

IN TOUCH with Recycling

Tab-collecting benefits dialysis patients

It seems recycling has become fashionable and nowhere is it more in vogue than here on campus. Throughout campus there are people working to make sure that everything, including food, can tabs and bottles, is recycled.

Perhaps the most interesting effort being undertaken on campus is the collection of the tabs from aluminum cans. The sign on the manila envelopes placed around the EMU used to say that each pop tab paid for a certain amount of time on a dialysis machine.

Wesley Weathers, who was responsible for setting up the program at the University, said the little pull tabs are not actually used to pay for dialysis, but for other needs of dialysis patients.

"You either go on dialysis or die. You have a choice, a big choice," Weathers said. "But it's expensive and there usually isn't much money left."

Weathers said it takes 1,000 can tabs to make one pound that can be taken to a recycling center in Albany. The money (usually about 18 cents a pound) is given to the Dialysis Center in Albany, which is responsible for dispersing it.

Weathers said he appreciates the help from the University (which has provided 110 pounds of tabs since December) and would like to set up a can drive sometime in the future so that the program could receive the money from those as well as the tabs.

Other little known efforts on campus are those of the Student Recycling Program. This program is funded through incidental fees and the ASUO.

Recycling assistants drive around in a big white van collecting glass, tin, plastic and paper from University housing, including the co-ops and the Greek houses, and other off-campus sites.

John Thomas, dorm coordinator, has been trying to increase recycling in University housing by putting collection bins in individual rooms.

"We have bins in roughly 10 percent of the rooms but are looking at expanding the service," he said. "Unfortunately, the bins are fairly expensive."

Germaine Curry also works with Student Recycling, but instead of working with childish dorm residents, she works with actual children. Curry does presentations and art projects with kids that attend the day care in the EMU.



Photo by Anthony Forney
Children at the EMU Child Care learn about recycling through worm composting.

Throughout campus there are people working to make sure that everything, including food, can tabs and bottles, is recycled.

She helps them with art projects that make use of already used materials and gives small presentations about recycling. One of the hazards of talking to the three- to five-year-olds is their short attention span.

"I have about five minutes to talk to them before they start to wander," Curry said. "And while they don't fully grasp the concepts, they appreciate recycling and know what it is."

— Carrie Fenelon

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