings
- **Yankeetown Elementary School**, Newburgh, IN
  - Aluminum Beverage Can Industry Champion: Kaiser Aluminum
- **Lewisburg Elementary School**, Logan, KY
  - Aluminum Beverage Can Industry Champions: Novelis and Tri-Arrows
- **Pleasant Hill Elementary**, Olive Branch, MS
  - Aluminum Beverage Can Industry Champion: Ardagh Metal Packaging
- **Our Mother of Perpetual Help**, Ephrata, PA
  - Aluminum Beverage Can Industry Champion: CANPACK
- **William M. Reeves Elementary School**, Summerville, SC
  - Aluminum Beverage Can Industry Champion: Ardagh Metal Packaging
- **La Vega Elementary School**, Waco, TX
  - Aluminum Beverage Can Industry Champion: Envases

For more information, on the Million Cans Recycling Contest and to see photos and video highlights from the competition, visit: [kids.scrapuniversity.com/millioncans](http://kids.scrapuniversity.com/millioncans).

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**The Can Manufacturers Institute (CMI)** is the national trade association of the metal can manufacturing industry and its suppliers in the United States. The can industry accounts for the annual domestic production of approximately 131.6 billion food, beverage, aerosol and general line cans; employs more than 28,000 people with plants in 33 states, Puerto Rico and American Samoa; and generates about \$15.7 billion in direct economic activity.

**Scrap University Kids** coordinates the program and serves as a liaison between the schools, CMI, and the scrap yards. The goal of the organization is to eliminate metal from the waste stream within the next 30 years through education by teaching kids that their everyday actions make a lasting impact on the environment in a fun and hands on way.