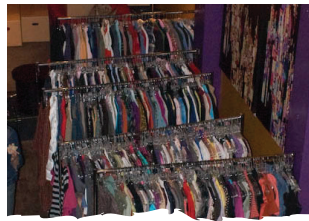




Textile Recycling



WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING

Project Guide

Waste Reduction and Recycling

Generation Earth Program

Generation Earth is a Los Angeles County Public Works environmental education program presented by TreePeople. Our goal is to educate and empower teens in Los Angeles County to be an active part of the solution to environmental concerns in their community. We offer do-it-yourself environmental projects that help youth make a positive difference at school, at home and out in the world. Our programs are built to support the needs of teachers, students, schools and community youth groups.



Generation Earth Project Guides

Generation Earth Project Guides are designed to assist students in the completion of an environmental project. These guides provide the instructions, tools and support materials needed to learn about the subject in order to complete a project that positively impacts the community.

Waste in Los Angeles

Waste is a vital issue in Los Angeles County. Each of us generates an average of five pounds of waste per day. This may not sound like much, but when multiplied over a period of a year, the amount of waste each person creates is staggering.¹ Waste is generally transported to one of ten solid waste landfills around Los Angeles County. It costs money to dispose of it and valuable open space is used to create landfills to store waste.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rethink

The four R's of waste reduction are reduce, reuse, recycle and rethink. The most impactful is to reduce the amount of materials used. The second is to reuse the material we already have. The third is recycle material back into the cycle of production and consumption. Recycling takes resources to haul, clean and reproduce a product. Not only do the three R's reduce pollution and landfill waste, they also save energy used in the sourcing of virgin materials, transportation of materials and production of materials to goods. When fewer virgin materials are used to produce new goods, more resources are available for a longer period. The last R is to rethink and make better choices by incorporating the first three R's into your daily lives. Often, items that are no longer needed by one person, may be still useful to someone else. Donate to a second-hand thrift store or list items through media platforms to share with the community are viable solutions.

Textile Recycling Event Project Guide

This guide will help your school promote the reuse of items and reduce waste in the process. Proper disposal of textile waste includes keeping it out of landfills through sharing, swapping, donating, recycling and repurposing. Your group can play a major part in creating awareness of proper disposal by hosting a textile recycling event.

How A Textile Recycling Event Works

Textile waste consists of fabrics, clothing, bedding, linens, curtains, accessories, backpacks, shoes, rags and other items made of leather, polyester, or fabric that have come to the end of their life because they are ripped, stained, don't fit, or are no longer desirable. In a textile collection event:

- A school team arranges a collection time period and storage location with a textile recycling collection company or organization at least 30 days before the event.
- Members of the local community and school are invited to bring textile waste to donate during the collection period.
- Make sure donations are in bags and placed in a storage area until the end of the collection event or until the minimum requirement for pickup has been met.
- At the end of the event, the organization picks up the donations for recycling.
- If enough donations are received, the organization often pays the school according to a predetermined pay-scale.

The Steps

1. Did You Know?

This topic sheet provides information about consumerism. It can be used as an introduction to the topic to share with others and poses thoughtful questions for discussion.

2. Preparation Checklist and Timeline

A checklist is provided for planning and completing first steps. The timeline provides the tasks needed to complete.

3. Promotion Plan

Guidelines are provided to ensure promotion of the event in the community.

4. Evaluation

Complete the project by answering questions that serve to evaluate the process and offer next steps for potentially taking on additional waste reducing projects.

5. Resources

Resources are provided including curriculum ideas and event/promotion partners.



DID YOU KNOW?

Today, the average lifetime of a piece of clothing is 5.4 years.²

Where does this waste end up?

Prior to World War I, used clothing in a household was repaired, handed-down and repurposed for rags and quilts. Today, the U.S. generates 25 billion pounds of post-consumer textile waste per year, including clothing, footwear, linens, towels and other fabrics. That is 82 pounds of clothing waste per person per year, with 70 pounds of that amount ending up in landfills.³

“Fast Fashion” is known in the fashion industry as moving clothing designs from the catwalk to the sales floor as quickly as possible to maximize profit.

How might this trend impact the waste and manufacturing industry?

New styles are no longer brought to the market on a seasonal basis. Instead they appear in stores multiple times a week. It's not uncommon for shoppers to wear an item once or twice before throwing it away for next week's style, aided by the poor quality of many of the clothes causing them to fall apart after several washes. This demand has forced retailers to lower the cost to produce garments, the quality of items produced and the wages for both the creation of fabrics and manufacturing of the items. More than 60% of the world's garments are manufactured in developing countries, which often have low wages, unsafe working conditions and unrestricted environmental regulations.⁴

New textiles impact natural resources.

What are some of the resources impacted to create clothing and other textiles?

Cotton production accounts for 2.6% of annual global water usage. A single T-shirt made from conventional cotton requires 2,700 liters of water and a third of a pound of chemicals to produce.⁵ According to the World Health Organization, 20% of industrial water pollution comes from the textile manufacturing industry. Wastewater containing the chemicals and dyes used in manufacturing textiles end up in local water sources; in some manufacturing countries, local water sources are so polluted by chemicals that they can no longer sustain wildlife.⁶

Oil is used to make all polyester, acrylic, nylon and elastane (spandex) clothing products. Petroleum based fabrics have become more popular than cotton. Polyester remains one of the most widely-produced fabrics in the world and is now the most common type of fabric in the world.⁷

On average, each American donates 12 pounds of textiles annually.

What can be done to increase this and lessen the amount going to the landfill?

Of the 12 pounds of donated textiles, 10-20% are sold in thrift stores. The remaining 80% of donated textiles are either exported as secondhand clothing (45%) repurposed into wiping rags (30%), recycled into fiber (20%) or disposed in landfills (5%).⁸

All used shoes and clothing can be recycled. Donating textiles include giving to local charity and thrift shops, community swaps, outdoor clothing recycling bins and direct donations to nonprofits that help children, domestic violence victims, homeless and more.

PREPARATION CHECKLIST AND TIMELINE

There are many tasks to take to ensure a quality event. Use the resources provided to get organized, set a date and plan the event!

Preparation Checklist

- Use the Textile Recycling Preparation Checklist on pages 6 - 7 to plan and complete the first steps.
- Work as a team to assign who will be responsible for completing each task.

Timeline

- It takes one to two months to plan and produce a textile recycling event.
- Once a date is set, use the Timeline on pages 8 - 9 to complete the necessary tasks needed to ensure a successful event.

Helpful Hints

Review the Preparation Checklist and Timeline ahead of time to understand what will be required.

Textile Recycling Event Preparation Checklist



Decide if you are raising funds or raising awareness

- Raising funds for school clubs or activities by means of a textile donation event can typically be achieved with a minimum donation of around 5,000 lbs. Shoes typically raise more funds than other textiles.
- Textiles can be donated in any quantity for different causes. Clothes in good condition, bedding, shoes and accessories can be donated to local nonprofits or shelters to be used by the people they assist.



Identify a textile recycling company or nonprofit partner

- Go to page 13 for a list of reliable textile recycling collection organizations.
- Confirm that the selected organization can pick up from your school or that a volunteer can deliver the donations.
- Ask if the textile recycling organization provides a crew to carry and handle all of the donations for loading their trucks.
- If fundraising, ask for the price breakdown of donations and payment. Typical pay rates vary by year, the organization you choose and the type of textiles collected. Some organizations require a minimum weight of textiles collected before payment is available.
- If donating to a charity, check what types of clothing or linens are accepted by the organization and ask if there are any other types of items needed like toiletries or toys.
- Ask the organization if they assist in outreach efforts by providing banners and helping with press releases.



Choose a location

- Identify a large storage area that is protected from the weather.
- If you're inviting the public to drop off donations, identify the drop-off location and plan for taking donations to the storage area.



Choose a time frame

- Collections can be for one day, week, or several months, depending on how quickly you can collect to reach the set goal.
- Any month during the school year will work.
- Consider the best time to advertise.

Get permission



- Choose a team to compile the information about the event and present to the Principal or other stakeholders.
- Ask for permission to use any school resources for advertising, such as newsletters or social media pages.

Secure materials



- Create posters, banners and flyers to promote the event.
- Make signs to direct people with donations to the drop off point when they are nearby and on the campus.
- Find extra reusable bags to hold donations in case original bags tear.
- Consider finding a scale to weigh donations.

Textile Recycling

It usually takes one to two months to plan and produce a textile collection. Once the time frame is set, work backwards and assign tasks and due dates.

One to Two Months Before the Event

- ☐ Find and secure a suitable location.
- ☐ Identify an organization to collect or accept donations.
- ☐ Present the event plan to key stakeholders to get permission.
- ☐ Create promotion plan (See pages 10 - 11).
- ☐ Create social media plan.
- ☐ Create signs and secure banners.
- ☐ Create flyers for distribution.
- ☐ Write an advertisement or press release and get permission to circulate it.
- ☐ Launch promotion plan.
- ☐ Distribute and collect any necessary volunteer waivers and photo release forms.

One to Two Weeks Before the Event

- ☐ Coordinate ability to access the storage area.
- ☐ Secure all supplies and signage.
- ☐ Place instructional signage for donors at drop-off area.
- ☐ Continue promotion.
- ☐ Reconfirm drop-off or pick-up details of donated textiles.
- ☐ Ensure all necessary volunteer forms are received.

Collection Time

- ☐ Collect donations and place in storage area daily.
- ☐ Keep track of the quantity of donations received.
- ☐ Take photos and/or video.



After the Event

- ☐ Coordinate pick-up or drop-off of textiles with the organization.
- ☐ Remove all signs, banners and flyers after your event.
- ☐ Thank all organizations and stakeholders involved.
- ☐ If you were fundraising, within two to four weeks, the company should give you a report of the textiles collected in pounds and a check for items collected. Make sure to tell the company who the check should be addressed to so that you have access to the funds.
- ☐ Fill out the evaluation form on page 12. Assess what went well and what you would change for the next time.
- ☐ Report the number of pounds of textiles collected to the school and selected community leaders. Share the results and photos with Generation Earth.
- ☐ Plan to celebrate your success with a party or fun activity!

PROMOTION PLAN

A promotion plan will help you reach the largest audience possible for the textile collection. The success of your event is directly tied to how much advertising and outreach you do. Expect a ten percent participation rate for all of your outreach efforts. Assign tasks and deadlines for the promotional campaign.

Consider the following:

Who is your promotion team?

- Designer for the flyer.
- Copywriter for the flyer.
- Advertisement/press release writer.
- Social media manager.
- Flyer distributors.
- Phone/email outreach

Who do you want to reach in the community?

- Identify your audience. Who will participate?
- Will materials need to be available in other languages?

What do you want to communicate?

- The reasons for the textile collection.
- Date, time and location. Is a map needed?
- Free for all participants.
- Details for involvement.
- Items accepted.

How do you want to communicate?

- Create and send advertisements.
 - School PTA newsletter
 - Local newspapers
 - Radio stations
 - Neighborhood/City Councils
 - Churches/Places of Worship
 - Organizations that help families in need

Flyers

- Create flyers that are appealing to your audience.
- Present information in a way that it is easy to understand.
- Information should be as concise as possible and include the important details (how, why, when, where, what, who).
- Include appropriate graphics and/or photos.
- Try to avoid too much text or “busy” layouts.

- Partners with the school or event space
- Community television channel to announce the event or to run a public service announcement
- Generation Earth
- Create and distribute flyers.
 - Schools
 - Privately owned local businesses
 - Malls
 - Community centers
 - Neighborhoods
- Social media
 - Online blogs
 - Facebook Event
 - Neighborhood websites, such as Nextdoor.com
 - Craigslist
 - Twitter
 - Instagram
 - Community event calendars
- Word of Mouth
 - Ask school administration for help.
 - Make classroom announcements.
 - Announce the event at City council meetings.
- Signs and banners
 - Request banners or signs from textile companies and display them outside the school or on busy cross streets.
 - Hang signs around campus.

Newsletter and Community Event Calendars

Find out:

- Who is in charge of the calendar listings for the newsletter.
- Length, format and deadline.
- Preferred way to receive information.
- Who from your team will write the article.
- Who needs to approve the article.

EVALUATION

Once the Textile Collection Event is complete, answer the following questions to evaluate the event and introduce some possible next steps.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the most successful parts of the project?
2. What were the least successful?
3. What might we do differently next time?
4. Was the audience interested in possibly having another textile collection event?

What's Next?

Another Project Toolkit

Are you interested in another related project? Consider:

- E-Waste Collection Event
- Composting
- Ink Cartridge Collection
- Food Rescue

Share!

Generation Earth would love photos and/or videos of the project!

- Send them to generationearth@treepeople.org.

RESOURCES

CURRICULUM IDEAS

- Invite a representative from Generation Earth or the textile company to speak to your group and/or faculty.
 - Make sure everyone knows what textile waste is and how to reduce, reuse and recycle it.
 - You can discuss what happens when textiles are disposed of in landfills and how they are recycled.

ORGANIZATIONS

- Textile Collection Event Fundraisers:
 - Clothes for the Cause: funds2orgs.com
 - USAgain: usagain.com/collection-drives
 - Soles4Souls: soles4souls.org/give-shoes
- Permanent Clothing Collection Bins:
 - Angel Bins: angelbins.com
 - USAgain: usagain.com
- Charities:
 - Los Angeles LGBT Center: lalgbtcenter.org/donate_clothes
 - Downtown Women's Center: downtownwomenscenter.org/donate-goods
 - Clothes the Deal: clothesthedeal.org

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