



Empowering Change for a Greener Tomorrow: Recycling Awareness through Art, Education & Clean Ups

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Project Motivation & Goals

The Urgency of Recycling

- ❖ Did you know that on a daily basis, we produce over 5 pounds of solid waste, but only ~1 pound of that gets recycled? The remaining four pounds end up in landfills (CT DEEP 2023).
- ❖ Recycling is an often-overlooked issue that contributes to climate change (EPA 2023). Recycling is crucial as it not only benefits the environment but also enhances our daily lives (EPA 2023):



Environmental Preservation	Using recycled materials reduces pollution and greenhouse gas emissions by lowering the demand for mining and processing of new raw materials.
Resource Conservation	Recycling items involves the conservation of natural resources such as timber, water, and materials.
Energy Efficiency	Recycling is an effective way to conserve energy since it minimizes the necessity of manufacturing materials from scratch.
Climate Change Mitigation	Reducing waste sent to landfills and incinerators can help reduce environmental impact.

Goal: While I knew I wanted to focus my project on this critical issue of recycling, the design of my project was community-informed during my first tabling event at the Hartford Public Library, individuals expressed, "I simply don't have the time to recycle and don't know where to recycle"

- ❖ My goal is to increase recycling awareness through targeted messaging that resonates with people of all ages by creating/organizing and implementing the following:
 - **Tabling and Workshops** on awareness of recycling benefits and how to recycle.
 - **Art Installation** to communicate what can and can't be recycled to a broader audience in my community.
 - **Clean Up** to promote coming together as a community to collect trash and recyclables in a Hartford neighborhood.

Community Awareness via Education Workshops

Tabling Event @ Hartford Public Library (Oct 2023)

- ❖ **Collaboration** with Nana Adjei of City of Hartford Public Works
- ❖ **Purpose:** Spread awareness about recycling.
- ❖ **Activities:** Gave out brochures on recycling in both English and Spanish, while also giving recycled toys to children's.
- ❖ **Impact/Outcome:** Became aware about the limited knowledge the public knew about recycling. Even though about 5 people came to my table it was enough for me to realize everything starts with educating the public.



This led me to start recycling workshops

Adult Recycling Workshop @ Hispanic Wellness Center (Feb 2024)

- ❖ **Collaboration** with Dr. Mayra Rodriguez of UConn Extension.
- ❖ **Purpose:** To provide recycling education for adults.
- ❖ **Activities:** I gave a presentation on recycling to adults and continued with a BINGO game about recycling to test knowledge.
- ❖ **Impact/Outcome:** Provided flyers in Spanish/English on recycling to 10 adults.



Youth Recycling Workshop @ Hispanic Wellness Center (Dec 2023)

- ❖ **Collaboration** with Dr. Mayra Rodriguez of UConn Extension.
- ❖ **Purpose:** To educate children on what can be recycled, composted or thrown away and assess their understanding.
- ❖ **Activities:** Children were provided with a sheet with recycled & non-recycled materials. They colored, cut it out, and decided whether its recyclable or not.
- ❖ **Impact/Outcome:** Eight (8) children, ages 4-17, participated. Depending on age, many knew what categories to place items. By teaching children responsible recycling habits early on, this can have a positive change early on in their communities, creating a cleaner and healthier earth.



Community Awareness via Art

- ❖ Collaborating with different people has provided me with a multitude of innovative ideas and helped broaden my reach to a wider audience.
- ❖ At the UHART campus, I worked with Dr. Kat Owens to learn about her effort to create a large art piece that is the size of a real whale using flat plastics. The messaging is that these prevalent, non-recyclable flat plastic packaging is choking our oceans and directly harming each cetacean species in her art.
- ❖ I helped with sewing new plastic pieces on a killer whale, while brainstorming with her to determine the art style for the art component of my project.



About My Art Project

- **Aim:** To raise awareness among a different audience, demonstrating the concept of upcycling and highlighting the amount of waste an individual generates in a week.
- **Materials:** Body of artwork-recyclable water bottles, non-recyclable wrappers from various products like candy and chips, some plastic vines. Acrylic paint to create flowers using the same water bottles.
- **Potential Location:** Hispanic Wellness Center or Hartford Public Library



Thank you to...

Kate Owens for inspiring my art portion of the project. Nana for giving me information about what streets need more help and what websites I can use to research. Laura for assisting me in brainstorming ideas involving both recyclable and non-recyclable materials. Additionally, for providing me with the chance to collaborate with Mayra. Aalyah for being extremely supportive, assisting with emails, contributing to workshops, and offering emotional support during challenging moments and a big thanks to UConn NRCA for providing various funding sources that provided me with project resources and a stipend.

References

- ❖ CT DEEP (2023). Recycling in Connecticut. CT.gov <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Reduce-Reuse-Recycle/Recycling-in-Connecticut>
- ❖ Lober, Douglas. "Kids Super Guide to Recycling." Awesome Custom Wholesale Reusable Grocery Bags Bulk. ReuseThisBag.com, 12 July 2021. www.reusethisbag.com/articles/kids-guide-to-recycling
- ❖ EPA. (2023). <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/recycling-basics-and-benefits#:~:text=benefits%20of%20recycling,Environment,and%20minerals%20for%20new%20products>

Organizing a Clean Up Event

- ❖ Organizing a community clean-up event is one way to foster connections that will encourage sustainable habits, like recycling, and reduce pollution in our community.
- ❖ With the support of the Hartford Fire Department and Nana, I will coordinate a clean-up event in Hartford to unite our community and demonstrate care for our environment.
- ❖ Clean ups will happen on these streets on May 2024:
 - Babcock
 - Elliot
 - Westland



Conclusion and Next Steps

Transitioning from recycling to upcycling and from learning to teaching has had a profound effect on me and everyone involved in the journey. Even though we are only at the beginning stages, my knowledge has expanded significantly and I'm ready to help others see recycling doesn't have to be a chore it can be fun as well.

- By July 2024, I'm hoping to make a bigger impact by:
 - ❖ More community events and clean ups
 - ❖ Place a few recycling bins in local areas

TO BE CONTINUED

- Future community events and services may target younger audiences and include activities such as:
 - ❖ Upcycle workshops
 - ❖ Local park cleanups