

Sustainability Earth Day Activities Ideas

WEBSITES THAT HAVE IDEAS:

USDA's Earth Day take home kit <http://www.epa.gov/earthday/takehomekit.htm#water>

Various resources from National Institute for Environmental Health Science:

<http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/links.htm>

Materials from DEP SEEDS program: <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/seeds/sect6.htm>

"Print me" pages from SEEDS: <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/seeds/printme.htm>

OTHER IDEAS THAT WOULD BENEFIT OUR COMMUNITY:

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1. No Idling booth

Idling Facts

- Idling for more than 10 seconds actually uses more fuel than restarting the engine.
- Vehicle related air pollution can cause asthma and other respiratory problems and allergies, especially in children who breathe at a faster rate than adults. Air toxics also contribute to heart disease and attacks, as well as higher cancer rates in high traffic areas (Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency).
- Asthma is the third leading cause of hospitalization among children under the age of 15 (Source: American Lung Association).
- Up to 25% of NJ's school age children are asthmatic-the leading cause of school absenteeism and increased visits to the emergency room on hot summer days (Source: NJ Department of Environmental Protection).

<http://www.cleanwateraction.org/njef/campaigns-noidling.html>

<http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/transportation/business/documents/idling-newsletters/pdf/spring2003.pdf>

Maybe poster or picture contest?

2. Recycling games and education

a) **Game1:** Who can identify #1 and #2 recyclable materials in 1 minute, and throw them into the right bucket. This was a hit at Hillsborough's 2006 earth day fair. Contact Thuy Anh Le (familyle@aol.com) for details.

b) **Game2** 1– 4 containers. One container of mixed recyclable and non-recyclable items (ex. #1-6 plastics, battery, CFC light bulb, pizza box). Person must put each item in the correct container: recyclable, non-recyclable container, hazardous waste container. See materials list below.

c) **Educate** on what Somerset county recycling – example #1/#2 plastics, junk mail, textiles, etc. See their website for details <http://www.co.somerset.nj.us/recycle.html>. Use fun statistics from www.earth911.org, for example:

- Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to keep a 100-watt bulb burning for almost four hours or run your television for three hours.

Recycle Games Materials List/Education details.

1) Recycling bin

2) Garbage bin (marked 'garbage')

3) Garbage bin (marked 'hazardous waste')

4) Recyclables (ex. glass jar, #1 plastic bottle, #1 plastic tray and garbage (ex. pizzabox) and hazardous waste (ex. batteries, CFL lite bulb)

Note: Pizza box and #1 plastic tray are trickier items since they are NOT recycled by Somerset county, but alot of residents don't know this. Putting these items in the recycle bin cost our county (i.e. increase taxes) thousands of dollars a year since the recycling center must pull these non-recyclable items OUT (estimated to be 1/4 of the material collected) from the recyclables items, and then pay to have the garbage haulers take the non-recyclable items away. Your group can really help by getting the word out about items that can't be recycled, like these, and items that can (ex. clothes!) that people don't know about)

5) Stop watch (or watch with second hand)

6) Booth sign:

Including the name of your organization plus name of activity.

Optional:

7) Sign: a list of fun facts (see website below) printed on a larger board, perhaps something colorful, that people can read as they watch the game.

8) Sample of recyclable items: that some residents do not know are recyclable (ex. textiles, junk mail) to add interest to the booth (visuals work really well). A header could be ("Somerset County recycles these items" and then the details below" and made profits of 3 1/2 million in 2006 recycling. The more we recycle these items, the more we can lower our taxes "). This type of information may help motivate parents :)

9) Booth literature: I can get you Somerset County Recycle brochures if you would like there is also literature on web (of course we want to limit these to just that people that need them, to try to 'Reduce' :)

Note: Please checkout the Somerset County Recycling and earth911 web site below for more info on what is recyclable. I have an email address for Somerset County Recycling if you'd like to correspond with them. Perhaps you can play this game at school to see if anything else would be good.

3. Sustainability quiz game

Spin game wheel, and read that # sustainability question. For example, person lands on # 16

#16 Which of the following items will take longer to degrade in a landfill?

- a) Diaper
- b) Strofoam cup
- c) Aluminum can
- d) Banana Peel

If person gets question right, they can get a prize (perhaps something somewhat sustainable, like a bag of popcorn from a popcorn machine?).

Contact : There are a list of questions on this website. Here are more questions...

http://www.funtrivia.com/quizzes/sci__tech/environment/environmental_problems.html

4. Sell CFC light bulbs - "Change a lite, Change the world" pledge

educate public about lite bulbs. Sell light bulbs and raise money for your non-profit organization.

If every household in NJ replaced 5 lite bulbs, it would be the equivalent of removing 650,000 cars from NJ roadways! It would also save most households about \$60 per year in electricity.

<http://www.njcleanenergy.com/misc/residential/change-light-2007>

5. Green cleaning – good clean fun!

Green Cleaning is using cleaning products that don't endanger you, children or the environment. This is especially important for people who have asthma. Commercial cleaning products often contain irritants that can trigger an asthma episode. The Green Cleaning products recommended here are effective, inexpensive, safe for you and the environment.

<http://www.metrokc.gov/health/asthma/facts/greencleaning.htm>

6. 'BACK to TAP'

Encourage people to use reusable water/drink containers

Publicize quality of tap water (Elizabethtown Water can provide data)

If you are a non-profit, you can sell BPA free water bottles (the safest kind because they do not leach plastic)

Reusable bottle alternatives:

- Healthy reusable bottles are Plastic BPA free bottles, stainless and glass.
- www.camelbak.com EMS (Princeton Shopping Center) and Dick Sporting goods sells them. Perhaps if bought in bulk, a logo can be put on them, and they can be offered at a discount.
- www.purewater2go.com – sells reusable water bottles that filter the water.
- www.quenconline.com – water purification systems. I saw them used at the Marriott on RT1 with a sign hanging above them “Marriott hotel, in it's effort to Go Green, provides the below purified water, to fill your water bottle”

Note: Chatham NJ worked on this campaign. See www.back2tap.com for more info.

7. Clean power choice program

Provide information and sign up cards.

For marketing information (display, brochures, etc) contact Carrie Johnson at Graphical Marketing at 908.879.2169. Website

<http://www.njcleanenergy.com/residential/programs/cleanpower-choice/new-jersey-cleanpower-choice-program>

8. Stop catalogs and junk mail

Props:

Have a high stack of catalogs: and indicate how many trees it takes to produce catalogs (ex. 8 million tons of trees are destroyed each year for the production of catalogs)

Computer: so attendees can remove themselves from lists?

Action: If attendee gives name/address/email then Montgomery Sustainability group will remove them from the junk mail and catalog lists (if they choose catalog, must have the names of catalog).

Stop the catalogs - Go to www.catalogchoice.org and fill out a simple form to remove your name from the mailing lists of most major catalogs - you can choose which ones. This single act, helps reduce deforestation, global warming, air/water pollution cause by catalog production

Stop Junk Mail: www.dmchoice.org DMA's Mail Preference Service (MPS) is the Official Mail Preference Service for the Catalog and Direct Marketing community supported by the United States Postal Service. DMA's Mail Preference Service will allow you to receive more of the mail you want to receive and less of the mail you do not wish to receive. You may add your name to individual organization lists and remove your name from individual organization lists. Complete form and they will send it to all their members, asking them to honor your preferences.

More information:

<http://www.smartmoney.com/dealoftheday/index.cfm?story=20070206>

9. Publicize different ways to be sustainable

As individual, and as community (i.e. drive less, recycle, turn down the heat, shut a light, join municipal committee such as the Environmental Commission, Open Spaces, Shade tree...)

10. Show/Sell alternatives Plastic bags

LEARN THE FACTS & STOP SINGLE-USE BAG WASTE

- The average American uses between 300 and 700 plastic bags per year.
- If everyone in the United States tied their annual consumption of plastic bags together in a giant chain, the chain would reach around the Earth not once, but 760 times!
- According to the American Forest and Paper Association, in 1999 the U.S. alone used 10 billion paper grocery bags, requiring 14 million trees to be cut down.
- Plastic bags don't biodegrade, they photo-degrade—breaking down into small toxic bits contaminating soil and waterways and entering the food-chain when mistaken for zooplankton or jellyfish.

Sell or recommend Chico bags, which fit in your pockets or purse and can attach to your belt loop, back pack....

<http://www.chicobag.com/> \$5 each or 5 for \$20 (discounts probably available for volume)

China joins Ireland and California in banning plastic bags.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080110/ap_on_re_as/china_plastic_bags_16

11. Publicize local/easy ways to be green

For example:

- 1) **Bring hangars back to dry cleaners:** maybe someone (student?) can create signs for dry cleaners.
- 2) **Bring bags back to stores** (ex. Wegmans, Shoprite): Any plastic (ex. dry cleaning covering, bag from other store, etc).
- 3) **Somerset County recycles clothing:** educate residents as to what is recyclable (ex. books without covers, clothing) and what's not (fluorescent lites, #1/2 food trays)
- 4) **Reusable water bottles:** Problems with water bottles. If you reuse a bottle, you can wash one in awhile with Oxyclean or a tiny amount of bleach and water, to keep sparkling clean.
- 5) **Bring planting pots back to Nurseries:** Ashford (Rt 206) and Bowman's Hill take them
- 6) **Bring flower vases back to Flower Ships:** One in Princeton takes them.
- 7) **Reuse Bubble wrap envelopes:** By taping new label over old.

Green local stores:

Support your local businesses and Environment:

Reduce, REUSE, recycle

Reduce:

Green Store?

Reuse:

Shoe repair Montgomery Shopping Center
Chair repair ???

Recycle:

Princeton consignment shop – Village shopper (206)
Somerset County picks up textiles – just label a clear or white plastic bag labeled "Textiles" and leave out with recycling.

Organic cleaners

12. Guess how long things stay in a landfill?

8/9 items that you had to guess how many years it took to disintegrate.

13. Polar Bear Global Warming Display

am tracking down a polar bear station that was so cute. The troop had a metal tray that contained a big block of ice. Over the course of the day, the ice melted and the plastic polar bears had to move closer and closer to each other. The girls explained about territorial problems and issues of not enough food. It was a great visual. Would your troop be interested in developing a station like that?

14. Kid Art Projects

14.1 Office Paper Recycling Bins

Create and decorate paper recycling bins for home. . Bins can be made of recycled boxes (check drug and other local stores for a good box size). Boxes should be at least 8 and 11 ½ wide to fit office paper. Bins can contain messages (see some suggestions below) or can be made to fit the décor of the room. Bins should be labeled “Office Paper Recycling” and could include pictures or words of items that can be included (ex. office paper, junk mail, chipboard).

A slogan could be printed and attached to bins. Possible slogans:

- Money grows on tress, recycle paper"
- Students Who Recycle:
Plant your seeds now,
Reap your rewards later.
- People who recycle do it over, and over, and over, and over..."

14.2 Mom’s Shopping List Pad

Create shopping list pads with reusable bag reminder. Reminder message could be, “Mom, don’t forget your reusable shopping bag!”. Shopping pad top binder can be placed on 4 x 3 paper with decorations, and stapled to recycled chipboard (ex. tissue boxes, cereal boxes) and paper pad. Paper pad can be can be created from office/business paper, that has already been used on one side, cut into horizontally into three strips. Note: Test width to make sure staple can go through the chipboard and paper chosen.

14.3 Recycling Reminder Magnets

Create a recycling reminder refrigerator magnet listing all the items to remind families of items that are/aren’t recyclable. Top of magnet can be decorated with picture and/or slogan. For Somerset County, the home pickup recyclable list would include cans, glass, plastics (with necks and market #1 or #2), newspaper, cardboard, chipboard, wrapping paper, batteries (in a see thru plastic bag). NO caps, paper towels, napkins, non #1#2 plastics. For more information on Somerset County recyclables visit www.co.somerset.nj.us/recycle.html

14.4 Create Supermarket ‘Did you bring your bag’ buttons

Work with your local grocery store and see if cashiers would wear buttons created by environmentally minded kids, reminding shoppers to bring their reusable shopping bags. Old buttons can be collected (or perhaps an unusable lot can be purchased on Ebay), and can be over laid with a paper with new message.