

## The Benefits of Recycling

**FACT:** Every year Kitsap County produces about 200,000 tons of trash and transports it to Columbia Ridge Landfill in Oregon. Much of this can be diverted from landfills and recycled. Recycling makes a positive impact on the environment. It not only provides materials to make new items out of old ones, it also reduces greenhouse gases and saves valuable resources. Aside from consuming a large amount of landfill space and wasting the earth's resources, waste leads to very expensive trash bills.

**What Can You Do to Help?** Recycle. You can easily divert enough material from the trash to make a difference. If you remove all recyclable items from your trash containers, you will be able to decrease the size of the containers and/or the number of collections per week! Waste Management and Bainbridge Island Disposal offer a single stream recycling program. Plastics (bottle, jugs and dairy tubs), glass, mixed paper, newspaper, cardboard, aluminum, and tin are recycled in the SAME single stream container. This allows residents to divert even more garbage to recycling and it only takes about two minutes per day.

*Important factors in the success of the Waste Wi\$e Communities recycling program are:*

- **Resident Participation:** Encourage resident participation. Just a few residents who do not recycle correctly, either by contaminating recycling bins with the non-recyclable items or throwing away recyclables, can greatly influence others. Contaminated and less than full recycling bins will send the message that the program is not important, so it's critical to build enthusiasm right from the start. In fact, some communities have used education, lease requirements, incentives and rewards to encourage individual tenants to reduce waste and recycle more.
- **Resident Education and Outreach:** Education is key. Continually educating your residents and maintenance staff guarantees the success and longevity of your recycling program. The Solid Waste Division will provide you with recycling information and additional educational materials to be distributed to your residents during the Waste Wi\$e Communities launch and throughout the life of the program. The goal of outreach efforts should be to promote enthusiasm while educating residents about recycling. For many, this may be the first time they are participating in a recycling program. Keep your residents informed and enthusiastic by providing consistent educational materials and additional environmentally friendly ideas.
- **Communication:** One of the ways that you can show and share your enthusiasm is through resident education and outreach. If your residents don't know about this program, or don't know how to participate, they won't! Distribute information in a new tenant packet, newsletter, or in the rent notification. Recruit one or more residents to help distribute educational materials and monitor recyclables in the trash. Educate your maintenance and office staff so they may also assist in monitoring and may answer questions posed by residents, especially when you are not available.
- **Feedback:** Ask staff and residents to share their opinions and suggestions on how your program is working, how it can be improved, what can be done next, who would they ask for assistance, and where additional sources for recycling are located. Feedback allows individuals to "buy into" your program and "own" the results. Add this information to a comment form if you have one or create a new one. You may be able to let the residents know that savings from the recycling may go towards upgrading shared facilities, a community event, or might defer the need for a rent increase.