



2016 Calvert County Recycling Awards Program Winner Synopses

Calvert Library Southern Branch won first place in the government category.

As the library staff said in its award application, the very idea of public libraries is based on the green concept of borrowing and sharing resources. The Southern Branch staff applied their creativity to the problem of plastic bags with their campaign, Bags Out of the Bay. The library stopped giving out disposable plastic bags and worked to give away reusable bags for customers to tote their materials.

Reusing the plastic bags brought out the cooperation and creativity of the greater Solomons community. Two community groups crocheted 20 reusable tote bags out of plastic bags. Each tote bag required 150 plastic grocery bags. This equates to 3,000 bags being removed from the waste stream in just three months, and that effort continues. The campaign has expanded to the Fairview library branch and Southern Pines Senior Center.

The Southern Branch made sure the recycling message reached its 10,000 monthly visitors with the help of a campaign mascot. The Plastic Princess, who is actually librarian Nancy Radcliffe, sports a full gown made of plastic bags. She is a sight to behold at public events as she sings her recycling message.

Other key folks in the effort were:

- **Maria Mayhew**, head of the Green Crafting group at Southern Branch Library, who motivated many volunteers to create the tote bags
- **Anne Sledge** of the Southern Pines Senior Center who engaged seniors in the effort
- And **Wendy Mitchell**, head of the Flying Needles knitting group that engages library customers in the program

Asbury Solomons Continuing Care Retirement Community is winner in the Housing category, 51 or more units. The Go Green Committee at Asbury Solomons takes waste reduction to an impressive level. The facility recycles 51 percent of its waste, and the residents are a key part of the program. Recycling information is part of new-resident orientation and is regularly reinforced through humorous skits, displays, bulletin postings and guidance from committee members.

Residents run enterprises such as Granny's Treasures and Betty's Closet which sell reusable, donated items. The Go Green Committee established a recycling area to accept small recyclables from residents when they check their mail.

Asbury Solomons also encouraged SODEXO, its dining and maintenance service provider, to use recyclable carryout containers and washable plastic glasses.

Recycling bins are placed next to trash cans. They are looking into compost bins in the local garden following the introduction of compostable carryout bags. Even with this inspiring track record, the Asbury Solomons Go Green Committee hopes to reach bigger achievements in the future.

The first place winner in the non-profit business category is **Calvert Memorial Hospital**. The hospital's Green Team believes in creating a green today for a healthier tomorrow. That idea involves healthcare that is good for the environment, patients, staff and the community. It also demonstrates that individual changes do add up to savings. For example:

- Motion detector lighting and lower wattage bulbs saved the hospital \$20,000 annually.
- Water-saving toilets resulting in an annual savings of 273,000 gallons of water.
- For fiscal year 2015, the hospital diverted nearly 200,000 pounds of waste from landfills by recycling.
- New laboratory equipment saved 390 pounds of glass biohazard waste and 160 pounds of hazardous chemical waste.
- The hospital created Office Supply Swaps in which items are swapped between various departments, thereby reducing duplication of supplies.

Calvert Memorial Hospital also provides outreach events to heighten awareness. At paper shredding events, employees shredded 3,000 pounds of documents that go back onto the recycling market. The Green Team recycled 628 pairs of shoes that will be sent to communities in Ghana. These are just two examples of

a comprehensive program to promote sustainability with hospital employees and the greater community.

Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant took first place in the for-profit business category for large businesses. Calvert Cliffs diverts 28 percent of its waste to the recycling market while producing a savings on disposal costs. The plant also recycles more than the majority of other nuclear power plants in its fleet. Much of this success is due to the Environmental Stewardship Committee, a group of employees empowered to identify, evaluate and manage environmental project opportunities.

Two years ago, Calvert Cliffs started a LED relighting project that included motion sensors to turn off lights if no motion is sensed after 15 minutes. Calvert Cliffs is reaping the great savings from energy and waste disposal costs with this new program.

The Environmental Stewardship Committee also calls on other power plants within the fleet for ideas or help. Two upcoming projects are the recycling of wooden pallets and metal. Committee members plan to recycle the materials in local Calvert County community instead of paying vendors to take them.

The second place winner for large for-profit businesses is **Sneade's Ace Home Center**. Sneade's has been a Calvert County institution for more than four decades. Because of this heritage, Sneade's cares about the environmental health of its community.

Last year, Sneade's recycled nearly 42 tons of materials from its two stores. Sneade's staff works together to ensure all cardboard, paper, cans, newspaper, toner cartridges and batteries are recycled. They cooperate with Bay Area Disposal and Call2recycle to accomplish their recycling.

The first place winner in the recycling industry category is **Planet Aid**. You have probably seen those yellow metal bins near parking lots. They are quietly doing a lot of recycling. Sixteen bins helped recycle close to 50,000 pounds of textiles in Calvert County last year. That's a 50 percent increase from 2014. Not only is this reducing landfill waste, it also reduces carbon dioxide emissions by up to 200,000 pounds.

Planet Aid shares its message in events and in the media all around the greater Washington metropolitan area. It also hosted a delegation from Russia to learn more about Planet Aid's facilities and processes.

Planet Aid knows that successful recycling means convenient recycling. Its collection bins fit in a small space, require little maintenance, and are easily accessible. Planet Aid designed a new indoor bin suitable for apartments and condos making recycling even more convenient for residents. This company is looking toward to new opportunities in Calvert County.

The first-place winner in the category of medium-size for-profit businesses is **Chesapeake's Bounty**. Chesapeake's Bounty believes that good eating and environmental stewardship go hand-in-hand. From its two Calvert County locations, Chesapeake's Bounty composts 750 cubic feet of organic matter. Plants, crabs and other material is high-heat composted on site. Customers can learn this skill for themselves by attending free composting classes. They can also contribute to the composting by disposing of their organic waste in the composting bins at each store location.

About 1,600 cubic feet of cardboard is either composted or recycled by Chesapeake's Bounty. Cardboard is recycled on site by laying it down and then covering it with mulch to deter weeds and retain soil moisture. It also makes up a good portion of their compost.

Chesapeake's Bounty returns oyster and clam shells to the bay for recolonization of oysters. The business also phased out plastic bags and replaced them with paper. Finally, trash that cannot be composted or recycled is taken to a waste-to-energy facility in Virginia.

The Rising Star award winner is the **Trash Troopers First Lego League Robotics Team**. This team tackled the problem of recycling LED lights. LED lights are recycled at a much lower rate than compact fluorescent bulbs. The team examined the health and environmental concerns with LED light disposal. Their research took them to the Appeal Convenience Center's light bulb recycling site to see how it is done here in the county. Their coach contacted a lightbulb recycling expert about LED recycling.

Realizing a lack of locations for LED recycling, the team developed a return package with pre-paid postage as a prototype for sending LEDs to recyclers. To share what they learned, team members performed a play to educate friends and families.

In the elementary education category, the recycling award winner is **Dowell Elementary School**. Dowell Elementary reduced its landfill waste by an impressive 26 percent. Student involvement drove the effort. Second graders made posters during indoor recess time to help promote the ideas of reduce, reuse and recycle. Instead of trashing over 49,000 juice pouches and almost 8,000 writing utensils, they sent them to Terracycle, an upcycling program.

The functional skills students collected 189 pounds of glue stick containers and sent them to Appeal Landfill for rigid plastic recycling. Students also saved and recycled plastic produce cups from the cafeteria for 46 days. Within that time, 2,650 cups were diverted from the landfill to the recycling market.

The school hosted a display at the Calvert County Green Expo to promote its efforts. The Dowell Elementary School Huskies look forward to continuing their recycling projects and improving their recycling. Congratulations.

The winner in the education category for middle schools is **Mill Creek Middle School**. Mill Creek achieved a 17 percent diversion rate as a Maryland Green School, a distinction they have held for the past 12 years. They did this through some interesting means. The eighth graders took old vinyl records and turned them into art.

Through a grant from Dominion, Mill Creek began composting and producing mulch for the school's flower and plant beds. Each morning green tips are given on the school TV announcements to the whole school body to serve as a reminder of proper waste and energy choices.

The winner for high school education is **Calvert High School**. Calvert High School students are re-establishing recycling practices at their school. Along with light bulb, electronic and shredded paper recycling, the students are looking at where recyclable waste is being generated. The students petitioned to bring back recycling in the cafeteria. They created signage and a space for plastic and aluminum container recycling.

The National Honor Society scouts the athletic fields after every game to pick up litter and separate recyclable items. With five new recycling containers for their athletic fields, the National Honor Society is looking forward to seeing improvements in the school's waste choices.