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Local youth speak out against asphalt plant

By: Gus Thomson, Journal Staff Writer

Youthful activists in Meadow Vista are making their voices heard in the Chevreux Aggregates asphalt plant debate.

The issue itself is headed for a court showdown in November, with the 61-year-old Meadow Vista Aggregate operation's long-held permit to make asphalt being challenged by the Meadow Vista Protection grassroots group

Last Friday, shoppers at Meadow Vista's Holiday Market were greeted by sign-wielding elementary-school students who oppose the asphalt plant.

"I want to help Meadow Vista," said 9-year-old Kalina Fudge. "There are some many people here who don't want it."

Kalina said that as well as making posters, she's been calling friends to tell them about the issue. Friday's protest even brought in some donations for a group she and classmate Iris Merritt have formed with other fourth graders to raise awareness on the issue.

The group plans more meetings to decide on their next course of action. Bernadette Fudge, Kalina's mother, said they may be getting together with eighth graders at Live Oak Waldorf School who are involved in community work to start a petition drive.

E.J. Belding of Chevreux declined to comment Wednesday, saying that the business knows nothing about the signs.

Dr. Dan Forman, Meadow Vista Protection's medical director and vice president, said he was surprised with the interest of the youthful activists.

"I wasn't really aware that fourth graders were attuned to the issue," he said. "But it's obvious kids are concerned, particularly when there's such a high incidence of asthma in the foothills."

Kalina said that she'll be continuing to work to provide another view on a discussion that has generally involved adults.

"Kids can make a difference the same as adults," she said.

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Youthful activists Katie Sykes, left, Isa Polena, Iris Merritt, back, and Kalina Fudge plan with parents Bernadette Fudge, back, and Julie Merritt on where to place some of their signs protesting the Chevreux Aggregates asphalt plan in Meadow Vista. Photo by Philip Wood/Auburn Journal

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