

Plastic Bag Drive: November 2017

Lily Sevilla & Anna Gibson

During the 6-10 of November the Recycling Coordinators hosted a plastic bag drive. The main goal of the plastic bag drive was to collect as many bags from around campus and the community so they can be properly recycled instead of ending up in the landfill. Other goals of the plastic bag drive were to raise awareness of alternatives to plastic bags and engage the student body to make the conscious decision to use reusable bags. The plastic bags collected during the drive and throughout the year are dropped off at the Super One because there is a plastic bag recycling bin located inside, the Super One has a private waste management company take their recycling and the manager assured that the bags do get recycled through that program, the Super One also occasionally donates the plastic bags to the Brick. The chip bags are collected in the recycling room and send to the TerraCycle program.

As for the drive itself, students could sign up in teams of 1-3 people. Teams could earn points by collecting grocery bags and terracycle bags, as well as by completing other activities. Only used grocery and chip bags were accepted as the collection of unused and new plastic bags would be counteractive to the goal of the drive. Team name and participants were recorded as well as the type of bag brought in, number of bags and total points from bag collection and activity completion. It was organized as such:

The point system used:

For bags

- 1 point per individual bag
- 15 points per group of 10
- 50 points per group of 25

For Activities

- 10 points per t-shirt bag made
- 10 points per email sent showing reusable in action
- 20 points to create a poster
- 100 points for committing to quitting
- 10 points per email sent showing reusable in action

For incentive to participate, prizes are to be given to the top three winners of the plastic bag drive. The prizes included, an reusable glass water bottle, a reusable canvas tote bag, and a produce bag set. The prizes increased competition in the drive as well as giving people an incentive to participate.

24 teams signed up for the bag drive, a total of 56 people. Though many teams signed up for the bag drive and participated in other activities, only 5 teams actually turned in plastic bags

as well as one individual who was not part of a team who turned in plastic bags. 28 individuals signed the 'commit to quit', the signing of which meant that they would no longer use plastic garbage bags for the rest of the school year. 6 individuals made and took home a t-shirt bag. Thought it may seem like a failing that only a limited amount of individuals actually turned in plastic bags, many individuals stated that they did not use plastic bags and used reusable bags instead, which is the end goal of this drive, to educate and encourage individuals to use reusables.

Bags Collected

Grocery:	918
Chip Bag:	12
Total:	930

Despite the short notice of the drive, the event was rather successful and plastic bag donation numbers were equal to last years drive, even though it had to be shortened to a week in length instead of two due to the Thanksgiving break. The bag drive was announced through 25 poster put up around campus, word of mouth, and Instagram and Facebook posts about the drive were created. The Coordinators tabled for around 17 hours during the week, each tabling for two hours a day. For next years drive it would be suggested that announcements about the drive take place starting around 2 weeks before and a student wide email be sent out about the drive. The drive could also be improved by educating individuals on reusable bags and having the drive be centered around the eventual disuse of plastic bags in favor for reusables. Perhaps reusable bags could be collected from the reuse room, thrift shops around town or donated by people who have too many prior to the drive, and each team that signs up is given a reusable bag and activities could be added to encourage use of the reusable bags.