

Quit throwing it away!

Student group promotes recycling paper, cans, plastic and cardboard on campus

By **REBECCA GLASSCOCK**
Special to the Courier

You read the newspaper. You know what's happening. You know that the United States uses one quarter of all the energy used each year and that our country emits one quarter of the carbon dioxide. You're aware of the fact that our planet is heading into the sixth great extinction and that the climate is changing too fast. You are probably sad that the beautiful mountains of eastern Kentucky are being sheared off to pull out the coal that will power our homes.

The magnitude of the problems are more than a bit overwhelming and will most assuredly require serious action at all levels, including at the level of you and me. Yes, at the level of you and me. We have the power to do things that hurt the earth, or we can make conscious choices to help. We can walk or ride a bike to school, change our bulbs to compact fluorescents, adjust the thermostat to save energy, choose durable rather than disposable goods, and we can recycle. Recycling is such an easy action, but it really is a valuable one. Here are some facts about recycling:

- Americans throw away about 35 billion aluminum cans every year. If all these cans were recycled, we would save an amount of energy equivalent to 150 Exxon Valdez oil spills annually.

- Aluminum can recycling saves 95% of the energy needed to make aluminum from bauxite ore. Energy savings in 1992 were enough to light a city the size of Pittsburgh for six years.

- One recycled aluminum can saves enough electricity to operate a TV for three hours.

- Americans discard 4 million tons of office paper every year. That's enough to build a 12 foot-high wall of paper from New York to California.

- The EPA has found that making paper from recycled materials results in 74% less air pollution and 35% less water

pollution. This means that every ton of recycled paper keeps almost 60 pounds of pollutants out of the atmosphere that would have been produced if the paper had been manufactured from virgin resources.

- Every ton of recycled paper saves approximately four barrels of oil, 4200 kilowatt hours of energy and enough energy to heat and air-condition the average North American home for almost six months.

- Plastics are made from petroleum - a limited nonrenewable resource. It is predicted that by the year 2040, the Earth's usable petroleum reserves will have been depleted.

- Americans use 4 million plastic bottles every hour — yet only one bottle out of four is recycled.

- Making tin cans from recycled steel takes only one-fourth of the energy needed to make them from new steel and creates only one-fourth of the water and air pollution created by making cans from new steel.

- Americans use 100 million steel cans a day. We throw away enough steel every year to build all the new cars made in America.

We want you to recycle at home, and at school. To make it convenient and easy for you to recycle at school, our college is introducing a new recycling program called BCTC C.A.R.E.S. (Campuses Advocating Responsible Environmental

Stewardship). Look for the blue containers with logo you see below:

- In these containers, place:
- CARDBOARD (packing boxes, pizza boxes, and any box that does not have a plastic coating; empty and flatten)
 - CANS (empty aluminum soda cans and rinsed steel food cans)
 - PLASTIC (soda and water bottles, detergent and condiment bottles)
 - PAPER (white and colored paper, envelopes, calendars, notepads, folders, newspapers, magazines, brochures, and phone books).

If you have a Rosie Recycler at home, you already know that you can place all of your materials together in the same container. Please do not put food waste or other non-recyclable items in the containers.

These recyclable materials will be taken to the regional recycling facility for sorting. The sorted materials will then be remanufactured into new products.

BCTC is offering an additional recycling opportunity. We are excited to be working with Cartridge World, located on Virginia Avenue in Lexington, to recycle used printer cartridges. Just place your used cartridge in one of the green-lidded cartridge bins around campus. For each cartridge recycled, BCTC's Sustainability Task Force will



Photo by LUCIE MACDONALD

BCTC student Crystal Miller created the logo seen below.

receive money to help with the recycling program and other sustainability efforts. As an alternative, you can take your used cartridge directly to Cartridge World. If you purchase a reconditioned cartridge from the company, as a BCTC student, you will receive a 5% discount.

Make make a commitment today to help make this campus more ecologically sustainable. If you have questions or would like to help, please contact the chair of the Sustainability Task Force, Rebecca Glasscock. Her email address is rebecca.glasscock@kctcs.edu.



Logo created by BCTC student CRYSTAL MILLER