

Recycle Ann Arbor 2008 Earth Day Essay Contest – Grand Prize Winner

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Recycling – A Good Way To Go!

How can recycling help us stop global warming? Global warming, the increase of the Earth's temperature is a very serious issue that is causing damage every day to our planet and it's inhabitants. Scientists have concluded that global warming is caused by the greenhouse effect, which means that gases trapped in the atmosphere, produced by both humans and natural activities, cause the Earth to warm up.

When people burn fossil fuels, do not recycle, cut down to many trees or fill up landfills this leads to more greenhouse gases, which create global warming. The consequences are fatal and catastrophic. Global warming melts glaciers, kills plants and animals, destroys the ozone layer, which can cause skin cancer, and creates more severe weather including storms and droughts. Everyone can help stop global warming by reducing greenhouse gases, and recycling is a great way to do this.

Recycling helps reduce global warming because it takes less energy to make products from recycled material so less fossil fuel is burned. Recycling is a good way to go. If you recycle just one aluminum can you would save enough energy to watch television for three hours, and if you recycle a six pack of aluminum cans you would save enough to drive a car for five miles! Also, did you know that recycling a glass bottle saves enough to light a 100-watt bulb for four hours! By recycling half of your household waste, you can save 2,400 pounds of carbon dioxide annually.

When you talk about recycling most people think about recycling bottles, aluminum cans, cartons and papers, however, there are other ways to recycle. Example, you can recycle food waste like banana and potato peels, strawberry leaves, egg shells, and other food that you do not eat by putting it in a compost pile, instead of throwing it into a landfill which produces methane gas causing global warming. Compost piles are easy to do and a great way to minimize the amount of trash in landfills while creating fertile soil for your garden. You can also do simple things like mulching your grass instead of bagging it and putting it in a landfill. Mulching helps fertilize the grass and while reducing waste.

By recycling things like paper we prevent the cutting down of more trees. As a result these trees can help stop global warming by a process called "carbon sequestration" in which trees store carbon dioxide in wood. This reduces the carbon dioxide in the air, which in turn reduces greenhouse gases and global warming. Recycling also reduces the amount of waste that goes to incinerators, which burn fossil fuels that produce greenhouse gases.

It is easy to recycle and help reduce global warming. Nevertheless, some people need to become more informed about recycling and its advantages before they participate. An idea for this is that people could achieve the “blue and green heart” certification. Everyone will be more enthusiastic knowing that his/her actions are helping to keep the environment cool and clean. If you want to help more, how about starting a book campaign where people donate two books and in exchange get one book for free. This would reduce the number of books going into landfills, and help to prevent the deforestation creating a cool and clean public conscience.

People also can support businesses that recycle by shopping more at them. Furthermore, at work it is possible to create a competition between departments to see which can recycle the most and the winner can be recognized with the “blue and green heart” certification plus get a party.

Although recycling is easy many people do not know what to recycle. Maybe someone from the city could go to your house or businesses and give instructions and tips on how and what to recycle. Finally, maybe businesses could put recycling facts on their products. These facts would like nutrition facts but instead they would show how much of the product is recyclable, how much is made from recycled material and how much greenhouse gases were used to manufacture the product.

It is easy to recycle and reduce global warming. Everyone can do it everyday at school, home and work. Recycle Ann Arbor makes it easy for you. Start today and you can make the difference for Earth tomorrow.