

# FALOOFA and FRED LEARN ABOUT the ENVIRONMENT



# FALOOFA and FRED LEARN ABOUT the ENVIRONMENT

This booklet is dedicated to families everywhere that have experienced and will face the challenges of environmental contamination. Education is our greatest hope of protecting and restoring our water, air and soil.

The goal of the Citizen's Cleanup Coalition has been to involve people of all ages from all walks of life to protect our communities by learning good stewardship, to keep people healthy by preventing exposure to toxic chemicals, and by thinking creatively to find solutions.

We thank everyone who has participated towards that goal. Join us and enjoy.

Please share this story freely with those that you feel would benefit from its use, because, as you will see, you're never too old to learn!

*The Citizen's Cleanup Coalition*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We'd like to give our special thanks to the US Environmental Protection Agency's Small Environmental Justice grants program for making this funding opportunity available and for recognizing the dedication of the Citizen's Cleanup Coalition. We are grateful to their patient staff who guided us through the process.

Our deepest gratitude goes to Ana Cardona, Project Coordinator, for her relentless dedication that made the dream of this educational program a reality, and for her creative imagination in developing the characters of Fred and Faloofa for this wonderful story. Ana, we know you faced many challenges and that your family and friends have been a tremendous support throughout this process. We're very grateful and proud of you.

We also thank the Regional Water Quality Control Board staff, whose presence is evident throughout the entire process from inception through implementation and finally in the nuts and bolts of actually making this a text. Your commitment and generous participation is remarkable and an inspiration for us all.

Thanks goes to all of the different agencies and members of the community who volunteered to provide the education to the children, and to Mr. Woods, Ms. Bowman and Mr. Curiel, for allowing us into your classrooms at Roseland Elementary School.

Finally, our heartfelt thanks go to the St. Joseph Health System, for acting as the fiscal agent and providing supervision for the project.

## History

The Citizen's Cleanup Coalition (CCC) was born out of a group of citizens who asked questions about the extensive nature of their communities industrial contamination and the potential effects to their families, friends and neighbors. In searching for those answers, citizens and various agencies joined together to exchange information and resources. Their work has led to a broader awareness and understanding of the issues, and was instrumental in providing a safe water supply for families at risk through connections to the municipal supply.

## PREFACE TO TEACHERS

The purpose of this story is to teach children how to take care of the environment. Because of the length of the story you may find it necessary to read it in two sessions.

If you do find it necessary to read the story over a couple of days, please share with the children that Faloofa and Fred's actions are hurting the environment at the beginning of the story, but that they become better stewards at the end of the story.

We hope you find the story informative and fun.



Hi children, my name is Faloofa Fluff and this is my husband Fred.

I would like to share with you a little story that happened right here in the Roseland Community.

I think this is a great story because it shows that children can be teachers too.

This is a story about learning to be a good *steward* of the land. Do you know what that means? Well, keep reading and you will find out. It is very exciting.



A long time ago, about 30 years ago, Fred and I moved to a beautiful home on Sugar Bear Lane, in Santa Rosa, California in the Roseland Community. We raised two children; a boy named Jeff and a girl named Carlie.

Jeff and Carlie grew up, married and had children of their own. Jeff and his wife had a little girl named Rylee. Carlie and her husband had a little boy named Donnie.

When our grandchildren were 4 years old, their mothers went back to work. Fred and I were delighted to take care of them the summer before they were to start kindergarten.



Fred and I loved to spend time working in the garden and fixing up the house. Rylee and Donnie liked to help.

The neighbors saw how much fun we had with our grandchildren and asked if we wouldn't mind watching their children until the end of summer. The children were all the same age, 4 years old. Their children would also be starting kindergarten when summer ended. Ginger, our 12 year-old golden retriever, loved having the children to play with.

We were now taking care of Melissa, Paul and John. Forest, John's brother, was 6 and was going to summer school. Every morning we would all wave to Forest when he got on the school bus.



Ms. Debra, the school bus driver, would stop right on the corner of Sugar Bear Lane and wait for Forest everyday. Ms. Debra would say to the other children "Pretty soon you'll be able to ride the school bus too."

Every morning Rylee, Donnie, Melissa, Paul, John, Fred and I watched Sesame Street while having hot chocolate or juice. Once Sesame Street was over, outside we would go.

The children watched us work, and helped if they could. I fussed with my flowers, pruning them and picking a few to bring in the house. After pruning I swept the trimmings into the *storm drain* that was right by our sidewalk. It was so nice to have it there; we dumped a lot of stuff down it. You know, someone had painted a cute little fish right on top of the drain.





After the pruning I sprayed the plants with *pesticides*, which are *chemicals*, to get rid of the little bugs that were eating my pretty flowers. When I finished I took the left over *chemicals* and very carefully poured them down the *storm drain* right by our sidewalk.

Fred liked to wash our cars in our driveway. He put soap into a bucket and used a sponge to soap down the cars. The children used to love to help him soap up the cars and then spray them down to get all the soap off. That was so much fun.

Once they were done drying the cars, Fred would show them where to dump the dirty soapy water. Where do you think Fred would dump it? You're right, he dumped it down the *storm drain* by our sidewalk. It was

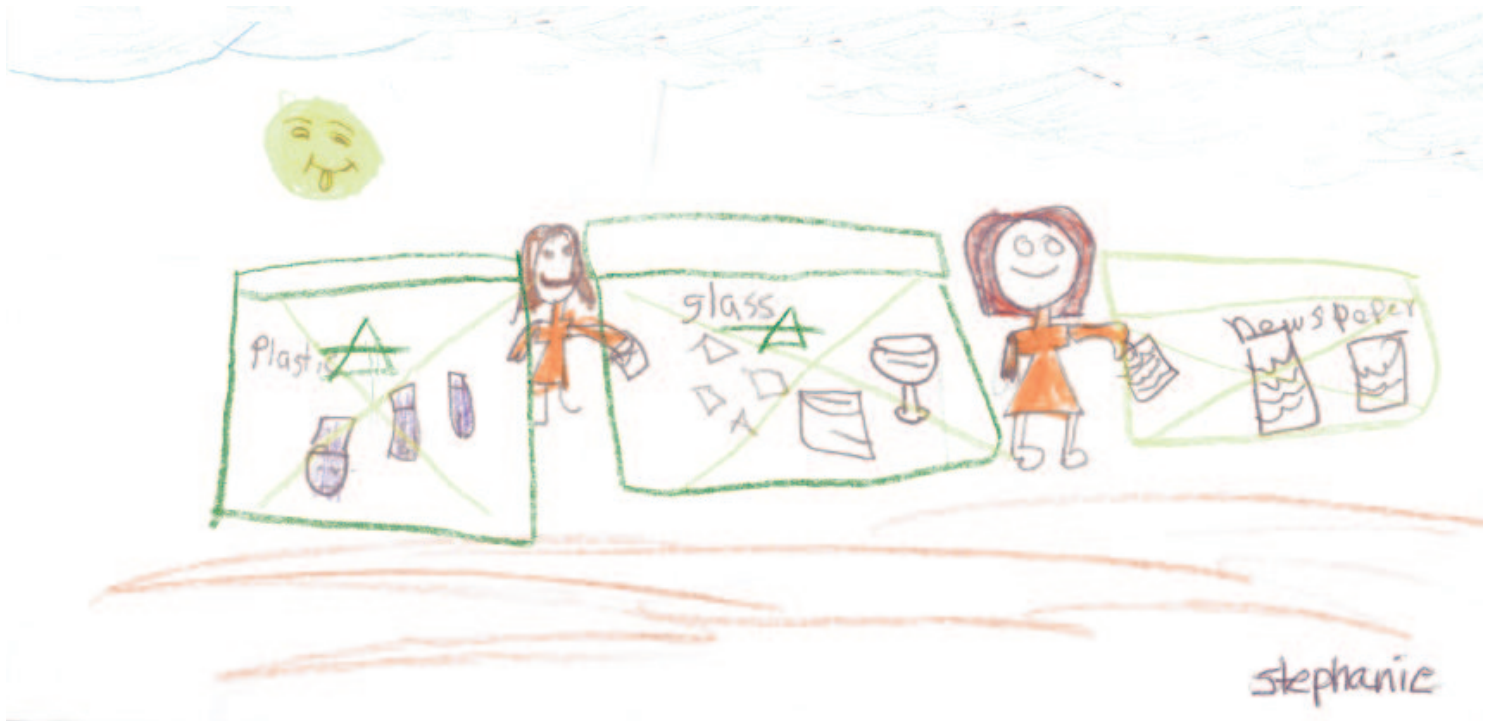


so nice to have that *storm drain* there because it made cleaning up so easy.

Sometimes Fred would paint around the house. He was very careful never to put paint down the *storm drain*. He had a special place in the back yard where he dumped the paint on the ground.

There were other times Fred changed the *oil* and drained the *antifreeze* from our cars and put these dirty, gooey liquids down the *storm drain*. Sometimes, like the paint, he poured the *oil* or the *antifreeze* in a special place in the back yard.

Fred and I were very careful not to leave messes after we finished working. We thought it was a great idea to set good examples for the children by cleaning up.



We taught the children how to *recycle*. We taught them to separate the plastic, the cans, glass, newspaper, cardboard and magazines for the workers who picked-up the garbage every week.

We had a wonderful time with our grandchildren and with the neighborhood children that stayed with us. We had so much fun teaching them the things we did.

Well, the end of summer had come and school would be starting in a week. The children went school shopping with their parents and were excited about their new adventure, starting kindergarten at Roseland Elementary School.



It was the first day of school and Fred and I were anxious to wave good bye to the children. Fred, Ginger, our golden retriever, and I went outside and joined all the other parents and children and waited for the school bus.

Our grandchildren, Rylee and Donnie, came and gave us a big hug. Melissa, Paul, and John came over and gave us hugs also. The children reminded us that after school they would share with us everything they learned.

All of a sudden the big yellow school bus came slowly around the corner. Ms. Debra opened the door and said, "Good morning children. Do I have new passengers for school this year?" Forest, John's older brother, said, "Yes, Ms. Debra, you have 5 new kindergartners today."



Ms. Debra said, "All aboard for Roseland School." The children walked up the steps and sat down. Ms. Debra closed the door, smiled, waved and said, "I will bring them home safely at 2:00 p.m."

The children smiled and waved as the bus pulled away. We all had a few tears rolling down our cheeks. The children were growing up.

Fred and I explained to the parents that we would take good care of their children until they got off work. So off they went, and Fred and I started our chores around the house.

It was lonely without the children, although we knew they were having a good time meeting new children and learning about the world they live in.



Ms. Victoria was the name of their teacher and Ms. Cindi was her helper. Ms. Victoria went around the classroom so that all the children could introduce themselves to the rest of the class.

The teacher shared with the children what they would be learning that year. They were going to learn how to read and write. They also were going to learn how to add and subtract. There were just oodles of things they were going to learn while having fun too.

The children had playtime and a little nap after lunch. Just before school was over Ms. Victoria talked more about what the children would be learning.



Ms. Cindi reminded Ms. Victoria that they were going to learn about the *environment*. "Oh my, you are right Ms. Cindi, I almost forgot. We are going to learn how to be good *stewards* of the land. Ms. Cindi and I will talk more about it tomorrow."

"It is now time to go home children," Ms. Victoria said, "Ms. Cindi will walk with you out to the school bus. Good bye, see you tomorrow."

Ms. Cindi walked the children to the bus and waited until each and every one of them were safely on the bus. She waved and said "See you tomorrow." "All aboard," said Ms. Debra, "Next stop, home."



The first stop was on Sugar Bear Lane. Melissa, Rylee, Donnie, Paul, John and Forest got off. "Bye Ms. Debra, we will see you tomorrow." Ms. Debra smiled and waved good-bye.

Fred, Ginger and I were waiting on the corner for the children. They gave us hugs and ran to the house. The children were tired because they had a long day. We all sat down to talk about their exciting first day of school.

We sat in the kitchen eating fruit and drinking milk. I asked the children what they had learned on their first day of school. Rylee said, "We learned what we are going to study for the whole school year." Melissa said, "We are going to learn how to read and write." Donnie said, "We are going to learn how to add and subtract numbers."

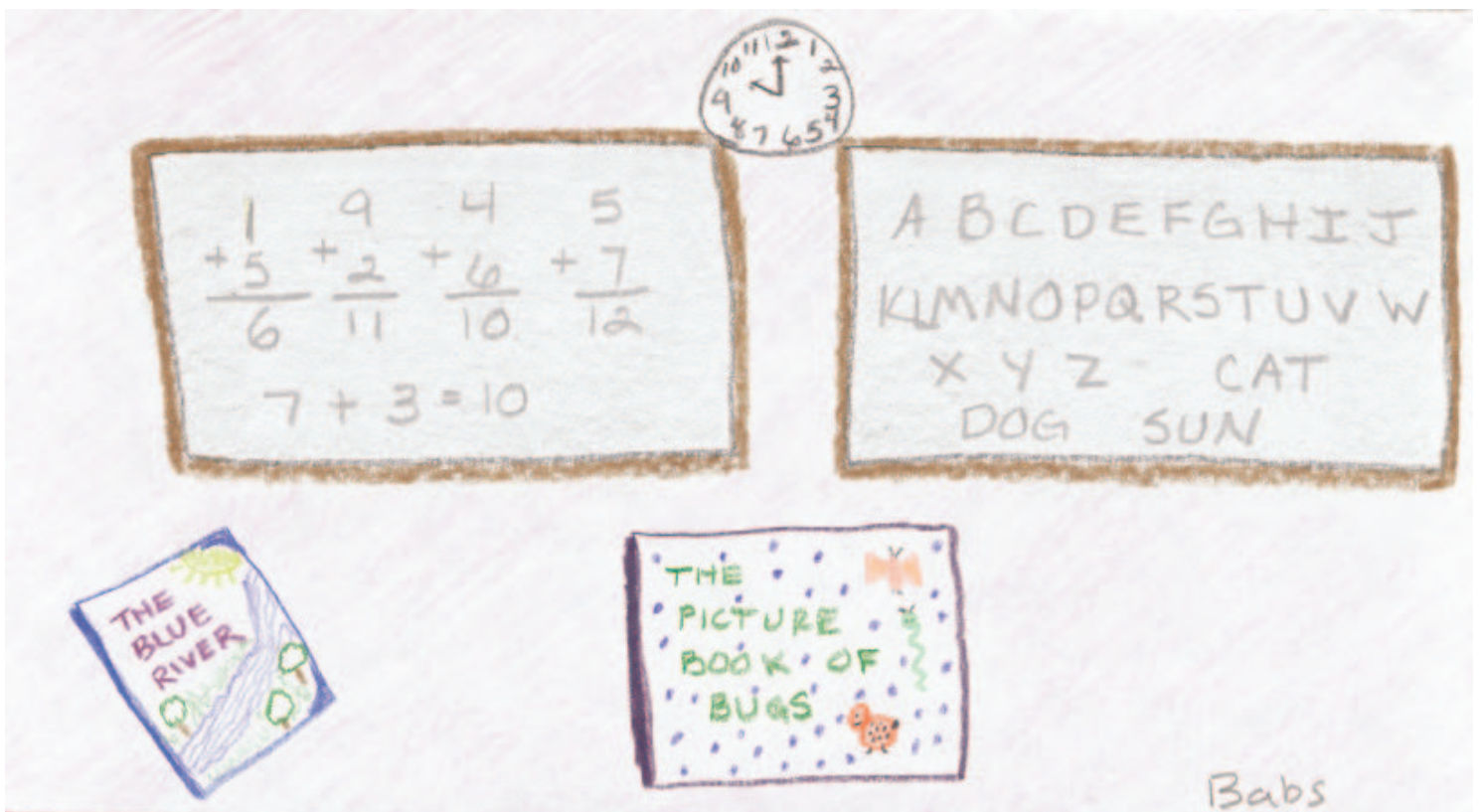




Paul said, "We are going to learn about our *environment*."  
John said, "We are going to learn how to be good *stewards* of the land."

"Oh my, you children are going to learn so much," I said, "I'm sure you will teach Fred and me a lot about our *environment* and how to take care of it."

It was almost 5:00 p.m. Jeff and Carlie and the other parents came by to pick up the children. "Good-bye Faloofa, good-bye Fred, we will see you tomorrow," the children said. Rylee and Donnie gave Fred and I a hug and said, "I love you Grammy and Popo, we'll see you tomorrow."

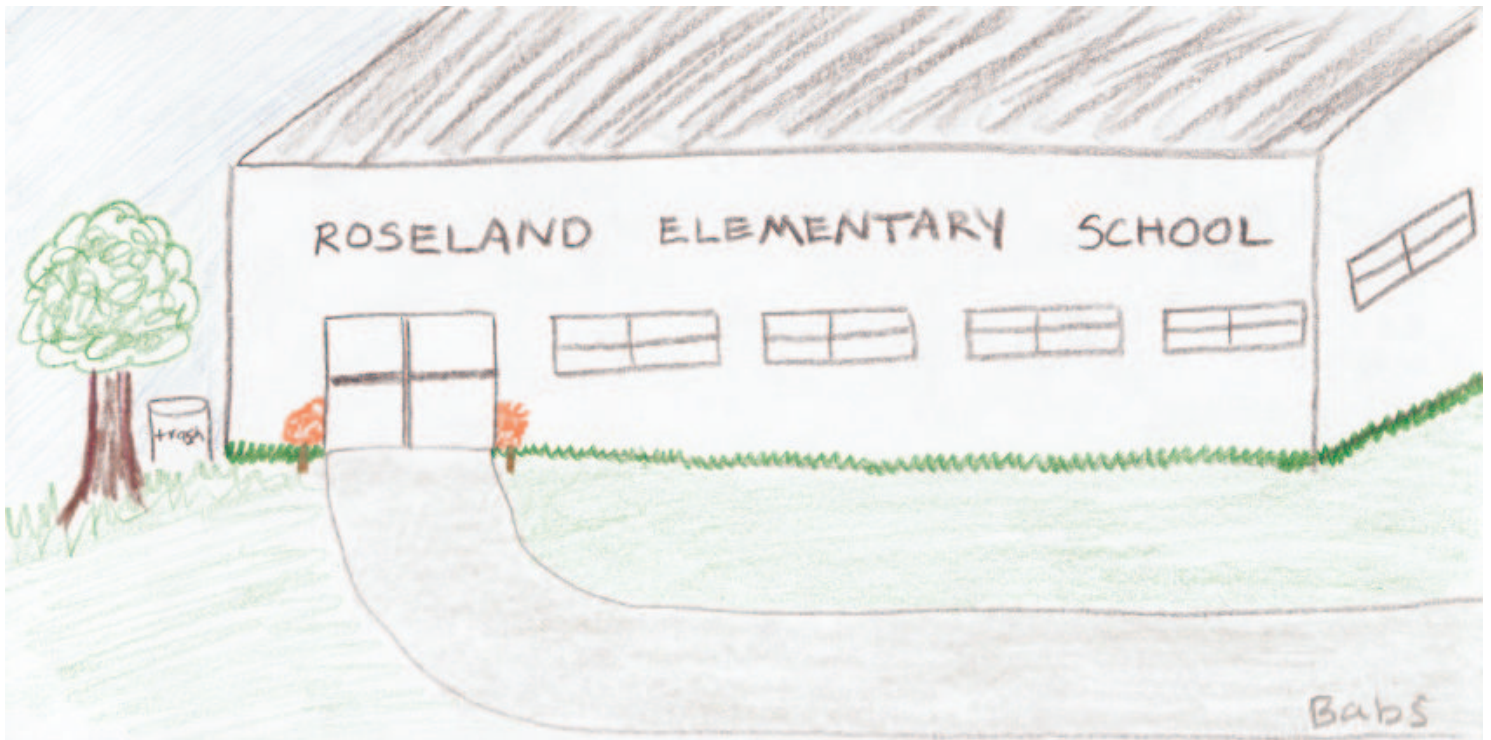


Fred and I looked at each other and smiled. Fred put his arm around me and gave me a little squeeze and said, "We had an exciting day didn't we honey? Let's go inside."

Fred and I enjoy taking care of our grandchildren and the other neighborhood children. We looked forward to the school year learning along with them.

The next day came and the children went off to school once again.

Ms. Victoria, and Ms. Cindi started each morning teaching the children adding, subtracting, reading and writing. In between they had recess and then lunchtime.



After lunch they had a short naptime. Then it was time to learn about the *environment*.

"Does anyone know what the word *environment* means?" asked Ms. Victoria. The children shook their heads no. "Does anyone want to guess?" Ms. Cindi asked. They still shook their heads no. Ms. Victoria said, "Let's see if I can help you guess. I'll give you some hints. This classroom is our school *environment*, when we leave and go home we are in our home *environment*." The children still did not respond.

"*Environment* means the area that you are in. It is your surroundings," said Ms. Victoria. "Our school *environment* is the classroom, the play yard and the lunchroom; it is the whole school. It is important to keep



the school clean. Do you know how to keep the school clean?" she asked. The children raised their hands. "By picking up papers on the floor," said John. "Very good," said Ms. Cindi. "If trash is left on the floor the room will start to look dirty, right?" The children nodded their heads. "What if not only papers were left on the floor but also a banana peel, a couple sandwiches someone forgot to eat and other foods, wouldn't the room start to smell awful?" The children nodded their heads yes.

"What about your home *environment*, do you like it clean or dirty?" asked Ms. Cindi. "Clean," said the children. "So, when you are at home you need to help keep it clean. Outside of our homes and our school is the world we live in and that is our *environment* too. Our streets, rivers, the air we breathe are all part of our *environment*," said Ms. Cindi.



"We all need to learn how to be good *stewards* of the land by taking care of our outside *environment*. To be a good *steward*, means to manage or take care of, and be responsible for the world we live in," said Ms. Victoria.

"Now, it is almost time to go home, but before we leave, can anyone tell me how someone can be a good *steward* of our *environment*?" asked Ms. Victoria. Donnie raised his hand and answered, "By picking up paper on the sidewalk." "Very good," said Ms. Victoria.

"Does anyone know what another word for papers or trash that you see on the streets, bushes, or sometimes even in our rivers, streams, creeks or oceans?" No one

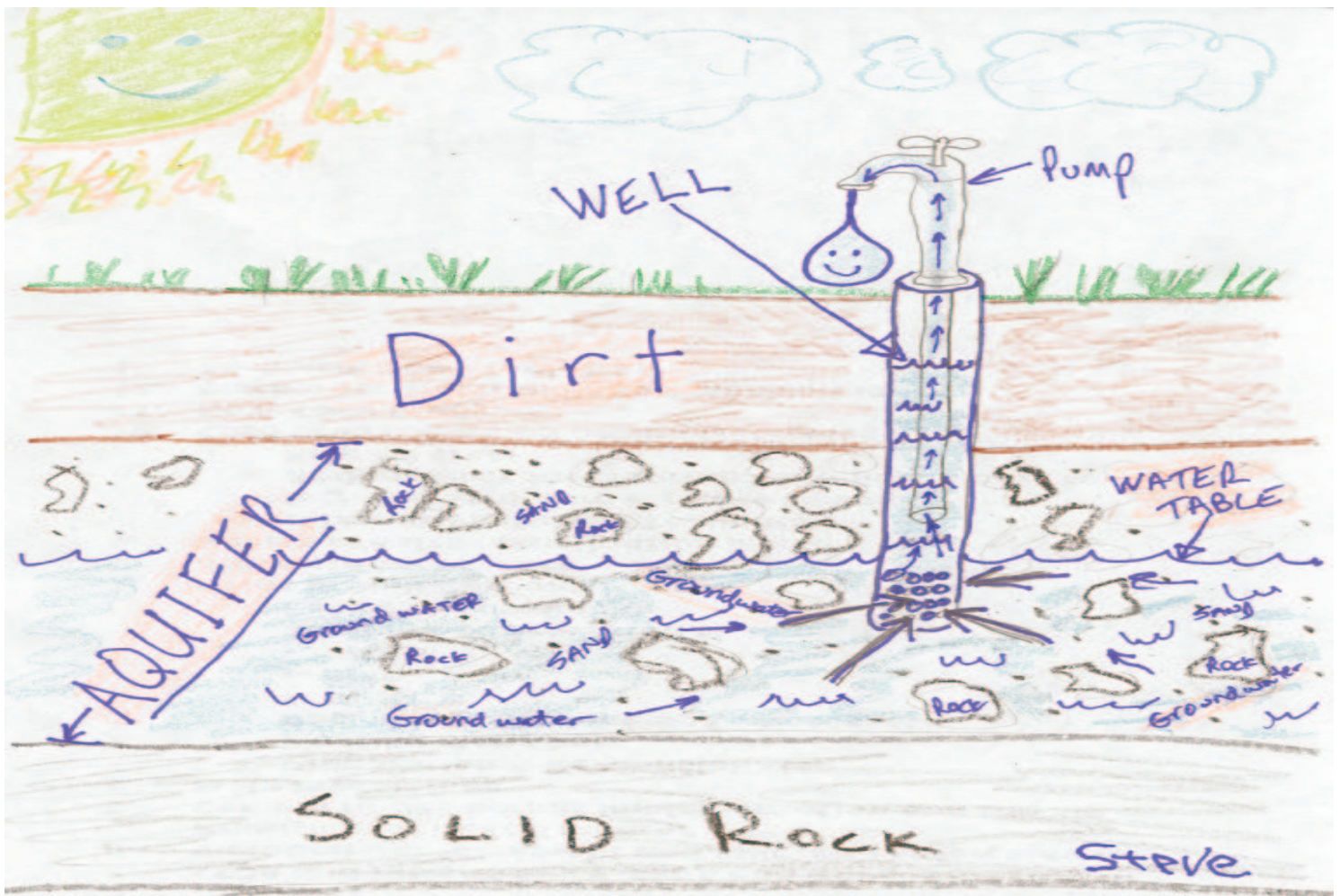


answered; the children shook their heads no. "It is called *litter*," said Ms. Victoria.

"Okay," Ms. Victoria said, "Time to go home, tomorrow we will talk more about other ways to keep our *environment* clean."

The children rushed out to the school bus. The children were excited to go home and share with Fred and me about what they had learned at school.

When they arrived at our home the children started to tell us about what the *environment* is and that it is everyone's responsibility to help keep it clean by picking up any garbage or *litter* that is on the ground. They told us that helping to keep our *environment* clean is called being a good *steward* of the land.



The day ended and the children's parents picked them up. Not only did the children share the information with Fred and myself, they also shared what they had learned with their parents.

The next day at school the children were anxious to continue learning about other ways to help keep the land clean. "Today," said Ms. Victoria, "We are going to learn about *wells* and *ground water*."

Ms. Victoria asked the children if they knew what a *well* is. No one seemed to know. "A *well* is a hole that is dug in the ground. The hole is dug in the ground deep enough to reach an area that is called the *aquifer* where the *ground water* is. People who have a *well* get their



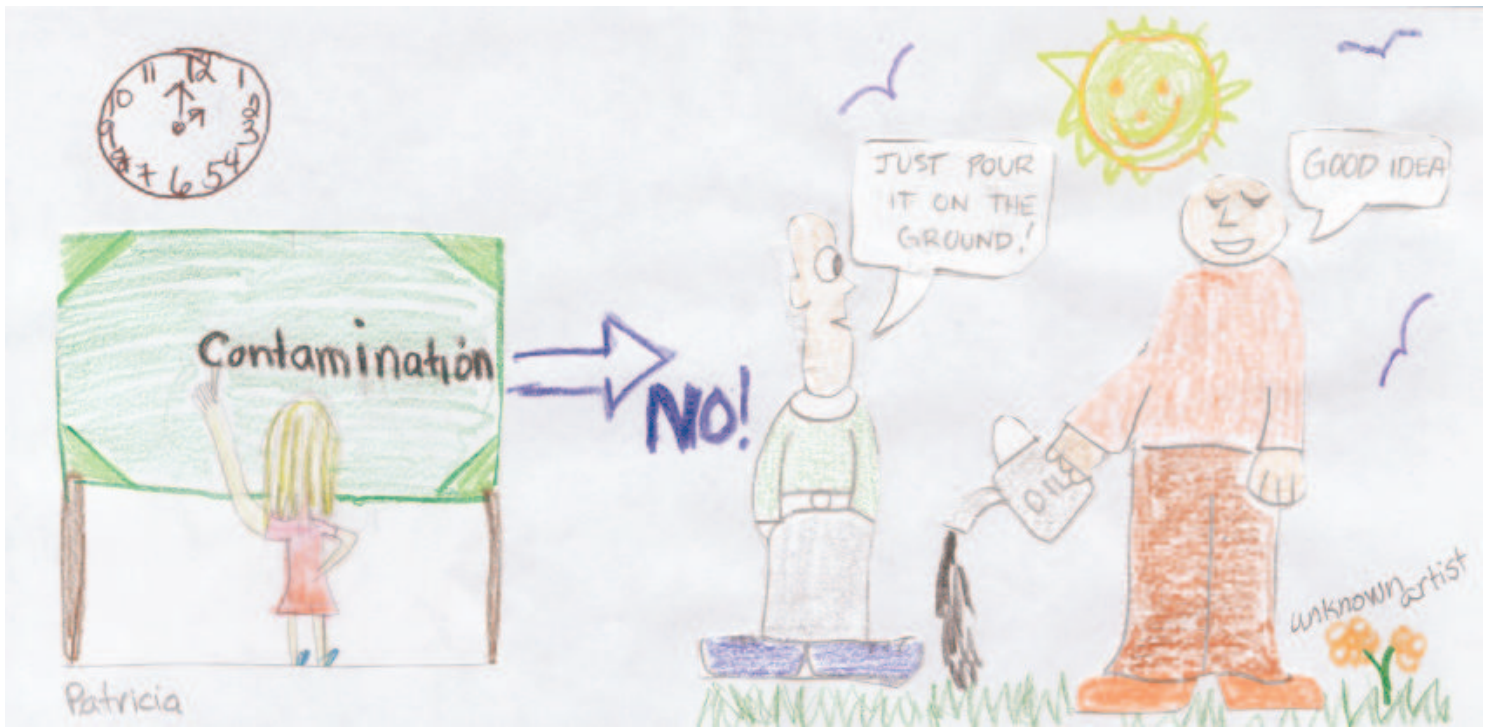
water *pumped* into their house from the *aquifer*," she said. "The rocks down in the ground act as a *filter* to help remove any little pieces of dirt from being *pumped* into the *well*."

The children were very interested in what Ms. Victoria was talking about. Rylee raised her hand and asked, "Does *well* water taste good?" "It sometimes tastes a little different but it usually is safe to drink," answered Ms. Victoria.

"Another important word to know, is the word *contamination*. That is a big word and it means to be dirty. When you hear someone say that something is *contaminated*, like water, it means it is not safe to drink."

Melissa raised her hand and asked, "How does water get *contaminated*?" Ms. Cindi said. "People who have





*wells* can have their water become *contaminated* if the *ground water* where their water is pumped from has been *contaminated* because of people spilling or pouring *chemicals* on the ground."

Ms. Cindi continued, "Sometimes when people are working on their cars they dump the dirty *motor oil* and the *antifreeze* in their backyard on the ground. Sometimes people dump paint or other *chemicals* on the ground. These *chemicals* work their way down to the *ground water* and it becomes *contaminated* and makes the water unsafe to drink."

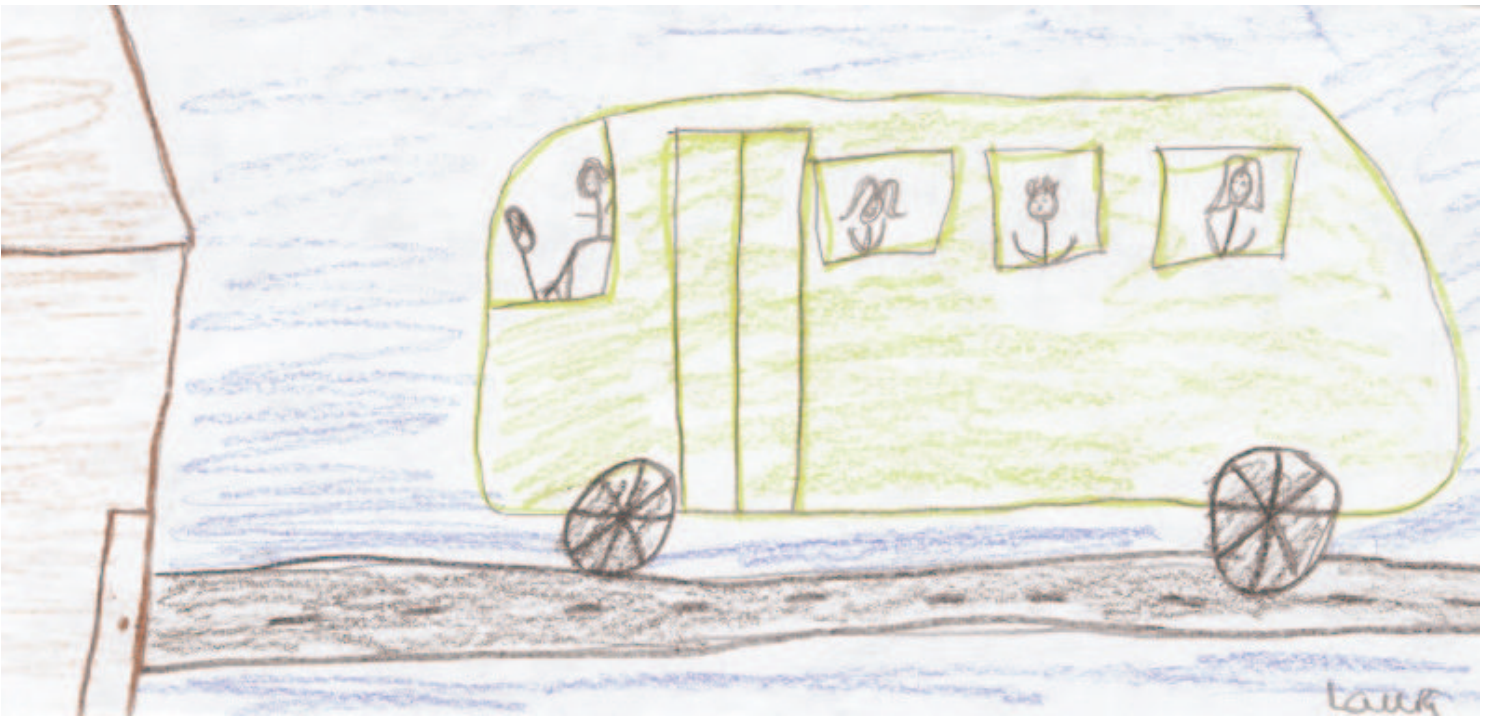
Paul raised his hand and asked, "Where are you supposed to throw that kind of stuff away?" Ms. Victoria answered, "Some gas stations will take *motor oil* and *antifreeze* and throw it away for you. Gas stations know



the correct way of getting rid of these kinds of *chemicals*. Just remember, dumping *chemicals* on the ground may *contaminate* the water people drink. The *chemicals* work their way down to the *ground water* and *contaminate* it. Knowing where and how to throw away *chemicals* is important in taking care of our *environment*."

"We covered a lot of information today on taking care of the *environment*. Tomorrow we will learn more. It is time to go home now," Ms. Victoria said.

As the children were leaving Ms. Cindi noticed that Rylee, Melissa, Donnie, Paul and John had a sad look on their faces. Ms. Cindi asked them, "Are you children okay? You look a little sad." Rylee said, "Ms. Cindi our



good friends Faloofa and Fred pour *motor oil*, *antifreeze* and sometimes paint on the ground in their backyard. They are *contaminating* the *environment*!" Ms. Cindi said "I don't think they are doing it on purpose. I think they just don't know that what they are doing is hurting the *environment*. This is a chance for you children to teach your friends what you have been learning in school."

John said, "You know what Ms. Cindi? Everyday when we come home from school Faloofa and Fred ask us to share with them what we learned." Ms. Cindi said, "I think your friends will be very thankful when you share with them what you learned. Well children, the school bus is here. I will see you tomorrow."

Ms. Debra, the school bus driver, shouted, "Hurry along children. We don't want your families to worry if



you are not home on time. All aboard. Next stop, Sugar Bear Lane."

The children got off the bus and waved goodbye to Ms. Debra. Fred and I were waiting for the children at the bus stop. "Did you have a good day?" I asked. Donnie said, "Yes, we had a great day." "A great day?" asked Fred. "Well, let's go inside and you can tell us all about what you learned on this great day."

The children's snacks were ready. Once everyone washed their hands they sat at the table. I asked the children, "What did you learn today?" The children all looked at one another and then Donnie said, "We learned what a *well* is and how the *well* water gets *pumped* up from the *ground water* in the *aquifer*. We also learned that



*ground water* can become *contaminated* if *chemicals* are spilled or poured on the ground."

Fred looked a little worried and asked, "Do you mean like the *motor oil* and *antifreeze* from my car and the paint that I pour on the ground in the backyard *contaminates* the *ground water*?" The children nodded their heads yes. Fred was very sad and said, "Oh children, I am so glad you are sharing this information with me, I must stop *polluting* the soil! Tomorrow I will find out where I should be throwing away these *chemicals*, maybe some of the gas stations in town will take the *motor oil* and *antifreeze* and dispose of it properly for me."

Fred asked the children about putting *chemicals* down the *storm drain*. Rylee said, "Ms. Victoria and Ms.



Cindi haven't taught us about *storm drains* yet."

"Fred, I think that you and I have been *polluting* the *environment* and we didn't even know it! Children, do you think your teachers would mind if we visit your class tomorrow in the afternoon and learn about the *environment* with you?" "We will ask our teacher in the morning," said Melissa.

The children's parents came to pick them up and Fred and I walked them outside and waved good-bye. "See you tomorrow", we said. I looked at Fred and shook my head, "I just can't believe that we have been hurting the *environment* all this time." "Faloofa my dear", said Fred, "the important thing is that we stop *polluting* now and start learning ways to help keep the *environment* clean." "You're right Freddy dear, let's go inside."



The next day at school the children asked their teacher if Fred and I could come by to class, to learn with them about the environment. During the recess Paul called us to let us know that Ms. Victoria thought it would be a wonderful idea if Fred and I came by to class.

Fred and I arrived at the school. The children introduced us to their teachers and to their class. Fred and I sat at the back of the classroom and gave Ms. Victoria and Ms. Cindi our full attention.

"Today," said Ms. Victoria, "We are going to learn what a *storm drain* is. These drains collect the rain water and carry it down to the streams and out to the rivers and eventually out to the ocean."

Ms. Victoria continued, "Different types of fish and



wildlife live in and around the streams. That's why sometimes you might see a picture of a fish drawn on the *storm drain*. It is to remind all of us that whatever goes down the drain affects the stream life."

I raised my hand, "Ms. Victoria, do you mean the *pesticides* and clippings I put down the *storm drain* goes out to the streams?" "Yes," she said. "*Pesticides* are dangerous and can hurt the fish and wildlife in the streams."

"What about the soap from washing a car in the driveway?" asked Fred. Ms. Cindi answered, "The best place to wash your car is at a car wash. The soap you use to wash your car at home can be poisonous to the wildlife and fishes in the stream. In a car wash they dispose of the soapy water properly. The water drains to the





Water Treatment Center and they have a special way of cleaning it. Sometimes people use *biodegradable* soaps to wash their cars that are supposed to be safe for the *environment* but even these soaps can hurt the fish in the streams."

"Water from your house, like from the kitchen, the bathroom and the shower, all go through pipes that are underneath the ground. This wastewater travels through the pipes underground to a place called the Water Treatment Center. Here it gets cleaned and sent back into the *environment*."

I raised my hand once again. "Well, Ms Victoria and Ms. Cindi, Fred and I have been *polluting* the *environment* and we are very sorry, but thanks to you and the children



we now know how to help keep the *environment* clean."

Class was now over and it was time to go home. The children rode the bus home and Fred and I drove home in our car. On the way home Fred and I discussed what a wonderful time we had learning how to take care of the land.

We arrived home just in time. The children were just getting off the bus. The children ran to the house. "Thank you children," said Fred, "Faloofa and I learned so much from all of you and your teachers. Now when you children help us with our chores around the house we will make sure not to cause any *pollution*."

"Oh look, your parents are home early today. Time to go home. See you tomorrow after school." Fred and I



waved good-bye to the children. "Well Freddy, did you think we were going to learn so much this year? We are never too old to learn." "Isn't it amazing how much we can learn from children if we just listen," Freddy said. "Children are excellent teachers too."

Well children, now that you have learned how to take care of the *environment* you can teach your family and friends how to be good *stewards* of the land too.

Remember that each one of us can make a difference if we share what we know about how to keep the *environment* clean.

**IT TAKES EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US TO KEEP THE ENVIRONMENT CLEAN AND SAFE TO LIVE IN.**

## GLOSSARY

**Antifreeze:** a liquid that goes in a car so it won't freeze.

**Aquifer:** a layer of sand or rock underneath the ground that holds large amounts of water.

**Biodegradable:** something that naturally becomes harmless in the environment.

**Chemicals:** a pesticide is a chemical.

**Contaminate:** to make dirty.

**Environment:** the things around you.

**Filter:** something like rocks or sand that helps to get rid of little pieces of things.

**Ground water:** water that collects in rock layers below the surface of the ground.

**Litter:** garbage thrown everywhere.

**Motor oil:** a thick greasy liquid that goes in you car engine to make your car run.

**Pesticides:** a chemical that kills bugs.

**Pollution:** to make dirty like contamination.

**Pump:** a machine that helps bring something, like water, from the bottom to the top.

**Recycle:** to use again.

**Steward:** someone who takes care of something.

**Storm drain:** a drain you see on the street that takes water to the creek.

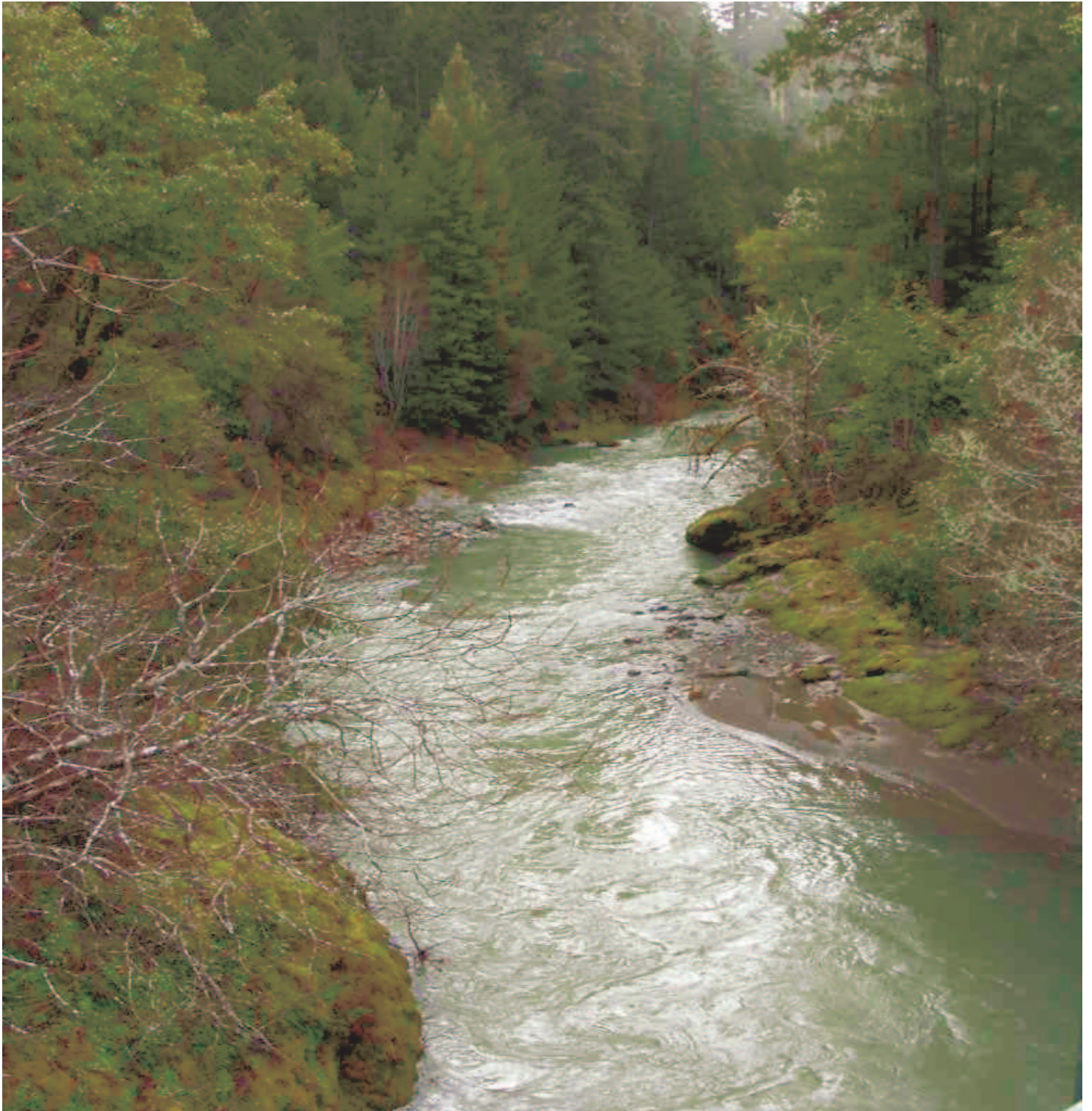
**Well:** a hole in the ground where ground water can be pumped up to the surface.

**Glossary definitions provided by members of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class from Roseland Elementary School in Santa Rosa California.**

**Eva, Jennifer, Hailey, Bianca, Jenn, Mary Carmen, Bianca F., Bella, May, Olivia, Marcus, Michael, David**

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# A NEW BEGINNING



South Fork Gualala River from Hauser Bridge