

# Ozone at Urban?

Special to the Legend by Nicole Trumm

For approximately two weeks team 8-1 science classes, under the direction of Mrs. Nara Detienne, were studying the earth's ozone and the effects it has on the environment we live in. After experiencing Ozone Action Day on the second day of school (August 31), students were very curious to find out just how much harmful ozone we breathe in right here at Urban.

There are many ways to measure the ozone, but probably one of the most effective ways is to use biomonitoring. This technique uses a certain kind of plant (milkweed in this case) to find out the level of pollution created by ozone in a specific area. It is easy to tell if the milkweed has any ozone damage by checking the plant for small purple or black dots on the front side of its leaves. By counting up the number of leaves students figured out the overall percent of damaged leaves on the plant. After that they connected each plant with the DNR code to determine the amount of pollution.

Students concluded that milkweed plants at Urban suffered 0 - 1 amount of injury due to ozone. The good news for us is that this trans-

lates into little or no ozone damage so we have little cause for concern, but that doesn't mean we can forget about protecting our air quality.

Let's face it, humans won't survive without the upper ozone to guard us from the harmful rays of the sun. Burning fossil fuels like oil and gas increases the bad ground level ozone, which is harmful to all living things, not just the milkweed plants.

What can you do?

Try walking or riding your bike places instead of getting a ride in the car. Take good care of your personal health: drink lots of water, and on days when there is an ozone alert, avoid strenuous outdoor activities, especially if you have asthma.

If we don't take care of the environment, who will? We only have one earth, and if we destroy it, we will be destroying ourselves at the same time.

The choice is clear and it is up to us.



*Legend photo*  
Heidi Dhein, Valerie Demko, and Nicole Trumm pose with the milkweed plants they examined in their search for ozone damage at urban.