

People impact our planet in many ways. They use energy saving fluorescent bulbs, and they rebuild habitats on top of old oil fields. But not all things humans do to the Earth are so positive. They build large shopping malls on top of wildlife habitats, and they shoot smog in the form of carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, and other putrid chemicals into the atmosphere. Doing this creates problems—quite large problems that people do not realize unless they look further than the plush inside of their homes and automobiles.

Last year, before an anticipated large rainstorm, my class was instructed by our science teacher to put a cup outside to collect rainwater. She told us to bring that water in after the rain and we'd test the level of acidity of the rain. I laughed to myself thinking *we don't have acid rain in Huntingdon Valley* (a relatively small city in the Philadelphia suburbs). *We simply don't have the volume of traffic to produce acid rain!*

But I was very wrong. When we tested the rain with litmus paper, the class got an average pH of four. A pH of four is acidic (a pH of 7 is neutral). I was amazed that such a relatively small traffic volume and other factors in Huntingdon Valley could produce acid rain with a pH of four!

That was when it hit our class. The amount of wildlife in the valley was declining. If we don't start making smarter decisions about our emissions, we might as well build a shopping mall on every last acre of wildlife. This really taught us to use less energy—turn lights off when leaving a room, and *bike* down the street, don't drive. These are all simple ways we can impact the earth positively in our community.