



# Talkin' Trash

Fall 2008

A Teacher's Newsletter from the Ecology Action Center  
*Please feel free to use any materials or activities in your classroom!*

## In this issue:

*Green  
Fund-Raising*

*Banana Peel  
Experiment:  
Compost pile vs.  
Landfill*

*Recycling Hide  
and Seek*

*Recycling  
Activities*

*Upcoming Events:  
America Recycles  
Day*

*Reusable Canvas  
bags and Chico-  
bags make great  
holiday gifts*

*Recycled Craft  
Activity*

*Grant  
Opportunities*

**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)

9-5 p.m. Mon.-Fri.

## Green Fundraising: Raising Money and Being Environmentally

Not only is there a high demand for fund-raising money in our schools today, but educating our children on the ways of being environmentally friendly is just as important. Organizations are now aiming to fix both these problems.

Organizations like Green Raising are now selling a tons of school products, all made from recycled materials! Notebooks, note cards, rulers, and many other valuable items are now being sold at [www.greenraising.com](http://www.greenraising.com). When an organization signs up with Green Raising, they receive 25% of the sales from the people who named your organization as the beneficiary purchase anything. This way children can learn more about recycling and the environment while you raise the much-needed funds necessary to continue their education and important school programs.

Also, at [www.cartridgesforkids.com](http://www.cartridgesforkids.com), organizations can recycle their old electronics and other old equipment to get cash back for school funding! Used cell phones, digital cameras, movies, and video-games can all be recycled to help give our schools more money!

It's a great way to fundraise and help the environment. Children will have the opportunity to learn a great deal about being economically friendly. Check out these groups today!



## Let's Learn About Composting - an experiment to try

Composting is fun and easy. Nature recycles leaves and plants and we can recycle our food scraps to form rich healthy soil. To demonstrate how nature will decompose organic material whereas these same materials placed in a regulated landfill will sit and rot, begin by digging two (2) small holes in the ground about 4" - 6" deep about 18" apart .



Place a banana peel\* directly in the ground and cover with soil. Place another banana peel in a freezer ziplock® bag and bury it in the second hole. Mark both holes. Allow the peels to sit 4-6 weeks and then dig up both holes. The lone peel will have partially (if not entirely) decomposed and the plastic bag will hold the rotting remains. This demonstrates how our garbage sits in the landfill.



\*or any peelings or scraps from fresh produce



# More Recycling Fun

Freecycle is a website where people give away their used possessions for free instead of putting them out at the curb. This site is truly about someone's trash, is someone else's treasure. Freecycle was

started in 2003 in Tucson, Arizona to help reduce the waste in Tucson's downtown as well as to help save the desert landscape from becoming mountains of landfills.

The Freecycle Network™ is made up of 4,622 groups with 6,065,000 members across the globe. It's a grassroots and entirely nonprofit movement of people who are giving (& getting) stuff for free in their own towns. It's all about reuse and keeping good stuff out of landfills. Each local group is moderated by a local volunteer. Membership is free. To join the nearly 3000 members of the McLean County group, visit our website and click on Freecycle in the left-hand column or just go to:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/McFreecycle/>

Teachers: this is an excellent way to get good stuff for your classrooms such as craft supplies, treasure box items, holiday decorations, and more. At the Ecology Action Center we understand how stretched budgets can be these days and encourage you to participate in saving good, valuable stuff from being landfilled while reducing your personal financial demands for classroom materials. For a good example of reuse see the craft idea on page 5 of this newsletter.



**Here** is a great active demonstration to illustrate the volume of waste coming from the classroom and to encourage 'waste-free' lunches.

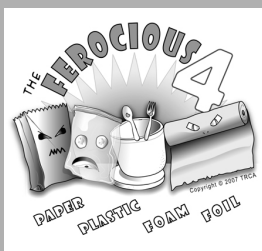
On a specified day, ask students to bring ALL of the waste from lunch back to the classroom (provide a large Rubbermaid® container for them to place their food scraps in). Spread the waste on a large open plastic garbage bag. Have them draw a picture of the 'mountain' of waste.

Next, have the students sort out the recyclables. Milk cartons and juice boxes can be rinsed and recycled. Disposable plastic containers from such items as Lunchables can now be recycled in many places (check where you send your recyclables). Dirty napkins can be added to a compost pile.

**Landfill from the Lunchroom**

Note the volume reduction; better yet, quantify it by weight or volume and turn this into a math exercise. What percentage of waste can be recycled or composted instead of being sent to the landfill? We all can take part in reducing these "landfills from the lunchroom."

For more information on vermicomposting, contact DeAnna Belz at the Ecology Action Center. We can help you get started.





## Active Recycling Game for InClass Activity, Gym Classes or Recess Activities

### Recycle Container Buckets

A good activity for  
Grades K-5

Materials needed:

- 3 blue recycle bins
- 3 plastic water or pop bottles

Ask your students: Are you able to throw a recyclable plastic bottle or aluminum can into the container buckets? Place 3 blue recycle buckets at about 5 feet, 7 feet, and 9 feet. This may be closer if you have younger students, make a line out of tape or a stick if you are outside. Give the student in front 3 of the plastic bottles. She/He throws the bottles and try's to get them in the containers. The farthest container is worth 3 recycling points, middle container 2 recycling points, and closest container 1 recycling point. Have one student be score keeper, have another student pick up the bottles to be given to the next person in line.

Once you get a winner they may be able to take the recycle bin from your classroom to the recycle area at your school.

Ask the students why they believe it is a good idea to recycle plastic?

Explanation:

1. Natural resource for making plastic is petroleum.
2. Over 2,000 bottles are thrown in the landfill daily. Once in the landfill they can not be retrieved.
3. Recycled plastic is made into hard plastic computers, phones, car parts at a lesser cost than virgin plastic.
4. Less pollution, water and waste comes from recycling plastic.

A better IDEA is to use a plastic or steel drink container that you clean out and refill. The bottled water comes from a municipal water source like our water. The difference is the cost of plastic bottle, the cost of packaging, shipping and delivery to a local store. Therefore there is more of a cost to the environment when you repeated buy bottled water than if you cleaned your own water bottle, filled it from the tap and took it with you.





Aluminum  
Soda  
Trees  
Tubs

Bottles  
Oil  
Paper  
Plastics

Recycle  
Sand  
Containers  
Bimetal

Cans  
Boxes  
Plastics  
Juice

## America Recycles Day Celebration



November 15 is **National America Recycles Day**. This year, the Ecology Action Center in conjunction with the Children's Discovery Museum will again host a day of celebration as we strive to inspire people to make recycling an important part of their daily routines. We will recognize the winners of our annual calendar art contest during a special lunchtime presentation at museum and have copies of the calendar available for distribution. Special games, activities and crafts (always fun to learn a new way to reuse items you can easily pick up) are planned from 10 am – 2 pm. Lunch will be included in the price of admission.

America Recycles day is also a good time to evaluate your own household's garbage output. Hopefully you and your family recycle, but is there more that you could be diverting from the landfill? Have you been thinking about trying composting but just haven't got up the courage? Are you filling up your recycling bin but looking to do a little more? Looking to find a home for some items you no longer need? From getting started with composting (or even vermicomposting!) to *Freecycle* to hard-to-recycle items, we may be able to help you out. Give us a call or consult our website for ideas and information.

Remember, "*Local action makes a world of difference!*"

Hope to see you at America Recycle's Day!



## EAC shopping bags

The Ecology Action Center sells reusable bags designed to provide ease and convenience for all your shopping needs. You can choose from our popular heavy-duty recycled cotton canvas bag or the newer ChicoBag. The ChicoBag comes in its own stuff sack with attached carabineer so that



you can attach it to a backpack or purse and never be without a reusable bag. You could feasibly never need to accept another plastic or paper bag ever again!

Both carry our same message of "**Paper or Plastic? Neither, I choose to reuse**" along with the EAC logo and contact information.

Recycled Cotton Canvas Bags sell for \$6.00 each (with tax) and ChicoBags sell for \$5.00 each (with tax).



## Recycled Fabric Angels

This is an easy project for most grade levels that uses donated left-over craft supplies

### Materials needed:

*6"x8" rectangle of scrap fabric (we used old sheets)*

*Small 1/2" ball (marble or other bead)*

*Small rubber bands (found in hair dept.)*

*Additional scraps of yarn, other hair material, fabric, trim, ribbons, beads, etc.*

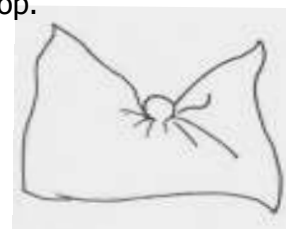
*Glue*

### Directions:

1) Begin by laying the fabric out landscape format and placing the bead in the center



2) Wrap the fabric so that it just covers the bead and secure with the rubber band near the top.



3) Pinch the fabric from the upper left-hand corner to meet the head and twist tightly so that you can tie a knot to form the arm. Repeat with the right side.



4) Embellish as desired.



Use paperclips or string to hang from your tree. Tie on packages, or place pin backs and attach to your coat or sweater. lots of creative uses and please be sure to share your unique and original ideas with us.

## GRANTS

### IL DCEO Illinois Recycling Grants Program

Traditional Recyclables (Fiber, Plastic, Metal, Glass) OR Computer and Electronics Recycling

Application Deadline: December 22, 2008

See [http://www.illinoisbiz.biz/dceo/Bureaus/Energy\\_Recycling/Recycling](http://www.illinoisbiz.biz/dceo/Bureaus/Energy_Recycling/Recycling) for full details

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY Office of Environmental Education Environmental Education Grants for 2009

Application deadline: December 18, 2008

See <http://epa.gov/enviroed/pdf/solNotice2009.htm> for full details