

Trash Talk!

Winter 2008

A newsletter of
Clean Fairfax Council

What's up with litter?

When you are out walking the dog or riding your bike, you probably see litter. Some of this litter is accidental. For instance, on windy collection days, some lightweight items blow out of trash cans or recycling bins. Other litter is the result of carelessness. For example, if you have loose paper and empty plastic bags on the floor of your car, they can

blow away quickly when you open the doors. But at least some of the litter was thrown out on purpose. You know what we mean—fast-food bags don't accidentally fall out of cars at red lights, and papers don't throw themselves on the ground at bus stops.

Unfortunately, all litter is equal once it lands on the ground. Wind and water move it around. According to Keep America Beautiful, nearly 20% of litter finds its way into our creeks and rivers, flowing toward the ocean. The remaining litter

gathers at the base of fences, gets caught in trees, or is scattered over the ground. Unfortunately, this litter creates a sense that "no one cares," inviting more litter.

In order to have less litter, we need to make sure that each person is both careful and considerate. Here are some tips. Feel free to share these with your friends, family members, and neighbors.

- ▲ Set a good example. Don't litter, and pick up litter when you see it. Even if it is just a gum wrapper in the school hallway, lean over, pick it up, and toss it into a trash can.

- ▲ Pick up after yourself. If you drop something on the ground, stop and pick it up. Dispose of it in a trash can or recycling bin.
- ▲ Pick up after your pet. When you walk your dog, be a good neighbor and take along a "poop bag." You can buy bags or use plastic shopping bags or newspaper sleeves. Carry the waste home and put it into your trash.
- ▲ Keep lids closed on trash and recycling containers. If your container doesn't have a lid, make sure heavier items are at the top on collection day.
- ▲ Tossing litter from moving vehicles is dangerous—especially to cars and bicyclists behind you. Don't do it!
- ▲ A car litter bag reduces parking lot and roadside litter. Loop an old plastic shopping bag over an armrest and you have a convenient, on-the-go litter bag.
- ▲ Help pick up litter. You could organize a cleanup this fall. The Clean Fairfax Council provides litter cleanup supplies on a first-come, first-served basis. All items are free of charge! For an application for the supplies, call Clean Fairfax Council at 703-324-5471 or visit our website, www.cleanfairfaxcouncil.org/cleanup.htm.

Report a litterbug

If you see someone littering, don't approach or talk to them about it. Instead, let us know what you saw, where it occurred, and when it happened. You can make your report by telephone at 703-324-3106 or by email at cleanfairfax1@aol.com. Or, you can download and print out a report form from our website, www.cleanfairfaxcouncil.org (follow link to "Report A Litterer").

Littering is against the law. The Clean Fairfax Council forwards these reports to the Fairfax County Police Department, which will investigate the report and take appropriate action.

Learn more!

Clean Fairfax Council offers a variety of environmental workshops and games that are informative, educational, fun, and FREE! Play "Environmental Jeopardy," learn "The Rotten Truth About Garbage," and more. The Council also assists Ecology/Environmental Clubs or other groups with schoolyard cleanups and school recycling programs. For details, ask your teacher or club leader to call Rosemary Byrne at 703-324-5471, or visit our website at www.cleanfairfaxcouncil.org.



Have a great idea for your school?

Apply for a Johnnie Forte, Jr. Memorial Litter/Recycling Grant

Clean Fairfax Council, in partnership with Fairfax County Recycling, is offering grants to Fairfax County Public Schools.

All Fairfax County Public Schools, or recognized groups within the school, are invited to apply for a grant of up to \$500 for a special project. Eligible projects must involve a litter prevention, litter control, or recycling theme.

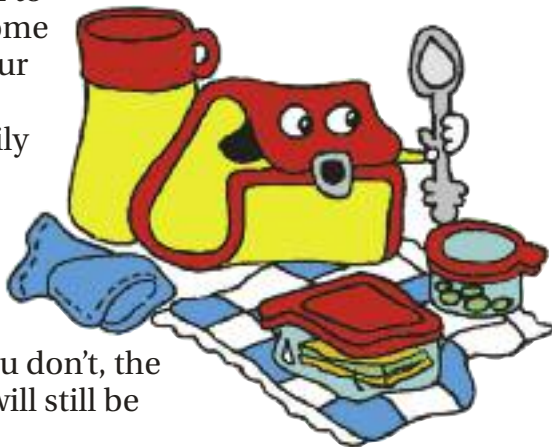
Applications must be submitted by December 12 of this year. Call 703-324-5471 to request an application or go to www.cleanfairfaxcouncil.org/forte.htm for a downloadable form. Awards will be announced in January of 2009, with funds to be sent out immediately following. Projects must be completed by April 15 so that a recap of the project can be presented at the Earth Day/Arbor Day Celebration held on April 25, 2009.

For more information, please call Rosemary Byrne, Executive Director of the Clean Fairfax Council, at 703-324-5471, or email cleanfairfax1@aol.com.

Pack a planet-healthy lunch

Do you carry your lunch to school? If so, we have some great ideas to reduce your lunchtime waste and probably save your family money!

- ▼ Carry a reusable lunch bag or box. You probably already have one of these. However, if you don't, the one-time purchase will still be



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We want to hear from you!

cheaper in the long run than buying disposable lunch bags.

- ▼ Buy lunch food in bulk. For instance, buy the large peanut butter and jelly jars and you'll pay less per serving. Buy big bags of fruit, vegetables, and snacks. This way, you'll get the least amount of packaging per serving of food. Also, when you buy in bulk, food products are usually less per ounce or per item.

- ▼ Pack food into reusable, washable containers. You probably won't need to purchase these. You can use containers that you already have or keep and reuse containers such as margarine tubs. You'll save money on throw-away plastic bags.



- ▼ Take drinks in washable containers or recyclable bottles. If you don't have a recycling bin at school, put your empty bottle back into your lunch bag and recycle it at home. Filling a washable container from the family-sized drink jug will be cheaper than buying individually bottled containers.
- ▼ Bring along a cloth napkin or washcloth to wipe your hands and face.
- ▼ After school, empty your lunch bag or box, wipe it out, and wash your containers. Remember to use hot, soapy water. You'll be ready for tomorrow's lunch!

Paper or plastic? No, thanks!

Reducing your waste is easy—stop accepting the free paper and plastic bags at the store. Once you get home to put away your groceries or other purchases, you are stuck with these bags. The bags are reusable, but a lot of them just go into the trash. Plus, many of the lightweight plastic bags end up on our roadsides or hanging from trees as litter.



Your family probably already has several canvas bags that you can reuse. If not, purchase durable shopping bags at a grocery or discount store. Put some in your mom and dad's cars. Then be the one who remembers to grab the bags on your way into a store.

Each year in the U.S., retailers hand out more than 380 billion plastic shopping bags and another 10 billion paper bags.

When you and your family say "No, thanks" to plastic and paper bags, you reduce the potential for litter, your family's waste, fuel used to deliver the bags to the store, and much more.

Carrying your own reusable bags is an easy way to help our environment and keep our community cleaner.

