



Hands On
NETWORK

Project: Create a Recycling Center

Recycling is an easy first step in positively influencing the environment. Recycling helps reduce the consumption of natural resources and energy. It also prevents pollution when a recycled material, rather than a raw material, is used to make a new product.

A collaborative school or work effort to establish a recycling program can get students or coworkers educated and involved in ways to protect the environment. Students or colleagues work together by organizing and executing the project on a regular basis.

Service Project Instructions

Suggested Age Group: teens, adults
Suggested Number of Volunteers: 8-10
Skill Level: moderate
Time: ongoing

Materials Needed:

- Containers large enough to hold recyclables
- Paper or poster board
- Pens, markers, paint, brushes

Activity Instructions:

1. Decide on an appropriate location for the recycling center. Choose convenient areas where trash is usually generated and where hauling the items away for disposal is easy (cafeteria, classrooms, hallways, offices, etc.).

2. Select containers for each type of product (e.g., paper, plastic, aluminum, glass) that will be recycled. Make sure that you check the requirements of the recycling program in your community. Some programs may allow products to be collected together.

3. Create signs or labels to clearly communicate what should be recycled in each container.

4. Designate someone to pick up the to-be recycled goods and take to the appropriate center.

- To make the project more engaging, students and colleagues can decorate the recycling bins using art supplies.

- If you are beginning this recycling center at the end of the school year, hold a book drive and collect old books that will not be used the following year. Coordinate with the local government to transport the books to a local recycling center.

Additional Resources

Learn more tips for how to reuse, reuse and recycle by visiting
<http://planetgreen.discovery.com/go-green/recycling/top-recycling-tips.html>

Learn more about how to protect the environment with service learning activities:
<http://tools.ysa.org/downloads/modules/environment.pdf>

Access free environmental service learning curricula:
<http://servicelearning.org/topic/environment>

Reflection

After your volunteer project, it is important to reflect on the experience – to think about what you did, what you learned from it and the impact it had.

Here are some suggested activities:

- Tell your family and friends about something you learned and how you will continue to help others.
- Draw a picture, write a poem or create a jingle about the service activity.
- Write about your experience on your blog, Facebook account or Twitter feed.
- If you are working with a group of volunteers to do this project, lead a group discussion with questions such as:
 - Why did you volunteer today?
 - What did you learn about the environment and helping the community?
 - What is the one thing you will remember most about this service activity?
 - How can you continue to make a difference in our community?