

Wouldn't it be great if each neighborhood had its own Master Recycler? Having someone who neighbors go to for advice on compost and worm bins, or a person who shares knowledge of global warming and waste prevention would be a positive addition to any neighborhood. In Portland, there are 95



Alameda Neighborhood Cleanup

neighborhood associations and over 400 Master Recyclers. In other parts of the region, there are over 200 Master Recyclers. There may be a Master Recycler in every neighborhood - we just need to make ourselves known as a resource.

In the past two years, over 4 million pounds of bulky waste, 616 tons of yard debris, 160 tons of scrap metal, 450 appliances, almost 3,000 tires, and 270 computer monitors were collected at Neighborhood Cleanups.

What better way to spend some of those payback hours than by reducing waste in your community? This spring and summer 45 Portland neighborhoods are organizing cleanup events where neighbors can bring unwanted items. Cleanups minimize illegal dumping and are connected to litter patrol in some neighborhoods. Last year, Master Recyclers staffed tables on recycling and waste prevention, helped with planning cleanups, and developed outreach materials so participants knew what could be recycled at the cleanups. Your neighbors are thinking about waste on this day - let's tap into that interest. Sign up to help your neighborhood cleanup.

No matter where in the region you live, you may want to do a presentation for your neighborhood or write an article for your neighborhood newsletter. I encourage you to contact me at 503-823-7530 or masterrecycler@ci.portland.or.us to put you in contact with a neighborhood organization near you.

Thank you,

J. Lauren Norris, Master Recycler Program Coordinator

Master Recycler Program Updates

Master Recycler Website

The Master Recycler website is about to be a better tool for you to find volunteer opportunities, report your hours, and contact and interact with your fellow Master Recyclers. It will include a calendar with links to specific volunteer opportunities and a blog so you can share a project idea, book, listserv or conference with fellow Master Recyclers. There will also be a page with pictures and descriptions of kits and literature to check out for your projects. As the overhaul is in initial planning stages, your input is welcome. What would make the website most useful to you?

Email your thoughts: masterrecycler@ci.portland.or.us

A Payback by any other Name would Smell as Sweet

What's in a payback? The Master Recycler Advisory Committee revisited this question last month and came up with a few changes. In addition to providing an educational or skill-building experience for you, the Master Recycler, in order for volunteer work to count as payback, it must implement a system or program that diverts materials from the waste stream or provide one-on-one educational contact. The Advisory Committee felt that it is important to recognize the diverse skill set that exists amongst Master Recyclers and allow for creativity and a wide range of outreach skills. While some may be great at presentations or staffing an informational booth, others might be better suited to plan an event or create informative signage for someone else to use in one-on-one contact. When the new Master Recycler website is implemented, watch for some changes in how you report and plan for your hours.

Congratulations and thanks to **Class 26** whose members have racked up 640 payback hours in two years, the most of any class. Sneaking up on Class 26 and vying for second place are Class 22 and Class 27 whose members have volunteered about 400 hours each. **Paul Barton** (Class 1) and **Pauline Freeman** (Class 26) have contributed the most individual hours: over 200 each! Thank you for going the extra mile to reduce waste in our community.

Why report your hours? Many of you would do the great work that you're doing if there was a payback system or not. However, payback reporting can really help support the future of the Master Recycler Program. It lets our funders know that the program is effective. It helps with program evaluation and planning. It inspires other Master Recyclers to participate. Even if you have completed your 30 payback hours, please keep reporting your hours. Thank you for all your great work out there! Let's tell people about it!

Welcome, Laura

A big welcome and thank you to Laura Matson at OSD who will be assisting with the Master Recycler Newsletter. Your skill in writing and formatting is greatly appreciated!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Earth Day

Many of the Earth Day volunteer opportunities announced in the March newsletter are still available. You can view information about the events and how to volunteer here: <http://www.masterrecycler.org/volunteer.html>.

Also, the University of Portland (5000 N Willamette) is looking for a speaker during the week of April 17. Contact Margie Young, 503-329-1382, mayoung@up.edu for more information.

Master Recycler Plastics Roundup

The two Westside Master Recycler Plastics Roundups are still looking for volunteers. Contact Pat Pullen-Jones at nmppj@comcast.net to sign up.

Lead a Workshop at SCRAP

SCRAP (School and Community Reuse Action Project) is looking for folks interested in sharing their skills by leading a workshop in SCRAP's workshop room. Workshops are typically held on Saturdays from 1-3pm, but other arrangements can be made. Past workshops include: book binding, lamp building, origami, paper making, and 3-D. The possibilities are wide, but reuse has to be the underlying theme. SCRAP is also looking for someone who can lead Mat Cutting workshops. There is a nice mat cutter on site, so all they need is your expertise. Stop by SCRAP (5901A N Williams) or email Joanna Dyer, joanna@scrapaction.org, for more information.

Revamp Internal Recycling at the ReBuilding Center

The ReBuilding Center, a project of Our United Villages, needs a volunteer to revamp and possibly redesign its internal recycling system. Throughout the warehouse and administrative offices there are several recycling stations, but they are not very visible and things frequently get placed in the wrong containers. They are looking for a volunteer to analyze the current system and improve visibility (to employees and visitors) and functionality. The project involves educating ReBuilding Center staff on what can and cannot be recycled (bi-lingual if possible). The volunteer(s) on this project will gain an understanding of how the ReBuilding Center operates and will make valuable and rewarding community connections. The ReBuilding Center is located at 5625 N Mississippi. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Bob Potter, Volunteer Coordinator, at 503-467-4985.

Latter-day Saints Church

April 18, 7pm

1025 SW Market St.

The LDS Church is seeking a speaker to give a presentation to a group of about 20 people on the topic of your choice around waste prevention or waste reduction.

Contact Suzi Fei 503-407-9882, email: feis@ohsu.edu

JOBS

Metro Recycling Information Center

Are you looking for an opportunity to help people and put your recycling knowledge to work? Metro Recycling Information is looking for fill-in help to answer calls to the hotline when their regular staff are out of the office. The ideal person would have good people skills, basic knowledge of recycling and the ability to use a computer. If you are interested, call Judie Miller at 503-797-1503.

Metro Solid Waste Facility Inspector

Under the supervision of the Regulatory Affairs Manager or a Program Supervisor, this position is responsible for inspecting and monitoring Metro-regulated solid waste facilities for compliance with the Metro Code, administrative procedures and Metro-issued authorizations; interpreting and disseminating information to facility operators regarding regulatory requirements and operational standards; and advising departmental staff on facility operations and emerging solid waste issues. The complete job announcement and application materials are available on Metro's website: <http://www.metro-region.org/jobs>

Metro Household Hazardous Waste Educator

Metro seeks a part-time Waste Educator to help reduce the toxicity of the region's waste by staffing Household Hazardous Waste Roundup events. The educator will talk to participants about choosing less toxic products, such as cleaners and garden products. Events are held from March 4th to November 11th on Fridays and Saturdays. Work hours are 7:30 am - 3:00 pm. Generally, each educator can work 15-20 days. Event schedule: <http://www.metro-region.org/article.cfm?ArticleID=760> Contact Lisa Heigh at 503-797-1611 or heighl@metro.dst.or.us for more information.

ReBuilding Center Salvaging Specialist

Directly contribute to The ReBuilding Center's efforts to divert construction and demolition waste to be reused and support the social and environmental health of our region. Assist donors by unloading materials and providing a tax-deductible receipt for donations. The ReBuilding Center staff is responsible for unloading, stocking, and selling materials. The work is hard; the environment is fast-paced, supportive, optimistic and fun! Apply in person at The ReBuilding Center no later than 6 pm, April 7, 2006: The ReBuilding Center, 3625 N. Mississippi Ave., Portland, OR 97227. No calls please. For more information, please see <http://www.rebuildingcenter.org> and/or visit The ReBuilding Center.

EVENTS

BEST Awards Breakfast

April 20, 2006

Registration is now available for the BEST (Businesses for an Environmentally Sustainable Tomorrow) Awards Breakfast. It is a great event, and very inspiring to see what the local business community is doing to champion sustainability into their workplaces. There are 42 applicants this year, with ten awards to be presented in eight categories: Energy Efficiency, Water Conservation, Stormwater Management, Waste Reduction/Pollution Prevention, Transportation Alternatives, Sustainable Food Systems Development, Sustainable Product Development and BEST Practices for Sustainability.

Information on speakers available at: <http://www.sustainableportland.org/default.asp?sec=stp&pg=BEST>

NEWS

"Out of the Retail Rat Race"

This article by Carolyn James was printed in the San Francisco Chronicle

While many people will spend countless hours this year lining up at Wal-Mart and maxing out their credit cards at Nordstrom, a small San Francisco Bay Area group has declared it will do just the opposite.

About 50 teachers, engineers, executives and other professionals have made a pledge to not buy anything new in 2006 - except food, health and safety items, and underwear.

"We're people for whom recycling is no longer enough," said one of the members of the fledgling movement, John Perry, who works in marketing at a high-tech company. "We're trying to get off the first-market consumerism grid, because consumer culture is destroying the world."

They call themselves the Compact. They have a blog, a Yahoo group, and monthly meetings to reaffirm their commitment to the rule, which is to never buy anything new. "I didn't buy a pair of shoes today," said Compacter Shawn Rosenmoss, an engineer and a San Francisco resident of the Bernal Heights neighborhood. "They were basically a \$300 pair of clodhoppers. But they were really nice and really comfortable, and I haven't bought new shoes for a while. But I didn't buy them. That's a big part of the Compact -- we show that we're not powerless over our purchasing."

Compacters can get as much as they want from thrift shops, Craigslist, freecycle.org, eBay and flea markets, as long as the items are secondhand. And when they're in doubt, they turn to their fellow Compacters for guidance.

"We had a little crisis when Matt and Sarah had to replace their shower curtain liner and we said no," said Perry, who lives in Bernal Heights. "But we put the word out and someone found one for them. It's like the Amish -- we help each other out. We raise a barn every week."

The Compact started two years ago when Perry and a group of his friends, who were tired of devoting so much of their time and money on items they don't need, vowed to go six months without buying anything new.

American consumerism, they say, has led to global environmental and socioeconomic crises, the only way to reverse it is to stop buying into it.

The Compact -- named after the revolutionary credo of the Mayflower pilgrims -- proved immensely popular and quickly increased its membership.

Then one couple remodeled their house and couldn't find used drywall. After that, "it all started to unravel," Perry said.

But after a breather, the group decided to recommit and try to expand its membership.

Kate Boyd, a drama teacher at Lick-Wilmerding High School in San Francisco, said she enjoys the extra time, money and perspective that a consumer-free life brings.

"It's just a relief to get away from the pressure to always have new clothes, gadgets and other things we don't need," she said. "And I find that I have more money to spend on the dried cherries for my Manhattans."

The Compact is part of the larger trend of consumers beginning to "tread gently on our planet," said Peter Sealey, adjunct professor of marketing at the Haas School of Business at UC Berkeley.

"It sounds marvelous. It's a wonderful example for all of us," said Sealey, a former chief of marketing at Coca-Cola and Columbia Pictures. "It's a crystal-clear statement about what can be done to get us away from being a disposable society."

The boom in green building, Oakland's recent crackdown on fast-food litter and the surge in biofuel-powered cars are all part of the movement toward more responsible consumerism, he said.

Northern California is often at the forefront of environmental and social trends, and the Compact is likely to garner a devoted following, he said.

"Will the Compact ever become mainstream? I don't think so, but it's an excellent way to bring attention to the reality that we need to be more gentle with our resources."

One especially appealing aspect of the Compact is its social component, members say. Fellow Compacters offer advice, moral support, help locating needed items and partners for thrift-store runs.

One couple, Matt Eddy and Sarah Pelmas, met through the Compact and got married six months ago.

But the main advantage of being in a group is "you can brag to someone," said Boyd.

Perry agreed.

"After a while you get this bravado. You want to brag more and more," he said. "I found a Razor scooter for \$15 at Thrift Town. That was great, but it doesn't top the free sewing machine I got on Craigslist. The stakes just keep getting higher."

Perry, who said he loves to shop, went into withdrawal the first few weeks of entering the Compact. For many people, shopping is a recreational and social activity that almost transcends consumerism. Boyd described it as an urge to "line the nest."

"But after a few weeks the buzzing in your head subsides," Perry said. "Although if I continue to shop crazily at thrift stores, is that any better?"

He thought about it for a moment.

"I think it is."

Bridging the gap between awareness and action by motivating people to reduce waste in their homes and workplaces.



MASTER RECYCLER PROGRAM

