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# Healdsburg Recycling News

Fall 2009

## Local 8<sup>th</sup> Graders Making a Difference



Plastic bags make up a very small percentage of the waste stream by weight and volume, but they are very visible. If not handled and disposed of properly, they are seen littering roadways, fence lines, and landscaping. In addition, they create an environmental hazard, impacting wildlife and waterways. While recycling is a good step to deal with the abundance of plastic bags, two local Healdsburg girls have embarked on an even better way of dealing with plastic bags than recycling: reusing them as a material to create crocheted bags that are stronger, more useful, and more fashionable.

Eco Chic is a new business of co-proprietors Molly Fuhrman and Bailey Kuebelbeck, both 8th graders at Healdsburg Junior High School. The idea of using

plastic as a medium came from Bailey's grandmother, who originally saw the idea of crocheting with plastic in Mexico. Bailey wanted to participate in the farmers market with her friends, and in early summer, started to create bags from reused materials. The

first step, and the most time consuming, is to cut the plastic bags into strips, creating what the girls call "plarn", or plastic yarn. The plarn is then crocheted into a durable and usable bag. They have created bags for almost everything, small bags to hold cell phones to a large, expandable bag for holding soft fruits. Bailey says, "We are

taking plastic bags and creating something more creative and long lasting."

When asked why they chose plastic as their material, Bailey responded that, "We wanted a better way to recycle, and everyone has tons of plastic bags". Used bags, as

well as other items like plastic table cloths,

are donated to Eco Chic at the drop off basket at the Healdsburg market table, by friends, or retrieved from grocery stores. The returns desk at Home Depot is now saving the bags from customers for the girls to collect and reuse. The average plastic grocery bag can produce about 40 feet of plarn. To produce one average sized Eco Chic tote bag, the girls will use 30 to 40 plastic bags.

Bailey and Molly are constantly thinking of new ideas and finding new ways to re-use materials. "We try to use as many things as possible", says Molly. Bailey adds, "We get things that can't be recycled and we find a way to reuse them, like plastic tablecloths." Co-workers of Rochelle Mueller, market mom, will bring her random items and ask if she has a use for them. It has given everyone a changed perspective on how items can be re-used or recycled.



"Sometimes its overwhelming," says Bailey, "but it feels good to keep something out of the landfill." A recent endeavor has been to use VHS tape in place of the plarn. The girls find that the material is a little harder to work with, but it gives a more elegant look and provides a stronger bag. Molly likes working with teal and maroon bags the best, while Bailey likes the tablecloths and the VHS tape.

In between school, sports, Girl Scouts, 4-H, and other activities, it takes the girls about 3 days to make a large bag. You can currently view and purchase their wares at both the Tuesday evening and Saturday morning Healdsburg Farmers Market. They hope to expand their business and sell at more locations, but they also want to put the idea out there and teach others how to create something more usable from plastic bags.

Eco Chic isn't the only new company in town using recycled materials. Caps is comprised of Esther Unti, Alia Tincknell, and Emma Linowski, who are also all 8th

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### Shop At:

Healdsburg Farmers Market  
 Tuesday 4-6:30 Plaza St.  
 Saturday 7-12, North and Vine

### For More Information Visit:

Eco Chic- <http://artist.to/ecochic>



# Single-Stream Recycling Guide

Place all Recycling Together inside the Blue Cart

## MIXED PAPER AND CARDBOARD

Flatten or cut boxes to fit loosely inside cart  
Place shredded paper in clear or paper bag

### YES

- White & Colored Paper
- Office Paper & Junk Mail
- Newspaper
- Magazines & Catalogs
- Cereal & Shoe Boxes
- Corrugated Cardboard

### NO

- Napkins, Towels, Tissues
- Food-Contaminated Paper
- Pizza Boxes
- Photographs or Blueprint Paper
- Waxed Cardboard or Paper



## MILK CARTONS AND JUICE/RICE/SOY BOXES

Remove straws & tops  
Empty before recycling

### YES

- Milk Cartons
- Drink Boxes

### NO

- Plastic-Lined Cartons
- Straws or Pop Tops



## GLASS BOTTLES & JARS

Remove caps & tops  
Empty before recycling

### YES

- Clear & Colored Glass
- Food & Beverage Jars

### NO

- Window or Mirror Glass
- Ceramic, Dishes or Stemware



## PLASTIC CONTAINERS

Wash & squash, remove caps  
Empty before recycling

### YES

- Plastic Containers
- Milk & Water Jugs
- Soda & Juice Bottles
- Yogurt & Deli Tubs

### NO

- Plastic Caps
- Styrofoam



## METAL CANS

Wash & squash, leave labels on  
Empty before recycling

### YES

- Aluminum Cans
- Steel & Tin Cans
- Bimetal Cans
- Empty Paint/ Aerosol Cans

### NO

- Plastic Caps
- Styrofoam

*continued from front page*

graders at Healdsburg Junior High. Also started in early summer, these young women often share a market table space with the



ladies of Eco Chic and sell their own jewelry creations made from re-used bottle caps. The original idea of using bottle caps for jewelry came from Esther when she saw pieces at a local art gallery. Like any crafter, she thought, "Hey, I could make that!" Joining up with her friends, that's exactly what she did.

Using discarded bottle caps from Powell's Sweete Shop and The Jimtown Store, the Caps girls started making earrings, bracelets, necklaces, and other items. Besides the obvious appeal of saving things from going to the landfill, these girls like working with reused items because they are accessible and easy to find. "Besides," says Alia, "it's cooler than buying materials." They also re-use the back of school notes and flashcards for their signs and price tags. You can see these creative jewelry pieces at the Healdsburg Farmers Market and drop off bottle caps of your own

for reuse. They will even do custom work for you if you have a special bottle cap.

The products of Eco Chic and Caps has received lots of support from market-goers, who remark "that's so clever." Some students at school, unfortunately, haven't seen the importance of using recycled materials. "But," the girls say, "it is necessary, and we have to care." Clearly, these ladies understand that it is going to be up to them to fix the environmental problems the past generations have left them. By creating usable items from objects that would be otherwise destined for the landfill and promoting reuse, these groups of 8th graders are doing a great job of reusing, reducing, and recycling. Molly, Bailey, Esther, Alia and Emma are model of how we should all start thinking.

