



# Oregon Recycling Awareness Week (RAW)

The first Recycling Awareness Week (RAW) celebration started in Oregon in 1986 to observe the enactment of the Opportunity to Recycle. The Act provided curbside residential recycling opportunities in cities over 4,000 population as well as drop-off depots at all Oregon disposal sites and/or more convenient locations in smaller towns and rural areas. A complete copy of the Act is available on-line at: <http://www.deq.state.or.us/wmc/solwaste/links.html#statutes>

To show how the opportunity to recycle had become available to Oregonians, then-Governor Victor Atiyeh took his materials to the curb in front of his Salem home--and also in front of newspaper and television reporters and camera people. Oregon industries ran newspaper ads, haulers distributed flyers to customers, and teachers attended workshops to learn about recycling. Traditionally, the Governor officially makes a proclamation about RAW every year and DEQ encourages cities and counties around the state to promote the event locally.

In the past, Recycling Awareness Week was held the first full week in October; however, the dates have been moved to the week in November that coincides with the National America Recycles Day celebration on the fifteenth. RAW spans from Saturday to Saturday to allow activities to occur on either weekend. Some communities may also participate in the national celebration, for more information visit: <http://www.americarecyclesday.org/>

Work with the Recycling Coordinator at your school to help plan events designed specifically for your students, faculty, staff and families. Many communities have their Mayor develop a proclamation for local Recycling Awareness Week--perhaps you should have your principal proclaim this observance for your school! Some suggested activities are listed with examples of themes that have been used in past celebrations. Themes can be modified to make them more meaningful locally. Let your students help you decide what Recycling Awareness Week activities can make your school and/or local community recycling effort better. The more students get involved, the more they will learn about the what, who, where, when, why and how of Recycling!

The themes of recycling awareness weeks past include:

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|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Demand the Supply: Buy Recycled | Close the Loop: Buy Recycled         |
| Reduce Your Use                 | Use Less Stuff                       |
| The State of Oregon Recycling   | Recycling: Part of the Whole Picture |
| Recycle Oregon                  | Be a Winner: Recycle                 |
| Recycling: It's the Oregon Way  | Oregonians Recycle                   |
| Recycling Saves                 |                                      |

## **Recycling Awareness Week School Project Ideas**

- ☛ Work with your local government recycling coordinator to do a school-community joint activity. Possibilities include developing a presentation about the importance of recycling and forming teams of students to visit local businesses to make the presentation. Students should ask businesses to sign a pledge to start an in-house recycling program for employees or look for ways to improve the things they are already doing.
- ☛ If your school's recycling program isn't already in place, there's no time like the present! See the handbook Oregon Schools Formula for Success in Waste Reduction, and contact your local government recycling coordinator or Oregon Green Schools coordinator for technical assistance. Invite your parent-teacher organization to become involved. This information is available on-line at: <http://www.deq.state.or.us/wmc/solwaste/du.html>

- ✪ Use this week to implement the Rethinking Recycling curriculum activities: a lesson a day keeps the garbage away! Lessons are available on-line at: <http://www.deq.state.or.us/wmc/solwaste/edu.html>
- ✪ Plan a waste audit by classroom or by building. If you already have a recycling program in place, compare this year's audit with one done before you started recycling--see how effective your program really is! Try a lunch-room garbage audit daily, graph it, compare differences. (Again, ask your local government recycling coordinator or Oregon Green School coordinator for help!)
- ✪ Hold a school-wide Recycling Olympics (aka Enviro-lympics, Garbage Games, Recycling Rodeo), with events like the milk-jug shuffle (attach milk jugs to your feet and see who can run while they smash the jug), trash-ball (fill two 32 gallon cans with dry trash, dump on each side of volleyball court--object is to get all the trash to the other side (NIMBY), tin-can stilt races, can opening relay and bin-throw, sort the trash relay, trash-toss (like the hammer throw, but pick recyclable items that aren't potentially dangerous like an empty milk-jug, paper sorting bag, etc.)
- ✪ Schedule a recycle art contest and put the winning creations in a calendar, poster, advertisements or other format to remind students, teachers and staff to recycle. Don't just limit your students to two-dimensional pictures of recycling themes--encourage them to create art with recycled materials and include categories for soft sculpture, new uses for old stuff, etc. Enter school winners in DEQ's statewide recycling art contest.
- ✪ Everybody loves the movies. Recruit a theatre arts or video production class to make a recycling video for your school. This could be an MTV-style music video, a documentary, a sci-fi look at the future of recycling, a horror "what if we don't recycle" flick, or "home movies" of the recycling projects in staff and students' homes.
- ✪ Read recycling announcements every morning--choose inspirational, informational, or humorous environmental announcements including "did you know" facts, quotes from famous environmental protectors, or ideas for students or classes to make their recycling program even more effective.
- ✪ Have teachers or students write songs, poems, stories or plays about recycling and environmental issues and publish an Environmental Literature magazine. Sell it to parents to raise \$\$\$ for your recycling program.
- ✪ Dedicate a corner of your school to a Recycling Museum (Garbage Gallery, Waste Wroom) that includes history, technology, current trends, even interactive exhibits like a trash-sorting station that provides on-the-spot feedback about recycling skills.
- ✪ Let students write and dub their own radio (TV?) Public Service Announcements--play them on your morning recycling announcements and send them out to the local media. Teach students about the importance of the media in shaping people's behavior.
- ✪ Try a Recycle Market--let everyone set up booths and sell/barter recycled items. Let the Home-Ec department do a food booth with recycled snacks ("Leftover" Pizza, Homemade ice cream with "leftover" fruit flavoring, sourdough bread items, etc.); the art department can have a heyday with recycled art (see item above), craft booths can sell recycled jewelry, a clothing booth could feature recycled jeans or patchwork skirts--this list could go on and on, but let your classroom teachers and their students take off with this idea. Let the FFA sell compost-grown fruits and vegetables and invite your local hauler or recycling groups to set up booths as well.
- ✪ Hold a recycling awareness parade. Let students dress up as recycle characters. Include a band of instruments made from recycled materials. March through the halls at school, or go big-time and arrange with your community to make it a street parade. (Work with your local government's solid waste department to get all the permits--they may even want to make it a city or county-wide event and invite recycling floats from businesses.)
- ✪ Have each classroom in your school design and produce their own recycling game and hold a school fair where students win badges (recycle stickers?) for winning. Ideas include board



- games, trivia games, TV game-show type games (Concentration, Jeopardy, Wheel of Fortune, etc.), fair games (trash-dunk booth?).
- ✦ Find (or write) your own Top 40 Recycling Hits and hold a Recycled Sock Hop. Have everybody bring those leftover socks with no mates (clean, please), put them in a bin, and to get into the dance they have to pick a pair to wear. Serve recycled food treats (popsicles made from pureed fruit, punch made from leftover juices/soda, banana bread, etc.) Let students dress in recycled sock hop appropriate clothing, and give awards for the best outfits, best recycled dance steps, etc. Try karaoke for the best recycled music ever!

- ✦ Recycle all those election-year political buttons, or have students design their own button. Decopage a used button.
- ✦ Recycle previous years' Recycling Awareness Week activities. Go through the files of teacher or school-sponsored activities and find one that hasn't been done for awhile. These kids are all new! Better yet, let the student council help you plan activities!

### Activities for All Grades

- **Parade.** Organize a school or class recycling parade. Students might dress up as recyclable newspapers, cardboard, tin cans, aluminum and glass.
- **Reuse Day.** Have students wear clothing handed down from someone else and bring in materials which have been reused instead of being thrown away.
- **Field Trips.** Take your class to a local landfill, recycling center, energy recovery plant, glass manufacturing plant, paper mill, beverage bottling company, etc.
- **Science Fair Projects.** Adapt science activities from the Classroom Activity Packets and enter them in a Science Fair.
- **Logo/Slogan Contest.** Have students design their own logo or slogan about recycling.
- **Plays, Skits.** Have the class perform existing plays or write their own.
- **Recycling Relays.** Set up relays to practice preparing materials for recycling and solving recycling problems.
- **Musical Instruments.** Have students use materials from the trash to make musical instruments and use these for the parade or music activity.
- **Posters.** Have a recycling poster design contest. Solicit help from local recycling representatives, grocery stores and business. Offer a prize for the best poster and display posters in your community. Send the winners to DEQ's statewide contest.
- **Music.** Have students compose a song about garbage, landfills, recycling or reducing waste. Perform it for the school or parent-teacher organization.
- **Recycling Fair.** Hold a fair with booths explaining how to sort, prepare and store recyclables. Don't forget to include booths that promote changing buying habits and producing less waste. Arrange to use the booth at a community event.



# Kids carry a message of recycling

By RANDI BJORNSTAD, *The Register-Guard*  
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DRAIN - Instead of parents setting a good example for their children, the kids at North Douglas Elementary School may soon begin showing their elders a thing or two about recycling.

About 100 students at the school - children in kindergarten through third grade - have been working with Drain-based educator Janai Lowenstein on a plan to conserve resources when they accompany their parents to the local grocery store.

Using a small grant from the Starseed Foundation in Sandy, Lowenstein bought stacks of un-bleached cotton tote bags and dozens of boxes of fabric crayons.

The children spent several half-hour class periods with her decorating their bags, which they will encourage their parents to use to carry groceries home when they shop at the local Hometown Foods or the PC Market of Choice in Cottage Grove.

"The markets have agreed to give the children a nickel each time they come in with their bags," Lowenstein said. "These children can become the leaders of the community in terms of recycling. If we can help them develop a sense of pride and responsibility for their world at this early age, it will help to make them better adults and parents in the future."

Although the environmental project might seem a bit far afield of the activities Lowenstein usually brings to the Drain elementary classrooms - her copyrighted Self-Help Program teaches self-control, anger management and problem-solving skills - the recycling message actually has something in common with those other topics, she said.

"Children need to feel that they are an important part of their environment and their communities - they need to understand that we need them to help change things," she said.

"We used to be a more agrarian society in which children had lots of chores and responsibilities that they don't now. They might have grumbled about them, but at least they knew they were important. This project can give them that kind of satisfaction."

Just creating the colorful, personalized bags gave the children pride in their artistry as well as teaching them about the need to conserve the Earth's resources.

On Thursday afternoon, a group of first-graders bent over their bags, decorating them with rainbows, hearts, trees, flowers and even - in the case of Jordan Derrick - an artistically drawn cat.

"These are like grocery bags - but instead of using plastic bags, we will use these," Angel Salamon said as she worked. "The plastic ones rip, but we can use these for a long time."

Charlotte Gould, who, along with her husband, Marc, owns Hometown Foods, said the use of cloth bags really could have an impact on costs and resources.

Paper grocery bags cost six cents each and plastic about four cents, so it adds to the overall cost of food if bags don't get reused, Gould said.

"I hope lots of the kids come in with their bags," she said. "It could be one of those things they do once or twice and then forget about, but I hope not." Lowenstein hopes not.

"I try to show the children that they can make choices that help the Earth and make a difference in the world," she said. "At the same time, I hope this shows adults that they need to participate, too. I hope they will look at what these children are teaching them and say, 'If a child can do this, I can do this, too.'"