

Green Living Tips - Bring Your Own Bag

Fact

- 380 billion plastic bags are used annually in the United States, each bag is used for about 25 minutes, less than 3% are recycled and they never biodegrade.

Problem

- It costs the state \$25 million annually to landfill discarded plastic bags.
- At least 267 species have been scientifically documented to be adversely affected by plastic marine debris and it is estimated to kill over 100,000 marine mammals and turtles each year.
- Plastic bags are considered especially dangerous to sea turtles, who mistake them for jellyfish, a main food source. 86% of all known species of sea turtles have had reported problems of entanglement or ingestion of marine debris.

Service Ideas

- Write to Jim Nielson and Senator Sam Aanstad about your support for AB 1998 (Brownley) Plastic Bag Ban. http://salsa.democracynaction.org/o/661/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=2457
- Instead of throwing away old plastic bags use them for craft projects:
Plastic Bag Mats - Weave or knot old plastic bags together to make a mat.
Dolls - Sew two pieces of fabric together except for one end. Stuff with old plastic bags, then sew closed.
- Go to local stores and tell them about the dangers of plastic bags. Ask them to stop providing plastic bags for free so that we can reduce the waste.
- Create your own shopping bags and sell or give away to families and people in your community.
- Make your own shopping bags and ask people to trade you plastic bags for a cloth bag. Use the plastic bags you gather for craft projects.

Resources

- Californians Against Waste
http://www.cawrecycles.org/issues/plastic_campaign/plastic_bags/problem
- Margo Reid Brown <http://www.gov.ca.gov/index.php?/blog/issue/margo-reid-brown-bag-recycle-blog/general>
- The Changing Tide http://www.coastal.ca.gov/ccbn/ct/ct-summer_2008.pdf
- Take Action http://www.cawrecycles.org/take_action

Additional Notes

- In Ireland, customers must pay a tax of 15 cents per plastic bag. There was an estimated 90% reduction in use of plastic bags. Money raised from tax is used for environmental projects.
- In Taiwan, free provision of plastic bags by shops was banned and you could receive up to \$8,600 in fines for the shop if they did so. Plastic workers protested but the government agreed to help them find other jobs.
- In India, the production, storage, use, sale and distribution of polythene bags were banned in states such as Himachal Pradesh, Goa, Kerala and Maharashtra. In Himachal Pradesh, you could receive up to seven years in prison or US \$2,000 fine for anyone using a polythene bag.
- Bangladesh banned plastic bags. Anyone making a polythene bag could receive ten years in prison or a US \$17,000 fine. If you were found using one you received a US \$9 fine. Jute bags are now used more widely which has encouraged the jute industry.

Green Living Tips - Wash Your Clothes In Cold Water

Fact

- By using cold water instead of warm, the average household can avoid emitting 1,281 pounds of carbon dioxide annually and save on energy bills.

Problem

- 90% of the energy used while washing clothes is for warming the water.
- Using warm water instead of hot water for two loads of laundry a week will save 500 pounds of carbon dioxide pollution, if you use an electric water heater, or 150 pounds of carbon dioxide, if you use a gas heater. 500 pounds of carbon dioxide is ten miles of driving.

Service Ideas

- Make posters with information about why using cold water is helpful to them and our environment. Hang them up around your school and community. Talk to people you know about the benefits of using cold water. Set up an information booth and have parents sign a pledge to use cold water as much as possible.
- Make flyers and call local appliance stores to see if you can put them in their stores.
- Go to City Hall to see if they can include the flyers in the water bills.
- Ask City Hall to proclaim a Cold Water Washing day or a credit for customers who use less hot water (or electricity) each month?
 - Information to include on posters or informational flyers
 - Set your water temperature to “cold” on your clothes washer. Unless your clothes have oil or grease stains, cold water is usually adequate to clean white and colored clothes. In fact, washing clothes in cold water allows fabrics to retain their color and strength longer.
 - If you have hard-to-clean clothes, switch the temperature to warm instead of hot and you can reduce the load’s energy use by half. You can also use spot remover or presoak the clothes to help loosen the grease or stains.
 - Use cold-water detergents whenever possible. Be extra kind to the environment and use biofriendly detergents. Manufacturers of natural laundry detergents offer products that work well in cold water and contain no harmful additives.
 - Wait until you have a full load to wash clothes. If you have a smaller load, use the appropriate water-level setting.
 - Set the thermostat on your water heater to no higher than 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
 - When buying a new clothes washer, look for Energy Star labels. Clothes washers with an Energy Star label use 50% less energy than standard clothes washers and also spin the clothes better, which reduces drying time. A full-sized Energy Star clothes washer also uses less water: about 18 to 25 gallons per load compared to 40 gallons in a standard machine.

Resources

- Wash Clothes In Cold Water <http://charityguide.org/volunteer/fifteen/laundry-machine-reviews.htm>
- Top 50 Things To Do To Stop Global Warming <http://globalwarming-facts.info/50-tips.html>

Green Living Tips - Turn Off Your Heater

Fact

- The energy consumption on heating and cooling the home is 50 percent of the total electricity consumption of an average household!

Problem

- Air Conditioning and Heaters indirectly inject additional carbon dioxide into the air.
- The Earth's temperature has increased by about 1 degree Fahrenheit in the last century.

Service Ideas

- Turn down your water heater thermostat. Thermostats are often set to 140 degrees F when 120 is usually fine. Each 10 degree reduction saves 600 pounds of CO₂ per year for an electric water heater, or 440 pounds for a gas heater. If every household turned its water heaters thermostat down 20 degrees, we could prevent more than 45 million tons of annual CO₂ emissions - the same amount emitted by the entire nations of Kuwait or Libya.
- Be careful not to overheat or overcool rooms. In the winter, set your thermostat at 68 degrees in daytime, and 55 degrees at night. In the summer, keep it at 78. Lowering your thermostat just two degrees during winter saves 6 percent of heating-related CO₂ emissions. That's a reduction of 420 pounds of CO₂ per year for a typical home.
- Clean or replace air filters as recommended. Energy is lost when air conditioners and hot-air furnaces have to work harder to draw air through dirty filters. Cleaning a dirty air conditioner filter can save 5 percent of the energy used. That could save 175 pounds of CO₂ per year.
- Talk to adults around you about ways they can reduce their energy use. Talk to stores and have the adults sign a pledge saying they will not waste energy.

Resources

- Air Conditioning May Indirectly Contribute to Global Warming
<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,206724,00.html>
- Reduce Your Electricity Use http://www.powerscorecard.org/reduce_energy.cfm

Green Living Tips - Use A Reusable Coffee Cup

Fact

- You would be able to circle the earth 436 times per year with the Styrofoam cups that are used in the United States.

Problem

- These products are made with petroleum, a non-sustainable and heavily polluting resource.
- Eating out of a styrofoam cup can contain acidic substances that could harm you after many consumptions.

Service Ideas

- Create a display for the school site to show how Styrofoam effects the environment
- Find out which businesses use Styrofoam food containers and make an appointment to show them some alternatives
 - Find alternatives to the Styrofoam items prior to the meeting
 - Make signs for the businesses that decide to change to celebrate their decision!
 - Let news stations and the newspaper know when a business changes from Styrofoam.
- Educate your school families on how to make the change
 - Use ceramic plates, bowls, and mugs/cups whenever possible.
 - Buy food that is not packaged in polystyrene (styrofoam).
 - Instead of receiving a styrofoam box for your left over foods, ask for a paper bag.
- Use your old foam cups for art projects. They can be broken up and painted to glue onto a picture. Also, you can use them to build castles that you paint.

Resources

- Grinning Planet.
<http://www.grinningplanet.com/2008/04-08/foam-cups-polystyrene-cups-article.htm>

Green Living Tips - Light Pollution

Fact

- It is a serious problem, accounting for somewhere in the region of two million barrels of oil per day in energy wasted in the USA alone.

Problem

- Some nocturnal birds use the moon and stars for navigation during their migrations; and they can become disoriented when flying through brightly lit areas.
- Female sea turtles shy away from areas with bright lights, which interrupts their nesting patterns. Newly hatched turtles are also drawn to lights, so instead of heading to the ocean, they often head inland instead.
- Other reptiles and mammals are believed to suffer from bright lights in relation to feeding and mating habits.

Service Ideas

- Call PG&E to see what programs they offer and how you can help
- Contact GE or other light bulb companies to see what information or programs they have – maybe they have one where you could give a energy efficient bulb out in exchange for old bulbs.
- Things you can do and get your schools families to do:
 - Light only where needed.
 - Don't over light.
 - Shine light downwards, using shields and reflectors.
 - Light only when needed - use sensors when possible.
 - Light with energy efficient sources such as LED's and compact flourescents.
 - Educate those around you.
 - Turn off lights when they are not needed.

Resources

- Green Living Tips.
<http://www.greenlivingtips.com/articles/57/1/Light-pollution.html>
- Starry Night
<http://www.starrynightlights.com/lpIndex.html>

Green Living Tips - “Tips for a Waste-Less School Year”

Fact

- School budgets have been cut drastically so many schools need to re-use text books each year
- Some books are no longer useable and must be discarded

Problem

- Books become old and torn without book covers and tips on how to take care of them.
- Only 24 books are produced for ever tree felled

Service Ideas

- Speak to your Principal and ask which books you can make covers for.
 - Have a plan – know when and how you will be covering the books
 - How long will it take you to cover “x” amount of books?
- Throw a book swap party.
- Donate the books to the local library or thrift store
- Find out if any hospitals, nursing homes, etc. would like the books
 - You may want to make a list of the books for reference.
- Find a book recycling company and gather books to send to them.

Resources:

<http://www.thedailygreen.com/going-green/community-tips/recycle-used-books-460808#ixzz0w9oOKhws>

<http://www.book-destruction.com/>

<http://www.adoptalibrary.org/>

Green Living Tips - “Tips for a Waste-Less School Year”

Fact:

“California school districts dispose of large amounts of waste (approximately 763,817 tons per year).

Problem:

These wastes represent a significant loss of natural resources and school district funds, as well as a potential threat to student/staff health and the environment. To be responsible stewards of environmental quality, school districts should review processes and operations, and even curriculum choices.” (www.calrecycle.ca.gov)

Service Ideas:

Start a Revolution! Look at what other schools are doing to reduce the waste at their schools... what can you do at your school?

What’s are the steps you need to take?

Evaluate the biggest need/waste area.

How can you change that?

Look at some of the schools below for some ideas.

Oak Hills Elementary School in Ventura County set a goal of zero waste generation, also focusing on lunch and snack activities, and modeled after a program being carried out at all six schools located within the Sacramento area’s Oak Park Unified School District. Here are the fundamentals of the program: student lunches and snacks only use reusable containers; no paper napkins or nonreusable packaging are allowed; all drinks must be in reusable or recyclable containers (no glass); nothing is thrown away. The 500 students only fill one 55-gallon can of trash during lunch. Previously, the same students filled eight of these cans.

The Palo Verde Unified School District, a rural district located in the Mojave Desert, has joined the City of Blythe, a prison, and a waste hauler to divert over 3 tons of milk and juice boxes and more than 40 cubic yards of cardboard from local landfills. All the proceeds from recycled cardboard sales go to fund the prison, where laborer sort and bale the material for reuse.

The Laytonville Unified School District in Mendocino County discovered that worms can be enlisted in the fight to curb waste. In 1993, 14,000 pounds of waste were diverted through composting and recycling efforts. Lunch waste, including nonprotein food waste and paper bags, is taken to worm bins in the school garden. The worms, and other waste reduction activities, reduced the school’s garbage by 60 to 80 percent.

<http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/ReduceWaste/Schools>

Kids with Disabilities

Fact: There are many students in every school with disabilities/special needs. They sometimes need help, a friend, or special equipment or materials

Problem: The students with disabilities/special needs don't always have a friend, or someone to help with their work, or to play with. They are sometimes left out at recess and special activities.

Service Ideas:

Find the students with disabilities/special needs in your school.

What are their needs?

How does the school help them?

What is missing?

What can you do to help the school provide the missing pieces?

Do they need a special piece of playground equipment?

Do they need friends to play with?

Organize a "playgroup" for them.

Create a sign-up sheet so that there will always be someone there to play with them during that time.

Make it a club... what's the club's name?

What else can you do?

Simple Service Learning Projects

Key Elements of Service Learning: Real Community/Campus need.

- Integrated Learning.
- Collaboration with Local Partners (Students, parents, community based organization...)
- Student Voice.
- Civic Responsibility.
- Reflection and Evaluation.

1.) **Get paid for Trash!!**

<http://www.terracycle.net/>

- ✓ Collect noted trash items
 - Make posters to let everyone know
 - Collect boxes or trash cans for various areas on campus for everyone to put items into
- ✓ Ship to company
 - They make cool products!
- ✓ You Get paid!
 - They will even pay for your shipping!!!

(Would be a good project to do during the month coinciding with Every Monday Matters “DeTrashing Our School”)

2.) **Recycle to donate!**

<http://www.bottlesandcans.com/content/index.cfm?ID=44&phpMyAdmin=SNwipYERqHbZX3jreShERea0uK8>

- ✓ Collect and recycle cans and bottles
 - Make posters to let everyone know
 - Collect boxes or trash cans for various areas on campus for everyone to put items into
- ✓ Get paid
- ✓ Choose an agency to donate money to
 - Make a list on agencies in your area and have students vote on the one they would like to donate to

3.) **Campus/ Community Walk:**

- a. Have students take note pads and/or cameras and walk around their campus (community for older students)
- b. Students can records problems or needs that they see
 - i. Trash, cracks in playground, holes in fields, graffiti, etc.
- c. Have students discuss problems and which ones need addressing
- d. Students can work on a solution to the problem (what would it take to fix this for now and future?)
- e. The students may then choose to write a letter to their school principal (or city council) seeking help with the problem and offering their solution.

4.) Library Books

- a. Check your schools library. Are their books that could use some new covers to keep them in good condition?
- b. Work with your librarian on a creating a list of books in need of a new cover.
 - i. Measure what size each book will need. You may want to start a list and work on “X” amount of books at a time.
- c. Make new book covers for those books – this could easily be an art project as well as Service Learning!
 - i. Look at the book – read it, or at least skim through it so that you know what it is about, and create a book cover using that information.

5.) Bullying Drama

- a. Have students discuss the problem of bullying
- b. Create a drama – **or a video** - to show how it happens, what bullying really is, how it can hurt, and how to resolve the problem.
- c. Use the students ideas to create the drama. This could be a project that is done over a period of time.

Books to look at:

The Complete Guide to Service Learning: Proven, Practical Ways to Engage Students in Civic Responsibility, Academic Curriculum, & Social Action [Paperback]

[Cathryn Berger Kaye M.A. \(Author\)](#)

The Kid's Guide to Service Projects: Over 500 Service Ideas for Young People Who Want to Make a Difference [Paperback]

[Barbara A. Lewis](http://www.amazon.com/Kids-Guide-Service-Projects-Difference/dp/1575423383/ref=pd_bxgy_b_img_b-#)

(Author)

77 Creative Ways Kids Can Serve [Perfect Paperback]

[Sondra Clark](http://www.amazon.com/Creative-Ways-Kids-Can-Serve/dp/0898273633/ref=pd_sim_b_8-#)

(Author)

The Giving Book: Open The Door To A Lifetime Of Giving [Spiral-bound]

[Ellen Sabin](#) (Author)

School Beautification