

## REDUCE, REUSE, and RECYCLE

Every month Campus Connect contains a suggestion how you can REDUCE, REUSE, or RECYCLE. The articles listed to date appear below.

**December, 2010:** Now that you have received a Christmas gift that either you can't use or a gift that replaces something you have had for years, what do you do with the unwanted item? This month we will focus on REUSE. If you have an item that is still usable, you can donate the item to the Treasure Chest at Menno Haven (preferable) or Goodwill or the Salvation Army in Chambersburg. Items that can be donated include such things as clothes (the Treasure Chest accepts clothes that can be sold in the upcoming season), furniture, small appliances, books, and anything that still has life left in it. The Treasure Chest does not accept large appliances, air conditioners, microwaves, toaster ovens, dehumidifiers, humidifiers, vaporizers, foot massagers, computers, computer monitors, printers, typewriters, infant and children car seats, cribs, mattresses, pillows, comforters, barbells, bowling balls, bulky exercise equipment, carpet padding, personal hygiene items, liquids, paints, foods, toys made in China, bulky and difficult-to-manage items, outdated items, and items that have no demand. On the other side of the REUSE picture is to purchase items from the Treasure Chest rather than to buy new. Every item purchased new requires resources and energy to produce, but buying a used item does not require any more resources to produce it.

**January 2011:** This month's item concerns recycling plastics. This is already a part of the weekly Menno Haven recycle program on the Menno Village, Northfield, and Northgate campuses, and included in the Green Team monthly collection for the Penn Hall campus. However, from resident's comments, this needs some clarification. Every plastic has a number, from 1 through 7, inside a triangle (which can be very small!); each number represents a different type of plastic. Some types can be recycled and some can't. The picture below shows what the symbols look like. Some areas of the country have facilities that can recycle all kinds, but in Franklin County only 1's and 2's are recycled. Certain types of plastic containers are all number 1's or 2's so you don't even need to look at the bottom. These are milk, juice, and water containers. For other container types, such as fruit and vegetable containers, some are 1's and some are 5's, so you need to check.



Any plastic that is not recycled ends up in the landfill. Plastics do not decompose easily, so they will be around for hundreds to thousands of years. Therefore, do your part to keep plastics out of the landfill and recycle all the plastics you can.

Additional information on recyclable plastics is on the Green Team web site. (Menno Haven web sits; Residents' Area; click on "plastics.")

**February 2011:** This month we will consider shopping bags: paper or plastic. Because a paper bag holds about twice what a plastic bag holds, let's compare one paper bag to two plastic bags. The options are: 1) use once and throw away; 2) use once and RECYCLE; 3) use several times (REUSE) and then recycle; and 4) use a cloth bag (REDUCE) that lasts a long time. Option 1) is the most wasteful and uses 1190 BTU\* of energy for plastic and 2500 BTU for paper. Option 2) is better for conserving resources, but uses 1220 BTU for plastic and 3950 BTU for paper. Option 3) divides the energy by the number of uses; if a bag is used 20 times before needing replacement, then the energy uses are one-twentieth of the above values: 60 and 125 BTU for plastic and paper, respectively. Option 4) is the optimum even though it may take more energy to produce a reusable bag because these bags are usable for hundreds to thousands of uses. In summary, plastic is better for options 1) and 2). However, when considering that plastic will last forever in a landfill, maybe paper is better. For option 3), because a paper bag will last longer than a plastic bag, paper is better. However, option 4) is by far the best option. Therefore, to do your part, use a reusable bag. One store, Target, actually gives you 5 cents if you bring your own bag (any bag).

\*One BTU (British Thermal Unit) is about the heat energy released by burning one wooden match. One kilowatt-hour is 3413 BTU.

**March, 2011:** This is a collection of small suggestions on how to REDUCE. First, a piece of paper has two sides; use both of them. If printing something, especially for mass distribution, use both sides. When you get a nice clean piece of paper with printing on only one side, don't throw it away. Keep it in a scratch paper pile to use the clean side for notes or printing another items, thus saving a clean piece of paper. Second, if you have a computer, pay bills on line whenever possible. This saves not only paper, but postage and the energy needed to transport the mail. Third, remove your name from mailing lists. To opt out of receiving credit card offers (except from any banks you deal with), either go to the web site <https://www.optoutprescreen.com> or call 1-888-567-8688. For this you will need to provide your name, address, date of birth, and social security number. To remove your name from national junk mailing lists, use <https://www.dmachoice.org>.

**April, 2011:** This is an alternate way to recycle some paper that benefits a good cause. The Ronald McDonald House in Hershey raises funds by collecting "Anything that is glossy - magazines, catalogs, and annual reports, just as long as the pages are slick and glossy." Unfortunately, the nearest collection location is the McDonalds in Carlisle at the I-81 Walnut Bottom Road exit (Exit 45). The paper goes into a large green dumpster in the rear of the parking lot. If you make regular trips to Carlisle or the Harrisburg area, you can recycle glossy material and contribute to a worthy cause. At this time the Green Team has no plans to offer any service to transport this paper, but someone who does travel that way regularly may be able to collect paper from neighbors and recycle it at McDonalds.

**May 2011:** This month we will consider bottled water and why you should REDUCE your consumption. Americans consume about 8 billion gallons of bottled water per year: about 30 gallons per person. However, this comes with a cost, both in money and to the environment. The production of 30 gallons of bottled water uses between 150 and 200 gallons of water and between 1 and 1.5 gallons of oil (for the plastic bottle, processing, and transportation). If you purchase the water in 16 oz. bottles, 30 gallons would cost \$250 if purchased individually (at \$1.00 per bottle) or \$45 if purchased in bulk.

What are your other options?

1. Use tap water. Some people think that bottled water is safer than tap water. However, the EPA does not regulate bottled water as they do municipal water supplies. For example, whereas municipal water companies must filter to remove pathogens and test for giardia viruses, bottled water companies do not. When bottled water companies do test their water for synthetic organic chemicals and asbestos, they are not required to use a certified laboratory to do the testing. In addition, between 25 and 40 percent of bottled water is just tap water; the industry does not have to specify the actual source of the water.
2. If you don't like the taste of your tap water, use a water filter, either on the faucet or in a pitcher. The cost of filtered water is between 10 and 15 cents per gallon. When taking water for exercise, shopping, or other activity, fill a reusable container with either tap water or filtered water.

**June 2011:** The REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE item for the month is a collection of tips for saving gasoline. There are three general ways to save gasoline: purchase a fuel-efficient car, reduce the miles you drive, or drive in a manner that maximizes fuel economy. Here are some specific examples:

1. If you have several items to purchase, don't take one trip per item; consolidate your shopping into one trip and use a route with minimum distance.
2. If you are attending a Menno Haven event, either carpool with a neighbor or take Menno Haven transportation. A trip to the Luhrs Center uses about a gallon of gasoline (plus wear and tear on your car).
3. Avoid sudden starts and stops. Rapid acceleration uses extra gas; braking means that you are wasting gas that you used to attain a high speed. Don't approach a red traffic signal and brake just as you get to the light; remove your foot from the gas pedal when you see the light is red and coast to the light. Careful driving can increase your fuel economy 5 to 30%.
4. Remove excess weight from your car. For every excess 100 pounds removed, you will increase your fuel economy by 1 to 2%.
5. Keep tires inflated to the recommended pressure. For a 3 psi loss of pressure, your fuel economy decreases by 1%.

**July 2011:** The REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE for the month is information on electronics recycling. First, if you purchase an electronic item as a replacement for an old unit, ask the store if they will recycle your old one. Be sure to also ask if they have a program to pay for a recycled item. Radio Shack (Chambersburg Mall) has a Trade-in Policy that gives you credit for your working electronic item when you

purchase a new item at Radio Shack. If you are just trying to get rid on an old electronic item, several stores will accept old items. The Computer Barn (1613 Orchard Drive) recycles electronic items free except for CRT monitors (\$5 charge) and TVs (\$10 to \$20 charge). Keck (4097 Lincoln Way West) also recycles electronics. Radio Shack will recycle any non-trade-in item at no cost. Staples (963 Norland Ave.) recycles cell phones and Dell computers at no charge; other electronic items cost \$10. Staples gives \$2 in Staple Rewards for any ink toner cartridge. Staples claims they recycle to EPA standards; the other stores do not state a policy.