

# Sustainability Sunday: Fact Sheet

## #3: Re-Think the Fourth "R"

This is the story of a great forest that caught on fire:

The terrible fire raged and burned. All of the animals were afraid and fled from their homes. The elephant and the tiger, the beaver and the bear all ran, and above them the birds flew in a panic. They huddled at the edge of the forest and watched. All of the creatures except one. Only Dukdukdiya, the little hummingbird, would not abandon the forest. Dukdukdiya flew quickly to the stream. She picked up a single drop of water in her beak. Dukdukdiya flew back and dropped the water on the fire. Again she flew to the stream and brought back another drop, and so she continued-back and forth, back and forth. The other animals watched Dukdukdiya's tiny body fly against the enormous fire, and they were frightened. They called out to the little hummingbird, warning her of the smoke and the heat. "What can I do?" sobbed the rabbit. "This fire is much too hot." "There is too much smoke!" howled the wolf. "My wings will burn! My beak is too small!" cried the owl. But the hummingbird persisted. She flew to and from picking up more water and dropping it, bead by bead, onto the burning forest. Finally, the big bear said, "Little Dukdukdiya, what are you doing?"

Without stopping, Dukdukdiya looked down at all the animals. She said, "I am doing what I can."

The hummingbird is often a symbol of beauty and agility, as well as optimism and wisdom, and a celebration of life in multiple cultures. From the indigenous tribes of the Americas to Japanese references to Buddhism and *Mottainai* or the process of not wasting resources and using them with respect and gratitude. The moral is obviously that no matter how small or seemingly insignificant your efforts may seem to you, trying to live sustainably and responsibly IS important and you DO make a difference.

So this week co-insiding with the release of the September/October issue of Greenability I would like to talk about "closed loop" recycling. As of right now based on current Kansas City waste practices our landfill is expected to be past capacity by 2020, that means our waste will have to be exported. We all know the 3 R's Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle but Julie Koppen the publisher of Greenability brings up the most important one: Rethink. A closed loop or "cradle to cradle" waste methodology means literally becoming a close to 0 landfill contributor. How is this even possible? Well calm down, listen up and

we'll f-ing get there. There are businesses in place right now and ones that are about to open their doors directly built to make this easier. The first step however is realizing that you do matter, your roommates, and family members matter, your entire community is connected through how you use and discard products- in short how we consume. The most important thing you can do to help the world around you is to put aside your identity as consumer and accept that before you were ever buying shoes you were breathing air as a plain and simple human being. We are all connected to larger systems, we are part of a whole and each part of the system we're in must be properly cared for and maintained.

It doesn't matter how much space or time you have- there is no reason you can't recycle. You should be separating paper, plastic, and cardboard as well as keeping a separate place for glass. As of September Ripple Glass is gearing up to open its Kansas City glass recycling plant downtown in November. 50 bins for glass deposit are now available throughout the city [see attached sheet for locations] and not only that but they DO NOT require you to separate by color so it's easier than ever. 85% of this will be turned into cullet and then made into fiberglass insulation for Owens Corning a local manufacturer. However you do need to wash out plastic and glass before you recycle it out of courtesy alone.

But what about the rest of it? IE food waste. Another local company called Missouri Organic deals with exactly that. They retrain and retrain companies on how to reuse their food waste. One of their biggest clients is Hallmark- now it doesn't matter if you like them or not the fact is they operate a giant cafeteria and are ironically one of the largest food purchasers in the local area. MO has gone in and made it a 0 landfill operation by taking the food waste and composting it or making it into mulch then reusing that in the very same company for landscaping around the facility. In doing this their clients take on the closed loop mentality- all the waste that is made from one location can go back into it. This is possible for you as well, your food waste can be composted if there is too much talk to your neighbors about community composting and working a community garden. If this is too much then talk to the Kansas City Garden Association and find a garden near you who would welcome the material to do the same. This and other types of thinking are ways to close the system, yet another company that has been around for quite a while called: Bridging the gap introduces companies into a pretty amazing barter system. Basically you find as many businesses as you can and make a list of their byproducts, then you see if another can use that as a raw material. Pretty soon the waste itself becomes another pathway to a product or service. Once again you can do this at small scale as well- Ever do any small construction? Did you know any leftover scraps you have you can take to any Lowes hardware store for a tax deductible donation? This is just one of a billion ways to get more efficient instead of wasteful.

The point is that there is always a way to do it, excuses and talk will always be just that. If you want to help the world around you and make it better you will. You are a hummingbird, and every other thing, the smallest effort matters and the city you live in is eager to help so get your damn eyes off the television, eat better and waste less. Try spending one whole day buying nothing and reusing every single item you waste, I dare you. Cheers-Dane.

## Ripple Bin Locations in and around KC:

- Boulevard Brewing Co: 2501 Southwest Blvd. Kc, Mo
- DST Systems, Inc: 11<sup>th</sup> & Wyandotte Kc, Mo
- DST Systems, Inc: 50<sup>th</sup> & Main St. Kc, Mo
- DST Systems, Inc: 18<sup>th</sup> & Main St. Kc, Mo
- Hallmark: 1 Block north of Warwick & 26<sup>th</sup> St. Kc, Mo
- Home Depot: 111 E. Linwood Kc, Mo
- Harrah's: 1 Riverboat Drive North Kc, Mo
- City of North Kansas City: 1901 Howell North Kc, Mo
- Harley-Davidson Assembly Plant: 11401 N. Congress Kc, Mo
- City of Overland Park Recycling Center: 11921 Hardy Op, Ks
- Owens Corning: 300 Sunshine Road Kc, Ks
- Sprint Campus: 6050 Sprint Parkway Op, Ks
- City of Roeland Park: Bella Roe, 50<sup>th</sup> Terr. & Roe Blvd Roeland Pk, Ks
- City of Liberty Recycling Center: 400 Suddarth Liberty, Mo
- Home Depot: 8598 N. Church Road Liberty, Mo
- City of Pleasant Hill Recycling Center: 203 Paul St. City Hall Pleasant Hill, Mo
- City of Excelsior Springs: 1290 S. Marietta St. Excelsior Springs, Mo
- City of Independence Recycling Center: 13600 E. 35<sup>th</sup> St. Independence, Mo
- City of Independence Recycling Center: 875 Vista Dr. Independence, Mo
- City of Lee's Summit Recycling Center: 2101 SE Hamblen Rd. Ls, Mo
- Gale Communications: 405 S. W. Longview Blvd. Lee's Summit, Mo
- Hen House: 1015 N. E. Rice Road Lee's Summit, Mo
- North Oak Market Place: Vivion Road & North Oak Trfkway Kc, Mo
- Metro North Community Recycling Center: U. S. Highway 169 & Barry Road Kc, Mo