



PENN WASTE'S COMMITMENT TO RECYCLING EDUCATION

Through Original Programs



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Over the past two years Penn Waste has reinforced its commitment to reducing the impact of waste streams by setting new recycling standards. In particular, it embraced the expansion of materials collected in single stream recycling for both residential and commercial customers in central Pennsylvania. For example, Penn Waste was the first company in the region to publicly and proactively accept all cleaned plastic

materials 1–7, no matter the neck size, in single stream. It was also first to actively promote the inclusion of aerosol cans and unlimited cardboard collection.

Scott Wagner, president and owner of Penn Waste explains that, “as a best practices company, we feel it is our responsibility and obligation to research and invest in new recycling capabilities that will benefit the Central PA region

by continually decreasing the amount of materials in the trash stream through reassignment into the recycling stream.”

Since Penn Waste now accepts a rapidly expanding array of recyclables, it recognizes that many residents do not know how to identify all the items they may now recycle. To assist in this challenge, namely community education, Penn Waste has created two custom programs. Each focuses on supporting recycling education and awareness in residential communities.

“What is meaningful to me,” said Amanda Davidson, Marketing Manager “is that Penn Waste, and Scott Wagner in particular, has made a significant investment in education, rather than only focusing on new business acquisitions. These educational efforts exemplify Penn Waste’s commitment to our communities on the deepest level.”

Classroom Education

In the fall of 2013 Penn Waste met with leaders from the Central York School District (York, PA) to present its creation of a recycling education module. What evolved from the initial meeting has been a year-long project in which Penn Waste partners and mentors a team of students to create a series of student led, educational programs in support of core curriculum requirements. After eight months of diligent efforts by the team, the response has been overwhelmingly positive.

The program design has evolved dramatically from proposed concept to actual implementation. The most important change is that instead of the content being created and taught by adults, the program is now one created by students, for students and led by students in the classrooms. In collaboration with an advisor from the school, Penn Waste’s marketing team meets regularly with the four who form the nucleus of the new program. The team helps coach the students and support their progress. During the spring semester, the core team brought in reinforcements from

the school’s Optimist Club. These additional students helped with the classroom events and are becoming part of the 2014–2015 academic year’s program. They call themselves the “Penn Waste Recycling Team.” Comprised of students in multiple grade levels the group represents the future of the program, and as such, promotes the program’s long-term plan for its expansion as the students develop their knowledge base and leadership skills.

During the 2013–2014 school year the Penn Waste Recycling Team created three classroom modules that they tested in third, seventh and ninth grade classrooms. Students and teachers offered overwhelmingly positive feedback. Pre and post surveys indicated increased knowledge and appreciation of what can be recycled, how to prepare recyclables, how materials are recycled, what recycled materials become, and why it is important to recycle.

While content and activities for each of these programs were designed specifically to be grade appropriate, they all followed a common outline. The in-class events were completely led by the students. Sessions were held at the beginning of each program,

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Spring Cleaning?

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PENN WASTE Recycling

Penn Waste accepts unlimited amounts of recycling...

- Paper, Paperboard and Cardboard – Recycle any size! Any quantity!
- Break down boxes as flat as possible
- High winds or wet weather? If possible, please keep your recyclables until the next week. Wet paper products are difficult to process.

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Education



providing an opportunity for attendees to share what they knew about recycling and what they would like to learn about it. The students then broke into teams of six to eight students and participated in rotating stations of interactive educational games on recycling and recyclables. The seventh and ninth grade programs also featured grade-appropriate clips from the award-winning feature documentary *Trashed*, featuring Jeremy Irons.

In three schools, a very positive response to the classroom events prompted the principals of the schools to ask the students to develop grade-wide presentations and interactive sessions for the 2014–2015 school year. Due to their impressive accomplishments, the students and their programs were recognized by their school board in May, 2014.

Looking forward to 2016 and beyond, the ultimate goal of the student team is to create programs that could be replicated easily by other school districts. These programs would help ensure that youth continually learn about recycling at key points in their education with the hope that it would affect long-term behavioral change with students, their households and their communities.

TV Educational Segments

Taking a page from NBC's *The More You Know* television campaign, Penn Waste created a series of six segments designed to broaden the communities' understanding of the vast array of materials that can be recycled. The goal for each segment was to present everyday items in seasonally specific or situational settings.

Sometimes people inadvertently place items into the waste stream due to habit or because they do not realize that new versions of items are indeed recyclable. Presenting items in their situational settings helps people better understand and remember the range of things that can be recycled. For example, one segment on household items was set in a laundry area with containers for household cleaning arranged for easy viewing. For seasonal awareness, the November segment was on holiday baking and highlighted how the containers and packaging for many kitchen





ingredients are recyclable. These 30-second spots ran on two regional stations and had a monthly reach of over 500,000 households and nearly one million adults, meaning each of the six informational segments had a significant regional viewership.

Many viewers of the television spots commented that the segments influenced dialog within their homes about what can be recycled and about items they didn't realize they could recycle. With such feedback Penn Waste feels that the segments accomplished their goal—to get people talking about recycling and sharing what they learned within their sphere of influence. Hopefully this will spur a change of habits within their homes. ■



To view or link to all six videos,
<http://www.pennwaste.com/resources/videos>

“We have found that most people are open to recycling and will recycle more items—as long as they are able to identify the items as ones that should be recycled. Cans and plastic bottles are no brainers, now we want to get aerosols, metals, other plastics and all sizes of cardboard as top of mind recyclables. Our goal is to create the ‘Did you know that is recyclable?’ dialog within our homes and communities. I am proud that Penn Waste is the regional leader who has taken up this flag for best community practices.”

—Scott Wagner