



CONSERVATION

Hello, Jersey Juniors, and welcome back! I hope you all enjoyed your summer as much as I did. I am thrilled to be serving this year as the Chairman of the Conservation Community Service Program, and I hope we will all be working together this year to promote planet friendly living in our communities.

Everyone is familiar with the long-standing conservation credo, "**Reduce, Re-use, Recycle.**" As I mentioned in my summer introductory bulletin, I would like our clubs to focus this year on the theme of "reduce," -- reducing our consumption of natural resources, our production of waste and our use of energy. This can be particularly challenging in the fall, when we are in consumer and consumption mode -- purchasing back to school supplies and holiday decorations and gifts, resuming our constant rounds of gas-guzzling drop offs and pick-ups for our children's activities, turning up the heat as the days grow colder. However, just because the leaves are turning brown doesn't mean we can't inject some "green" into this season. Here are some great ideas your club may want to consider for projects you can lead in your community.

CREATE A RECYCLING LOOP OR EXCHANGE:

Toys, clothes, books, CDs, DVDs, furniture, sporting equipment, baby gear, household items: As web sites like E-Bay and Craigslist have taught us, one Junior's trash is another Junior's treasure, so why not establish a system for trading and swapping these types of items, either within your club among members, or if you can manage it, host swaps and exchanges in which your entire community can participate.

Your club can actually earn big bucks for your projects by recycling electronic items like digital cameras, i-pods, lap top computers, gaming consoles and cell phones as a fundraiser. Visit www.RecyclingFundraiser.com for more information and how to raise money keeping these items from the trash heap.

PROMOTE a "GREEN" HALLOWEEN:

Encouraging the recycling and re-use of Halloween costumes by hosting a costume exchange; encourage and promote the use of re-usable trick-or-treating bags; turn pumpkins into yummy treats or compost them when their time as decorations ends; purchase decorations that you can use again year after year.

PROMOTE COMPOSTING:

Organize an educational seminar on composting for your club members or community at large. Consider organizing a cooperative or community composting project for your club members or community at large.

PROMOTE "LOCAL" EATING:

Encourage club members to participate in locally grown food cooperatives or farm shares and promote doing so within your community; organize a community garden or promote the cultivating of home vegetable gardens within your community; host a cooking seminar, class, or recipe exchange using in-season, locally grown foods.

To find a co-op or farm-share near you, visit:

<http://www.naturaljersey.com/community-supported-gardens--co-ops.html>;

<http://www.localharvest.org/food-coops/>

WALK THE WALK:

Organize and promote weekly or monthly "walk to school" days within your community; organize and encourage car-pooling to school and to children's activities; educate your community on the public transportation options available for both local and long-distance travel and commuting.

RAISE AWARENESS:

Write up a short press release or newspaper article providing conservation and green-living tips on a specific topic each month and place it in local newspapers, town web sites, church bulletins, and school newsletters. Feel free to use excerpts from these monthly bulletins if you do not have the time or resources to write your own article, but keep it short and focused on one topic per month. Your local news outlets will be happy to publish it!

SHARE YOUR IDEAS:

Please drop me an email sharing your club's ideas for conservation projects and the great conservation projects you are doing, so I can share them with the Jersey Juniors. Your fellow Juniors may want to model your ideas in their clubs, or may want to help out with yours. And, make sure to check back here frequently for updates and resources. I am looking forward to hearing from all of you, and to a great year ahead!

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