

# STOP WASTE

May the 4Rs Be With You Contest 2024

## Katrina M.

11<sup>th</sup> grade, Fremont

### My 4Rs: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rot

**Reduce.** Reduce the waste you create. Reduce the rate at which you use things. Electricity, water, food, and all of the luxuries you use daily could be gone in the blink of an eye. That's how it could be for you, a world where those luxuries are nothing more than dreams just a breath away. Imagine a world where over-usage of our favorite appliances causes them to cease to exist. No electricity means no internet, no water means you're stripped of one of your basic human necessities, and no food means no life- in short, you would cease to exist without these appliances and luxuries. A world without these things would lead to pure chaos and destruction of the world. Out in the streets, individuals fighting over the last can of peas, over the final sip of water. From across the world, their distant family stays in another country, without the internet how would they get in their last goodbye before the inevitable strikes and they succumb to the bleakness of their life without their luxuries? The world would be nothing but a dark, cold, and damp planet that we once used to inhabit- the over-usage of our luxuries, and humans falling into greed would lead to our downfall. You wouldn't want that now, would you? Turn off the TV, stove, computer, light, and anything that uses up electricity after you leave the room. Don't waste water, take sensible showers, turn off the sink after you are done washing the dishes. And lastly, do not waste food, one of the most valuable things to mankind, we need food to survive. Finish your plate, you never know when your last meal is.

**Reuse.** Repurpose the materials that you do end up throwing away. There's only so much material to go around on Earth, eventually, we're going to run out so make the most of what we have now. That soda can you just threw away? Repurpose it into a reusable cup and save both time and money. The cereal box you thought about recycling. Is a good start, but you can do so much more with it. Ease your boredom from the darkness of life and light a fire- not literally, brighten your day with some arts and crafts that'll create permanent memories instead of the temporary bliss of eating that sugary cereal for breakfast. One man's trash is another man's treasure as they say, if you see trash on the floor pick it up! You could do the bare minimum of throwing it away or you could go far and beyond by making it into something new, be creative!

**Recycle.** If you're not creative enough to repurpose or reuse the luxury of choice, you can give it to someone else who might know how to repurpose it for themselves. Have a bin separate from your everyday trash can to put recyclable items into it such as cans, cardboard boxes, paper, glass, and plastic. You can do better for the Earth by picking up recyclable items and putting them into the correct bin, don't allow poor innocent animals to get to them and choke to death, be mindful! You could save a life by simply just recycling the items you no longer need. You could save both animals and people in need, be a hero, don't be a villain.

**Rot.** The final stage. Food. Water. People. Everything rots away eventually and you don't want to be there to see it, do you? Bio-compostable, becoming one with the elements of the Earth within no time at all. It could happen to any one of us, at any time- that's a scary thought to think of. It could also happen to anything we eat and drink. Though for food and drinkable liquids, it's a good thing, the food that you don't end up eating or aren't able to eat can be turned into compost. Instead of having a separate bin for compost this time, have a homemade outdoor bin in the ground made from nothing but dirt and the natural elements of the Earth. Put your food

into the hole and cover it up, then the food will decompose on its own and become one with the earth again, just like it started.

The cycle, should not and will never end. Things always rot away in the end no matter what it is, the world as we know it will rot away with time and there's nothing we can do to prevent the inevitable from happening. Unless we use this cycle the downfall of our Earth is near and we will all soon succumb to the misery of the loss of everything we know and love. We'll even miss the things we don't appreciate in life such as our simple luxuries, the things we need most but don't acknowledge. When you walk down the street don't turn a blind eye to the starving deer going for the single piece of plastic on the grass. Though it may not seem like a big problem, that piece of plastic could be the difference between life and death. Go up to the deer and offer it sweet tasty berries instead of the bleak taste of plastic, then you've not only saved a life but you've made a friend. Not only did you make a friend but you postponed the downfall of us all.

Me and my family use this cycle daily. We reduce the usage of our appliances by turning off the lights, sinks, stoves, ect. After we're done using them so as to not waste anything that we don't currently need. We avoid the risk of wasting food by giving ourselves portions that we know we're going to eat then getting more if we're still hungry, less is more in some cases. We save food in containers instead of throwing them away so that we could use them for later. We also like to do arts and crafts, something that comes handy to us when we need to throw things away. Instead we're able to reuse the items before throwing them away. We use glass plates instead of plastic for easy re-use, and before recycling food containers we use them to store other things instead. We have a separate bin for recyclable items in which we throw away glass, plastics, paper, water bottles, cereal boxes, and other things that can be put to other use. The apartments we live in have a bin to put compost into, since we don't have a backyard we put food that has gone bad into the compost bin in which the owners of the apartment put it to good use by decomposing it.

## My (Re)Generation Action Story:

I chose these 4R's because they're important to the life of not only me but everyone and everything on planet Earth. Displaying these 4R's leads us to a healthy world with a nice clean environment that we can comfortably live in. Without a display of even one of these things the environment would be unclean and not a safe space to live in for plants, animals or humans. It's a good deed to keep the planet we live on clean since it's been inhabiting us for centuries, its the least we can do for it. I participate in each and every one of these 4R's as I want to keep my community clean and I want a comfortable place to live for myself, my neighbors and anyone else who comes by my apartments. Reducing your appliance use is good for both you and the environment, going outside and taking a break from your appliances for a moment does good for your mental and physical health. Reusing things that you may have thrown away is fun, I like making artwork with the so called trash I might've thrown away if I didn't give it a second glance. Recycling comes in handy when I'm not feeling so creative, I can donate my trash to someone else and it could become their treasure. I hate wasting food, so allowing it to rot and become one with the Earth again brings me peace if it's gone bad and Im unable to eat it.

Read Katrina's full story online here –

<https://bit.ly/katrinastory>