



## THE CHALLENGE

Like many high school students, Holton High senior Alexandria Bontrager was keenly aware that more effort could be devoted to addressing America's environmental issues. But what set Alex apart was her skill at finding and funding a way to bring about change at her Kansas school.

Hoping to encourage others to reduce plastic waste by using reusable water bottles, Alex and her fellow members of the school's KAY Club, a leadership-training organization, initiated a fundraising effort to purchase an Elkay ezH2O Bottle Filling Station for the high school.

"I saw a bottle filling station at another school," Alex recalls, "and I thought that it would be a good service project to get one for Holton to improve our school and community."

## THE SOLUTION

Through online research, Alex learned about Elkay's ezH2O Bottle Filling Stations. As luck would have it, Holton High School was already outfitted with Elkay drinking fountains. That made replacing a traditional unit with an ezH2O unit very simple. But first, the funds needed to be raised to purchase the new unit.

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"Fundraising is usually difficult," says Alex, "but for this project we used a lot of social media and posted regularly about the benefits of healthy hydration on a popular community site that connected with the parents of students." Links to an online donation site made it easy for people to help. In the end, reaching out through social media proved to be a winning strategy.



## Alexandria Bontrager – Holton High School (continued)

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### THE RESULTS

“People were really excited about this project,” according to Alex. “We raised more money in a shorter time than any other fundraiser we’ve ever done.”

With the new ezH2O Bottle Filling Station installed, students had a source of clean, healthy hydration that reduced the dependence on disposable plastic bottles. And with the new unit’s built-in filter, the school’s mineral-rich water now had a noticeably better taste.

“It got people’s attention right away,” says Alex. “Students told me they went out and bought water bottles so they could start using the new bottle filling station.” Alex also noticed that students were very interested in the unit’s ticker feature that counts the number of refills. “I think it helps motivate people when you can see the results on the ticker – you know you’re making a difference.”

### THE FUTURE

According to school officials, Holton’s new elementary building will include drinking fountains with bottle filling stations. As for the high school, the recycling program has seen a reduction in plastic bottles and has stepped up its efforts to recycle more of the 70,000 pounds of waste produced by the school every year.

Alex has been contacted by a number of schools interested in learning more about her fundraising efforts. Below are her tips for bringing an ezH2O Bottle Filling Station to your school:

- Involve your school principal/superintendent early in the process.
- Look professional: no typos in your fundraising campaign materials.
- Make your materials visual and keep the copy short.
- Use social media channels and encourage sharing.
- Make it easy to donate via online fundraising sites like fundly.com.
- Send reminders to keep supporters involved and informed.