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Reusable Cups in Alumni Dining Hall

Have you noticed the new reusable cups in Alumni Dining Hall? If not, make sure to choose a reusable cup next time you have a couple minutes to sit down and finish your beverage in Alumni. If you are in a rush, try bringing a reusable cup or tumbler to grab soda on the go instead.

Students in Rick Battistoni's Honors Policy course were assigned a project to implement change on the Providence College campus. After reading Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment, entitled *Laudato Si: On Our Common Home*, students couldn't help but jump on the opportunity to implement additional sustainability practices at Providence College, as a Catholic institution. A group of environmentally conscious students, including Katie Iwanowicz '21, Katie Queenan '18, Hadley Tate '19, Shane Sullivan '21, and Tom Hendrickson '21, teamed up in an attempt to make a lasting change in reducing the environmental footprint of Providence College. After floating a few ideas, these students ultimately settled on eliminating the massive amount of waste generated by the single-use paper soda cups in Alumni. Working with Stu Gerhardt, students managed to agree upon a trial period for the implementation of the reusable cups, lasting from the day after the Thanksgiving break, Monday November 27th, until the end of the semester.

These students recognized the immense amount of waste created by single-use products on our campus. Judging by the amount of students, faculty, and staff that dine in Alumni every day, we likely send hundreds of these paper cups to the landfill every single day. These cups and other similar products are used for a few minutes before spending the rest of eternity in the landfill. Using one of these paper cups everyday adds up quickly. Now, you have a much more sustainable alternative and can use a reusable cup instead, reducing your environmental impact as well as the college's environmental impact as a whole.



Which is more sustainable: real or artificial Christmas trees?

The question of which tree is most sustainable comes up each year around Christmastime: which tree is more sustainable, the real or the artificial tree? Investing in a fake tree one time, you can save on the recurrent cost of buying a new tree each year, you do not have to worry about watering the tree nor cleaning up the fallen pine needles, and you don't have to worry about whether you have to shove the tree in your trunk or find a way to attach it to the roof of your car. Though a fake tree might come with less headaches, is it more sustainable? Many experts actually believe that the artificial tree has a larger environmental footprint when its entire life cycle is considered. Fake trees are typically made with metal, polyvinyl chloride (PVCs), a non-biodegradable petroleum-based plastic, and may contain lead. According to the National Christmas Tree Association approximately 85% of artificial trees sold in the US are imported from China, increasing their overall environmental footprint. According to a study conducted by Ellipsos, an environmental consulting firm in Montreal, an artificial tree would have to be used 20 times in order to be more sustainable than buying a real tree each year. Ellipsos also determined that the annual carbon emissions associated with using a real tree each year are one third of those created by an artificial tree over a typical six year lifespan.



According to the EPA, over 33 million real trees are sold in North America each year. Incredibly, about 93% of those are recycled in one of the over 4,000 "treecycling" programs offered throughout the US. Trees can be recycled into mulch, used in landscaping and gardening, used as wood chips in playgrounds and hiking trails, or used to prevent erosion and stabilize vulnerable coastlines. One tree farm sequesters over one ton of CO₂ throughout its lifetime. Each acre produces enough oxygen daily to support 18 people! These trees do have many benefits but must be planted sustainably, meaning for every tree chopped one to three more must be planted to ensure a healthy supply of trees.

One downside to real trees is that they are farmed using pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, and other unnatural chemicals, unless farmed organically using integrated pest management strategies to replace harmful environmentally damaging chemicals. In addition, if the area you live in is not the proper climate to grow coniferous trees, the trees may have to be shipped hundreds or thousands of miles to arrive at the lot, significantly contributing to the environmental footprint of the real tree. Overall the real tree is better for the environment due to its ability to be recycled. However, if you want to be even more sustainable, consider buying an organic tree or investing in a potted tree. Potted trees can be replanted in your yard after the holidays or donated to your local parks department.

Sustainable Events at PC

Clean Plate Challenge: October 24th 11am-1pm, Ray Dining Hall

We had 351 clean plates and 424 plates with food waste, during two hours in Ray, that totaled 95.84 pounds. The food waste was brought to Earth Care Appliance, a local composting operation working out of Frey Florist on Radcliffe!



ECOPC's PC Recycles Day: November 28th

Slavin Atrium

RIRRC came and helped the ECOPC club teach students about recycling in RI!



Trouble Recycling at PC

According to Waste Management, two entire truckloads filled with "recyclables" coming from Providence College were rejected from the recycling center in Johnston, Rhode Island Resource Recovery. They were far too contaminated with non-recyclable items such as food waste, plastic bags, paper plates, paper towels, shredded paper, wax paper, straws, wrappers, Styrofoam, and much more. Plastic bags



and plastic wrap should **never** go into the recycling bins as they become entangled in the sorting machines at the recycling center and are very dangerous for the workers.

To keep it simple, bottles, cans, jars, metal cans and lids, aluminum foil, hard plastic containers, paper, cardboard, and cartons are the only items you should place in your recycling bins. If you have any recycling questions please reach out to the Office of Environmental Health & Safety and email aduryea@friars.providence.edu! You can also check out the Rhode Island Resource Recovery website for any questions about what you can recycle in RI!



If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact us at the Office of Environmental Health & Safety.

401.865.1881

recycle@providence.edu
www.providence.edu/recycling

Newsletter brought
to you by Alex Duryea,
Sustainability Coordinator

Be more sustainable this holiday.

Consider this! Americans throw away around 25% more trash between Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve. Do your part, don't be a statistic, and consider reducing the amount of waste you generate this holiday season.

Ideas to reduce your environmental footprint this holiday:

1. Make your own cards or buy cards made on recycled paper using non-toxic ink
2. Make your own gifts: knit, sew, bake, build, or make art! Make calendars with your own photos, make a collage, or make jewelry for your loved ones.
3. Regift or buy someone an experience, like concert, theater, or game tickets, gift certificates to a local spa or rock climbing gym, or items that your family and friends actually need:



35% of Americans have unused Christmas presents collecting dust in their closets

4. Buy sustainable gifts: buy gifts that are locally made, fair-trade, organic, durable, energy efficient, or made of recycled materials

5. Support local businesses by buying from your local merchants, or local craft or antique stores

6. Decorate your tree with energy efficient LED lighting. Remember to turn off the Christmas lights when they do not need to be on or plug them into a timer to save electricity.



7. Decorate your home with natural materials you find in your yard or with items you already own

8. Remember to bring your reusable bags with you when shopping both at the grocery store and when shopping for presents!

9. Be creative! Wrap gifts with newspaper, sheet music, maps, or carefully unwrap your gifts year after year so you can reuse the paper: If every American family wrapped just three presents in reused materials, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 football fields! Be sure to save ribbons and bows for next year!



10. Recycle your tree by leaving it out on the curb for Waste Management to take and compost or use for mulch or bring it to a drop-off location!