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Recology Sunset Scavenger and Recology Golden Gate, your local recycling companies

RECYCLE
COMPOST

Environmental champs

Let's give credit where credit is due: to those who took the time to really consider the issue and take responsible action.

We call them recycling champions. They are excellent recyclers. They also champion recycling at home, work, and to groups they are associated with.

The champs of San Francisco's recycle and compost programs range from huge entities to individuals. Here are some examples:

The Hilton Towers on O'Farrell Street is the largest hotel on the West Coast. It has five restaurants and serves more than 3,000 meals a day. When San Francisco launched its urban compost collection program more than 10 years ago, the Hilton sent its employees to the compost facility to see firsthand why it is important to compost.

Then the hotel removed the garbage disposals from its restaurant kitchen sinks and asked employees to place all food scraps and plate scrapings in green compost collection bins. And do they ever. The Hilton is one of the biggest participants in the program and also recycles all bottles, cans, and paper, including all cardboard.

Apartment buildings are other key players in this city's efforts to send less to landfill. More than 70 percent of San Francisco residents live in apartments, a very high percentage compared to other cities. The Cathedral Hill Plaza Apartments on Gough is a true recycling champion.

Years ago the complex set up recycling stations on each floor near the elevator. The stations include recycling bins, compost bins, and color posters showing what goes in each container. Residents keep kitchen pails for food scraps in their apartment kitchens and then toss their compostables in the green bins. Complex staff empties those bins on a regular basis to make sure recycling stations remain clean and functional.

"You have to make it easy for people," said Linda Corso, general manager for the property.

A decade ago some people had a false phobia that composting would be "icky." Today, new tenants are happy to see that Linda and her team have recycling and compost stations on each floor.

"San Francisco is changing for the better," she said. "People are much more ecologically minded than they were ten years ago."



City resident Elizabeth "Buffy" Francisco (above) has recycled almost all her discards for years and promoted a recycling ethic at other locations.

Cathedral Hill Plaza Apartments (left) set up recycling stations on every floor. "The key is to make recycling easy for people," says Lisa Corso, general manager.

Elizabeth "Buffy" Francisco lives in the Richmond District and is a longtime San Francisco resident. For years she has put next to nothing in her trash (black) bin.

Like other recycling champions, Buffy wants to starve landfills and has promoted a recycling ethic at other locations. She helped set up recycling and compost bins at her church, which meets in a multiuse building shared by another congregation, a YMCA, and a rehab program.

Buffy is undaunted when someone accidentally throws something in the wrong bin.

"It's really about educating people," she said. She takes the time to explain that

tossing material in the right bin makes recycling more efficient. She has put up posters showing what goes where so people come to know and understand the process.

Big or small, recycling champions play a critical role in San Francisco's efforts to help protect the environment. Let's all follow their lead and make recycling a good green habit in our own lives. After all, a healthy environment supports our own good health.

Know a business, group, or individual you believe is a recycling champion? Go to RecologySF.com/contact.php and send us their story.



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Action equals hope

As the new documentary “Trashed” makes compellingly clear, we humans must clean up our act if our planet and, by extension, our lives are to overcome the dangers of global waste. The film, featuring Jeremy Irons and written and directed by Candida Brady, won praise as the most meaningful documentary at the Cannes festival last summer.

“Trashed” makes its clarion call with grim visuals:

Irons in Sidon, Lebanon, dwarfed by a mountainous dump heap at the very edge of the Mediterranean. The Ciliwung River in Indonesia drowning under a never-ending tide of plastic. Fish and other animals mangled and strangled by plastic bags and other trash. Heart-wrenching scenes of Vietnamese children born with birth defects years after the U.S. military used herbicides and defoliants as part of its herbicidal warfare program.

The film also details serious environmental and health problems created by trash incinerators, which are now being branded as “waste-to-energy” facilities.

An hour in, one feels we’re damned. Then rays of hope. Brady puts Irons in Chateau Montelena vineyard, north of Calistoga, where compost made from food scraps and plants collected in San Francisco is used to grow cover crops between the rows of vines.

Returning food to farms as compost helps protect topsoil and gives farmers a viable alternative to chemical fertilizers. But there is an even bigger prize to be had if we all do the right thing.

We have long known recycling saves trees, energy, and water. New data shows recycling and composting are even more effective at helping protect the environment than we previously understood.

Tossing food scraps such as coffee grounds, carrot tops, and egg shells in a collection bin is a little like coming upon a fork in the road. The path you choose makes all the difference. Throw scraps

in a garbage bin and they go to a landfill and something bad happens. The scraps decompose in an anaerobic environment and produce methane, a potent greenhouse gas, much of which escapes to the atmosphere.

Instead, place your scraps in your curbside compost bin and a lot of good things happen. In addition to the benefits

It’s a choice. We can live in garbage and breathe in toxins from incinerators, or we can thrive in a healthy environment.

That is why it is important to take simple steps to stop creating so much trash, to reuse materials whenever possible, and to recycle and compost. That is why Brady’s film is important. That is why Irons was spot on in a recent



noted above, farmers use compost to grow healthy fruits and vegetables that come back to the city and ultimately support the good health of you and your family and friends.

interview when he said recycling programs should be standardized worldwide.

We owe it to our children and our grandchildren. We owe it to the earth. We owe it to each other.

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Recology Sunset Scavenger and Recology Golden Gate, your local recycling companies

Useful
Telephone
Numbers

Recycle, Compost and Trash Collection:
Recology Sunset Scavenger, 330-1300
Recology Golden Gate, 626-4000

Debris Box Service, 888-404-4008
RecycleMyJunk.com, 330-1300



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