

HOW TO ENCOURAGE RECYCLING

You and your family understand the importance of recycling. You carefully sort your paper, plastics, and aluminum. Whenever possible, you reuse plastic bags and repurpose old items around the home so they serve a new function. And you buy products made from recycled materials.

However, you feel that your efforts are outweighed by your neighbors' negligence. Though you try hard to recycle on your own, many in your community don't seem to care about protecting the environment. And many more don't even bother to throw their trash in the dumpster, let alone take their recyclable items to the nearest center.

So what can you do to encourage your community to take action?

1. Add Recycling Bins to Public Areas

Many people prefer to choose the path of least resistance. If something seems inconvenient, they may feel they don't have the time or energy to follow through.

To make recycling an easy option, purchase a few recycling bins and place them strategically next to trash cans in parks, parking lots, piers, and plazas. When people throw away their trash, they only need a few seconds to decide whether they should recycle.

Better still, check out your local curbside collection program. You may be able to acquire additional recycling bins for your neighbors at no cost to you, and the collection program can pick up the waste on a regular basis.

If your area lacks a basic recycling program, talk to your nearest disposal and waste management company. They may help you set up a regular waste and recycling collection service for your neighborhood or community.

2. Write a Column in Your Local Newspaper or Newsletter

Your local newsletter or newspaper does more than list the latest classifieds or coupons for your grocery store. Despite the rise of digital news sites, many people still read the local papers for headlines, gossip, and sports scores.

When you want to catch your neighbors' attention, submit an article to your local newspaper and describe the benefits of recycling. If you have a particular knack for writing, you can start your own daily, weekly, or monthly column that gives readers tips and tricks for recycling their waste properly.

Don't have a local newspaper? Make your own! You can set up a community blog and let neighbors and city officials contribute to the posts. Share your website through social media to get the word out.

3. Teach Recycling to Students and Their Parents

Children can learn to recycle at an early age. And once they've established the habit, they may recycle for the rest of their lives. Additionally, kids have a natural enthusiasm that can spread to their parents, friends, and relatives.

If you want to spark a passion for recycling, offer to teach about recycling at your nearby elementary and high schools. You can keep your lessons short and sweet in individual classrooms, or you can put

on much larger events with guest speakers in the auditorium. Simply reach out to your schools' teachers and principals for approval, advice, and planning tips.

4. Form a Recycling Club

Though you may feel alone in your efforts to recycle, keep in mind that several other families may feel the same way. Why not bring those who feel passionate about recycling together through a community club?

Your recycling club can meet together every week to participate in repurposing crafts, clothing drives, and cleaning projects. You could set recycling goals for your members, and when everyone achieves their goals, you can all reward yourselves with movie tickets, concerts, or trips to amusement parks.

Use Your Creativity

Although the above ideas can get you started, you don't have to limit yourself to these options. With a little creativity, you can find more ways to recycle and encourage your neighbors to do the same.