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Group giving away water-saving system

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It's been a busy — and productive — year for the Helena environmental group Student Advocates for Valuing the Environment Foundation.

S.A.V.E. was active in the 2007 Legislature in helping to pass a bill to make separating and using gray water legal in Montana. To help promote the new law, the group is holding a drawing for a new gray water system.

Gray water is waste water from laundry, baths or pretty much any source other than toilets or kitchen sinks, and it can be re-used to water lawns and flush toilets. A household can save up to 60 percent using graywater, according to S.A.V.E.

The system, donated by Brac Systems in Montreal, is valued at \$1,500 and is on display this month at Real Food Market in Helena.

"They were excited about helping us make a market for gray water," said S.A.V.E. organizer Matt Elsaesser.

Entry for the drawing is free at Savemobile.org, and the drawing will be held on April 22, 2008, which is Earth Day.

Also this week, S.A.V.E. announced that it has received a \$5,000 matching grant from the Cinnabar Foundation.

The grant means that every dollar donated to the group, up to \$5,000, will be doubled.

S.A.V.E. organizer Matt Elsaesser said the grant announcement comes in the middle of a fund-raising drive for the group. He hopes to have the \$5,000 raised by August.

The money raised, Elsaesser said, will go towards "supporting our overall structure for expanding recycling, making graywater legal, biodiesel."

S.A.V.E. has received several grants from Cinnabar in the past, including a \$5,000 matching grant last November.

With the grant, donations to S.A.V.E. will be doubled. Secure online donations can be made or contribution forms downloaded at www.savemobile.org. Call 431-0815 for more information.

In other S.A.V.E. news:

Electronic waste, including computers, monitors, and other items, can now be recycled at Staples with a charge of \$10 per item. S.A.V.E. and other community partners are planning to organize an e-waste event this fall, similar to the "Erase your E-waste" event last September that collected nearly 40,000 pounds of electronic waste.

S.A.V.E. is now expanding its business recycling route, which collects paper, newsprint, magazine, cardboard, cans, tin, glass, plastics and other recyclables from an array of businesses. Call 431-0815 if you're interested in joining the route.



Shown is the gray-water system Helena's S.A.V.E. Foundation is giving away next Earth Day.