



# Talking Trash

A Teacher's Newsletter from the Ecology Action Center

Spring 2010

## In this issue:

### Recycle "Bozo" Buckets

### DYI: Your Own Recycle Notebook

### Compete for the Earth

### Make A Board Game!

### Reuse: Empty Plastic Bottles

### And more...

## Recycle "Bozo" Buckets

Games for kids are by far one of the most fun things to do as well as an excellent way to incorporate informative facts about important topics like recycling. This game will allow kids to have fun while "practicing" recycling. They will see how easy it is, and realize how much they can truly help. Besides being fun it gives them the needed information and skills to share the message with their family and friends.

### Materials Needed:

- 3 blue recycle bins
- 3 plastic bottles

Place three blue recycle buckets at about five feet, seven feet, and nine feet (this may be closer if you have younger students) then make a line out of tape or a stick if you are outside. Give the student in front the three plastic bottles. She/he throws the bottles and tries to get them in the containers. The farthest container is worth three recycling points, middle container two recycling points, and closest container one recycling point. Have one student be score keeper, have another student pick up the bottles to be given to the next person in line.

### Variation: Butterfly

Each student must take a plastic bottle, only one blue bin is needed. Students start around three feet from the blue bin. Once a student makes the shot they take one full step back, this continues until the student with the longest distance from the recycling bin (who still gets the bottles in) wins. Students who do not make it can sacrifice points to try again. Each step back is worth one recycling point.

A suggested prize for the winner—they get to take the recycle bin from your classroom to the recycle area at your school.

*Question to ask:* Why is it a good idea to recycle plastic?

*Answer:*

22 billion plastic bottles are thrown away each year in the United States. Once in the landfill they can not be retrieved. Recycled plastic is made into hard plastic computers, phones, car parts at a lesser cost than virgin plastic. Less pollution, water and waste comes from recycling plastic than extracting more petroleum for making new plastic.



### Ecology Action Center

202 W. College Avenue

Normal Illinois 61761

Phone: (309) 454-3169

Fax: (309) 454-7508

[www.ecologyactioncenter.org](http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org)

9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Monday—Friday



# Programs by the EAC

## EAC Staff

Michael Brown  
Executive Director

Kris Hall  
Assistant Director

Michele Bell  
Environmental Educator

## EAC Board of Directors 2009-2010

Nancy Armstrong  
President

Kari Sandhaas  
Vice President

Carol Schmidt  
Treasurer

Charles Bristow  
Secretary

Mike Hall  
Ex-officio  
Normal

George Kutz  
Ex-officio  
Bloomington

George Gordon  
Ex-officio  
McLean County

Charlotte Brown  
Myra Gordon  
Missy Smock  
Enid Cardinal  
Carl Teichman  
Julie Elzanati  
Bonnie Bernardi  
Laurine Brown  
Deb Dirks  
Shari Bowman  
Amy Endicott

## DYI: Your Own Recycled Notebook!

Notebooks are needed for their use in the classroom, but are also for kids to express their thoughts, do their school work, and even draw a doodle or two. This project reuses kids' favorite cereal boxes and turns them into notebooks. The reuse of the cereal box is great because the entire notebook can be recycled! You get the best of both worlds by reusing something, and recycling it after its use is up!

With the price of notebooks rising a completely reused/recycled notebook can save money, especially with a full class load. This not only saves materials from being used, such as the plastic covers on some notebooks or the glues to bind the pages together, but it also saves money. Money saving, environment saving, what more could one ask for?

### Supplies Needed

- Cereal box cut to the size of the recycled paper (8 1/2 X 11)
- Five (or more) sheets recycled paper from school bins clear side up
- Hemp, string, or a strong yarn
- 3 hole punch
- ruler
- scissors
- markers
- Environmental DVD

Time: 15 minutes to make the booklets  
Grades: 3<sup>rd</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>

This booklet may be used to write facts about reducing waste, reusing items, and recycling materials, or just for a general purpose notebook.  
Ideas for Once it is Made:

Page 1: Take this time to explain to the kids what the booklet is made from and why reusing something is so important. Example questions: Why is it good to buy recycled paper? What natural resource provided the material?

Page 2: Help students see how they have helped save part of the planet. From enjoying tree climbing to how beautiful leaves get in the fall, kids will appreciate knowing they have done something important for our world. Students may draw a picture of a forest with trees that would be saved from reusing the back side of recycled paper.

Page 3: Show WALL-E or another film that shows waste on our planet. With WALL-E pause the scene of the earth with garbage over the entire Earth and ask the children to write 3 ideas of how this could have been avoided.

Older students describe what systems are currently in place to help avoid the mess that happened in WALL-E. Will those systems work for ever?

Page 4: Allow kids to draw pictures of other recyclable materials that they know of, and go over unique items. Older students figure out how much waste is made in a year from all the students in their class. Everyday in McLean County 8.5 lbs of garbage per person per day is created. The equation for the amount thrown away by your class:  $(8.5 \times n \times 365 = \text{years amount of garbage})$ . How much of the garbage of each person could have been recycled?

Page 5: Younger students figure out another way you could reuse a butter tub. When you have the answer draw a picture with its use. (Jewelry cup, coin cup, Barbie's accessories, marble cup, etc.)





# Programs by the EAC

**Encourage  
your class to  
recycle!**

**The more  
everybody  
recycles the  
more McLean  
County Wins!**



## Compete for the Earth

First and foremost, kids love competition. Why not turn this competitive spirit into a productive effort to protect our environment. Class and school wide recycling competitions will not only increase and promote recycling it will also make it fun for kids, thus promoting their participation of recycling and reuse in the future.

### In Class Competition:

Raise recycling awareness and encourage good habit through an in class recycling competition! Place a recycling bin in the room, with a chart monitoring each student's individual recycling progress

Each student will notify the teacher when they have recycled an item, each item (depending on what it is) will be given a value of points. Checks, stars, tallies or any other mark can be used to show progress for the students.

The overall winner of the recycling competition can be given something to promote recycling awareness, whether it be a button with a recycling sign on it, or a simple treat. This in class style competition will motivate kids to recycle. Include some interesting facts about recycling, or have students come up with a new recycling fact as a group each week.

### Grade Wide Competition

The grade/school wide recycling competition would be a great way to endorse recycling. Hang large recycling logos and posters around the competing grades with reminders of the competition.

Weekly or monthly status reports from classes can be taken and grades can be aware of where they stand. Classes with less will be motivated to recycle, and classes in the lead will be motivated to keep that lead, thus creating a large amount of recycling.

At the end of each month, losing classes can all create a poster to hang in the hall to both promote recycling and introduce a shocking fact to the students about pollution. This will keep competition up, and spread awareness and education at the same time.

The Ecology Action Center has wonderful full color posters for your classrooms. Please feel free to come to our center during our regular hours of 9-5, M-F, to take the posters; these are free to all who are able to use them in your classrooms.



Illinois State University Senior, Sharon Parker from Bloomington, IL stated,

*"I'm very excited to come into the Ecology Action Center and pick up wonderful color posters to use in my elementary classroom. I especially like the Illinois trees, moths, frogs that are great visuals for my science classes."*

# Engaging Students in...

**Games With  
a Lesson!**

**Teaching the  
Importance  
of Recycling!**



## Make A Board Game!

Board games have forever been a favorite thing among family and friends. A free, recycled board game can be even better, making it yourself, with your own rules all while helping the environment.

Kids create the game (instructions below) with a recycling theme in mind. Incorporated are interesting facts about recycling. This helps kids grasp the idea of how imperative recycling is and also provides an introduction to shocking facts about how much solid waste Americans produce. The mix of good and bad facts about recycling will help kids by introducing recycling awareness and further recycling habits.

### *Making The Game:*

The primary thing each student needs is a box, any type of box will do! Then it is time to cut, construct, and decorate the box with the desired amount of spaces. Next recycle old pieces of miscellaneous things to decorate the playing board. Make sure to mark at least a few spots on the board game with "draw a card."



To construct the playing cards, for the 'draw a card' spots, use recycled paper from classroom activities or extra cardboard from the boxes. Cards do not have to be the same size, shape, or color. Around 7-10 should be made, making sure to have "good" and "bad" recycling facts. Once the board is constructed and decorated pick what to use for playing pieces. Old washers, buttons, rocks, pop bottle caps, or old puzzle pieces are great ways to reuse items into playing pieces.

### Extras:

The guidelines for the game are loose, as it is completely up to the student to design the game and rules. Facts can be provided to help students with their playing cards, but the designing of the game is completely up to them. Suggestions for good facts and bad facts:

Good fact: "You turned off your bedroom light and saved energy, move forward 1 space!"

Bad fact: "You forgot to recycle your water bottle, move backward 1 space! \*Nearly 8 out of 10 water bottles will end up in a landfill."

*For recycling facts use the following links:*

<http://www.recycling-revolution.com/recycling-facts.html>

<http://recyclingfacts.org/>

<http://www.environment-green.com/>

<http://www.illinoisrecycles.org/facts.html>

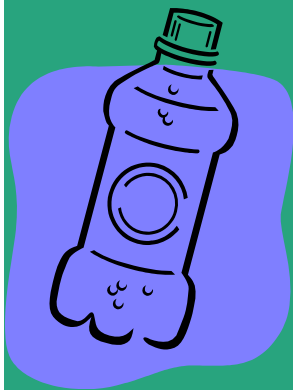
<http://www.oberlin.edu/recycle/facts.html>

<http://www.chevroncars.com/learn/wondrous-world/recycling-facts>

# ...Creative Green Projects



**Time To Get Crafty!**



## Reuse: Empty Plastic Bottles

Recycling is great, reuse is even better. Without the need to recycle a product, less time, energy and all that non-eco-friendly stuff can be put aside! The idea behind these craft projects is that all of them reuse plastic bottles.

*Freezer packs:* Applies to smaller bottles, fill with  $\frac{3}{4}$  (allow for expansion) water and use to keep food cold whether it be in lunches, or picnics.

*Start growing a native plant or flower:* Use 2 liter bottles. Cut off bottom, fill with soil, plant a seed. Reattach top portion with tape when the plant becomes too big for the bottle.

*Art Stencil:* Applies to all bottles, dip bottom of bottle in paint, and press on surface (like a stamp) can be paper, shirts, posters, etc. Various other parts of the bottle such as surfaces and caps can be used as well, clean off once done and recycle or use bottle for another project.

*Bottle Toss:* Uses multiple bottles and sizes. Requires one large 2 liter (or more depending how you want to set up the game.) Fill two liter with water, have kids fill their smaller bottles with water, but half full, set up the large two liter and have kids (from same distance) toss their small bottles to see who makes it closest to the larger bottle. Recycle or reuse bottles when done.

*Flower Vase:* Cut off the top of the plastic bottle leaving a somewhat narrow top and decorate. Once decorated, painted and stickered up. Fill with water and place a native flower in there and get it ready for a Yard Smart garden.

*Funnel Fun:* Cut off the top section to make a funnel. Reuse the remainder for other projects.

*Nickle & Dime Ya:* Keep that change kids it adds up! Decorate as desired, fill with change and watch it add up.

*Garden Pourer:* Easy as removing the cap, punching or drilling various holes. Reapply cap, and fill with water, squeeze over native yard smart plants and enjoy.

*Mega Phone:* Cut off bottle cap portion, cover sharp edges with both recycled/reused cloth and tape, cut off the bottom of the bottle, and let kids be heard from all over the playground. Finding friends was never easier. Keep left over "scrap" pieces to use as funnel (top portion) and bottom can be decorated as a candy dish, or coin dish for a table.

*Shaker Toy:* For those that love music is great. Start your own band! Use small (as small as can be found) bottle, fill with small rocks or any other items, decorate colorfully.

*Come up with your own fun crafts for reusing plastic bottles!*



April, 2010

Greetings, Teachers!

Please allow me to introduce myself... I am Kris Hall, and have been working at the Ecology Action Center since January.

Many of you may recognize my name in a different context. For over 22 years, I was the Education Coordinator at Miller Park Zoo. Due to a City of Bloomington budget crisis last spring, my position was eliminated. It was abrupt and unexpected, but I have found a wonderful new venue for my passion – talking to children (and grownups!) about saving the earth. After all, those animals I spent so many years teaching about cannot survive if their habitats are destroyed.

Given my long history with educational programming in a variety of settings, I have begun asking a lot of questions about how the Ecology Action Center programs work. Currently, we focus our school programs on Clean Water for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and Solid Waste Reduction (Recycling) for 4<sup>th</sup> grade. We have two major sources of funding which enable us to present these topics free of charge and in your schools, which is a huge benefit to you in these challenging economic times for school districts!

I know that your days are getting busier and busier. You are expected to squeeze so much material into your lesson plans. I feel the Ecology Action Center offers quality programs on important topics, but I want to be sure we are reaching the students at the best time. Curriculum varies by school district, and it would be so helpful for me to hear from you about what grade levels are covering these topics. Third grade teachers: is the water cycle part of your curriculum so that I could come and present our program as a component of what you are already doing? Fourth grade teachers: what about recycling education? Everybody else: are you covering these topics too? What about energy? Environmental issues? There are so many things we could cover, and I need to know how I can be most helpful to you. We probably wouldn't be able to provide all of these topics for free (we are a VERY small non-profit, after all!) but I think we could keep things affordable.

The prospect of working with you all again in a different role is quite exciting. I look forward to hearing from you soon! Please contact me at [www.ecologyactioncenter.org/about/contact.shtml](http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org/about/contact.shtml) with ideas, concerns, suggestions, or just to say hi!

Warmly,

**Kris Hall**

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

**June 12: Freecycle Free-4-All.** Call 309-454-3169 for more information.

**June 26: Yard Smart Garden Walk.** Call 309-454-3169 for more information or to sign up.

Check our website calendar for more upcoming events or sign up for our free email newsletter to stay in the loop! Go to:

[www.ecologyactioncenter.org](http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org)



[www.facebook.com/ecologyactioncenter](http://www.facebook.com/ecologyactioncenter)



[www.twitter.com/ecoactioncenter](http://www.twitter.com/ecoactioncenter)

