

Master Recycler — A conversation with EcoGeneration founder David Gardiepy (Pt. 2)

By Britte Kirsch
Lane County Master Recycler

carpets and clothes. Denton Plastics in Portland takes our number 2, 4 and 5 plastics and they make a high quality feedstock plastic used for agricultural and construction materials.

Terracycle is out of New Jersey so we have to ship our nutritional and health and beauty packaging to them for a cost. They create a 100 percent recycled plastic feedstock to be used for packaging materials and use a special heat process so they can extract all of the plastic for reuse.

The plastic film is baled and shipped to Trex for lumber and decking. The plastic caps cost us money to recycle and are made into lumber or a low grade number 7 resin so at least it gets one more use.

PakTech is a Cottage Grove based manufacturer that makes handles and drink rings out of 98% recycled plastic. They are extremely innovative with respect to taking responsibility for recycling their products by provided transportation and paying for the recycling processes.

Why do you go through all the trouble to create these different waste streams? Why can't we just throw everything into the bin?

DG: EcoGeneration was created because the US re-

ally wasn't recycling plastics when China stopped taking our plastics.

As a country, we only recycle about 9 percent of our plastics properly. We were sending dirty commingled plastics somewhere else to be processed.

By the way, the US is still shipping contaminated unsorted plastic overseas to other countries. So in order to make sure Lane County does the right thing, we have to go back to a single stream recycling process, where we have clean, number specific waste streams that can get effectively reused.

Taking the time to sort and clean the different plastics into specific waste streams equates to better sustainable reusable feedstock plastics for future use.

A lot of our recycling partners do not have washlines to process the materials, so cleaning and drying your items is crucial not only for the safety of our volunteers but for the ability to remanufacture the plastics.

Recycling is not the answer to ending our dependency of plastics, but it is something we should do right if we are going to do it at all. Our website — www.ecogeneration.org has more information on all the different plastic packaging we accept and how to sort them.

What can we do to be better recyclers?

DG: Don't buy single use plastics period. Avoid certain products whose packaging is hard to recycle or not easy to clean or remove labels.

Know what your garbage hauler takes in their comingle recycle bin and pay attention to what you put in it to make sure it truly can be recycled, not wishful recycling.

Stay away from unlabeled plastics or low value plastic like numbers 3 – 7. Number 2 plastics get the most bang for the buck and are the easiest to reuse multiple times, so if you have to buy plastic, make it a number 2!

The number 2 transparent plastic is the most versatile and gets reused into number 2 plastics more than any other plastic.

Be an educated consumer when it comes to purchasing certain products, make choices that are good for the environment.

Going the extra mile to protect our planet from plastic pollution is worth the effort.

What other programs and opportunities do you have planned for the future?

DG: We are working on setting up more collection events in Florence for

2022. We are hoping to increase it to six times per year, based on sponsorships and funding. We appreciate the overwhelming support from the community of Florence for these quarterly Recycling Take Back Events this year and hope to continue them in the future.

We are also in need of a cargo van for transporting materials and looking to rent an industrial warehouse facility to process the increased recycled materials.

So, sponsorships and donations are always welcome.

Please visit the website for more details at www.ecogeneration.org.

ecogeneration.org.

There will be two more Recycling Take Back Events in Florence in 2021 on Sundays — Aug. 1 and Oct. 3.

Volunteers are an important part of these events, so visit the website for more information on how you can help.

Got ideas for future articles? Need more information about closing the loop? Have questions about your recycling efforts? Please contact me at britte.kirsch@gmail.com or visit Waste Wise Lane County.

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Register now 'Fore Kids Golf Classic'

The Boys and Girls Club of Western Lane County's 24th annual "Fore! Kids" Golf Classic sponsored by Banner Bank is scheduled for Saturday, June 5, at Florence Golf Links.

Entry into the 4-person scramble is \$90 per player, including opportunities to participate in the Hole-In-One Challenges and Million Dollar Shoot Out, awards luncheon and more.

All proceeds help fund the Boys and Girls Summer Program for the kids in Florence and the surrounding area.

On the day of the class, team check-in starts at 8 a.m. with a 10 a.m. shotgun start, depending on COVID restrictions.

Register by calling or emailing Pat Bennett at 209-986-4793 or pat@pennettco.com.

Entry forms are also available at Florence Golf Links, 1201 35th St., or the Boys and Girls Club, 1501 Airport Rd.

Ending the day on a high note is the 10th annual Helicopter Golf Ball Drop, sponsored by Fairway Estates, Chad Clement, D.D.S., and R & R King Logging. The Golf Ball Drop is scheduled for 3 to 3:30 p.m. on tournament day at Florence Golf Links on the 18th fairway. Winners do not need to be present.

The ball closest to the pin will receive \$1,000 cash. The ball furthest from the pin will receive \$500 cash.

Tickets are \$5 and can be purchased when you reserve your team or by contacting the Boys and Girls Club at 541-902-0304.

The Boys and Girls Club Summer Programs include Summer Brain Gain, Florence Air Academy and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math) Programs. These are all fun and innovative ways for kids to maintain the knowledge acquired during the prior school year.

Want to help but don't swing a club? Sponsor a Club Kid. A \$300 invest-

ment will support this year's summer program for 21 days — two hot meals and snacks every day, fun-filled activities with other kids and field trips, all while emphasizing the im-

portance of math, literacy and great citizenship.

Serving over 450 community youth, the Boys and Girls Club of Western Lane County is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

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