



May the 4Rs Be With You Contest 2023

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1st Place Adult Outreach & Education

My 4Rs: Recycle, Rethink, Reuse, Readdress

Do you know what happens to the Bay Area's trash after Trash day?

By Xion Abiodun

Recently I was invited to StopWaste Schools Open House. Stop waste is a program I have been involved with since my senior year of high school. It is a program that teaches me a lot about being environmentally friendly. At the event, we were able to tour the transfer center for trash, basically, the place where our trash goes after it leaves us, but before it reaches the landfill. And seeing that in person for the first time was really shocking.

As you can imagine, trash was everywhere. On the property, they have a huge building and it is just full of trash. The smell is horrid, and so many things that could've been recycled were mixed up with the trash, which is awful. I was disappointed and a little sad to see that this is how much trash people are producing on the regular.

Trash and items that can be recycled should not be mixed up because unlike trash, items that can be recycled get turned into new stuff sometimes. And, transfer centers and landfills in the bay area do not separate the different types of waste. It is on us – the people – to separate our garbage, recycling and compost.

After our trash leaves the transfer center it is dumped into a landfill. Landfills are just huge holes in the ground where our trash gets dumped. Landfills take about 30 to 40 years to fill up, and when they finally fill up another one is created. This is such a huge problem because if trash is in the ground, then the Earth around it gets polluted as well. Most of our waste is not biodegradable, which means it will not just "disappear." It will break down into smaller and smaller pieces, getting into the environment around us, and eventually end up in everything like our food and water sources. Even if we burn our trash, the fumes from it will still be toxic to the environment and could pose health risks to anyone around it.

Before landfills were created, all of our trash (Bay Area) was dumped into the bay. This is one of the reasons why the Bay is so dirty today. When the people dumping our trash in the Bay realized that this was not a good idea, they resorted to dumping our trash in cities around the bay. And this still happens today. Just take a moment to think about

what that is doing to our bodies. What are some other alternatives that we can do with our trash so that it is not in the landfill polluting the environment forever? Email me and tell me your ideas at Xion.Abiodun@gmail.com.

Read Xion's full article
online:

<https://sfbayview.com/2023/05/do-you-know-what-happens-to-the-bay-areas-trash-after-trash-day/>

My (Re)Generation Action Story:

My four R's are recycle, rethink, reuse, and readdress.