

## 2011 Dumpster Dive totals

Volunteers signed in: 94

Faculty sending students: Effland, Bass, Dinchak, McLaughlin, Clinton

Total bags placed on the lawn: 349

**Total bags sorted: 222**

After the recyclables were pulled out, only **15 full bags of real actual trash** remained.

**Recyclables removed:**

**Cups: 1066**

**Cans: 162**

**Bottles: 630**

**Cardboard: 179**

**Paper: 91.6 pounds**

**Other plastic food and packaging: 242**

**(Glass was minimal, just a dozen or so bottles)**

10 barrels total, approx. 35# per barrel = 350 pounds cups/bottles/cans/plastics (doesn't include paper)

- Right now, on average each week we put out approximately 40 barrels for city pickup. If we were able to recycle every day the additional items we found in the trash today, we would put out NINETY barrels each week for collection!!! That's 1,750 additional pounds of recycling PER WEEK.

## **THERE WERE 127 MORE BAGS WE DIDN'T EVEN SORT!!!**

Other facts:

Food: 63.5 pounds (we didn't get cafe trash this year)

Grocery bags: 397 (most are recyclable at grocery stores but not on campus)

We also pulled out some electronics that are recyclable.

Although chip bags, candy wrappers, and cookie packaging is NOT recyclable, we sorted them to show the disposable single-use mindset of society.

Many people commented that their trash bag hardly had anything in it and asked why custodians didn't just combine it with another bag instead of using a bag for nothing. This will be presented to M&O as an efficiency measure and cost savings.

We got an additional 31 signers for the paper reduction pledge.

## Annual recyclables going into trash:

1066 cups per day, 5 days per week = 5330/wk = 266,500/yr

162 cans per day, 5 days per week = 810/wk = 40,500/yr

630 bottles per day, 5 days per week = 3150/wk = 157,500/yr

242 pieces of other food packaging per day, 5 days per week = 1210/wk, 60,500/wk

Plastics, cups, cans = 350 pounds per day = 1750 lbs/wk = 87500 lbs/yr = 43.75 tons/yr

**We pay approx. \$70/ton to landfill, so we spend \$3062.50 to landfill our recyclables that we could be recycling for free.**

91.6 pounds paper per day, 5 days per week = 458 pounds/wk = 22,900 pounds/yr = 11.45 tons/yr

**We earn \$70/ton for recycling paper, so we throw out 11.45 tons, or \$801.50, in addition to spending approximately the same amount to landfill it instead. Total loss on paper would be \$1603.**

I haven't compared year-to-year stats because we have been adding recycling, adding buildings, having less volunteers each year (so less is sorted), and because we look for different types of info each year during the sort. This year, for example, no cafe or bathroom trash was included, which accounts for less food and paper towels being sorted than in the past.

## Comments

- It was nice being able to help clean up our campus. I was not aware of how much trash there was until we started cleaning up. We picked up mostly plastic bottles and soda cans along with a lot of paper. It amazed me how many people throw away plastics and aluminum into the trash bin instead of the recycle bin. It opened my eyes into how much we all need to recycle more.
- Admittedly this was not the first time I've rooted through the trash, but it was the first time I've analyzed it in an academic capacity with my fellow waste management scholars. My general impressions of the garbage at MCC is that we are a disposable and wasteful microcosm: so much of what we found was paper towels, disposable drink and food containers and chip bags. This is not even including the heaps of unopened applesauce, Cool Whip or all the uneaten food scraps. Not that I'm saying people should stop eating, but that if everyone brought a reusable beverage container just once a week we could cut back a lot of what goes into the landfill. We also throw out lots of bags: we found bags within bags within bags, and some of them were just empty. Lastly it's remarkable how many recyclables don't end up in the recycle bin: the bins are placed right next to the trash cans, so it's not like some huge effort. Overall it was really unique experience.
- This was my first dumpster dive experience and was quite interesting for me to take part in. The most interesting thing I found was that there were a lot of pizza boxes that were put into the garbage. I was told that Cardboard is a material that can be recycled so that it can be made into something new. Another recycling item that I found multiple times in the trash was paper. This was removed from the trash and then put into the appropriate recycling bin. Overall, this experience was one that allowed me to learn about the type of items that everyone at MCC throws out. I will hopefully use this knowledge in my day to day life with the items that I recycle and the items that I don't.
- The place I work at, we deal with a lot of garbage, so the smell and garbage itself didn't bother me. What surprised me was the amount of recyclables mixed in with the normal trash. Also, the amount of wasted food that goes in to the garbage. People need to learn how to clean their plate and not waste so much. Expected, most of the trash was soda bottles, chip bags and the basic junk food wrappers. That's is to be expected though given the crowd. The trash elsewhere may be totally different. Interesting experience overall.
- Before arriving I pictured there would be tons of students, balloons, confetti, heavy traffic, and of course lots of garbage. Well I was right about the trash, but I fell short of students, and the traffic. But I couldn't understand why the parking lot was still full! But over all I got there and the staff greeted me with a warm welcome. So me, and a student I didn't know grabbed our needed materials and jumped right on in. We picked up 3 bags of trash and dissected them thoroughly. Picking through the trash is not all that fun, the things that were in there were not practical, but "hey" is trash practical? From cups, lids, food containers, computer hardware, untampered still wrapped food, you name it MCC had it. There was even a dead Dove in the trash, a toast to the groundskeeper team for a proper burial.

- During the dumpster dive I was really surprised at the things I was finding in the trash.

The amount of recyclable material found was very disappointing to find in the regular garbage. I was also wondering why there weren't more people at the event. More classes should get involved as there was a lot of trash that we didn't get to during the event. Also most of the people at the event were part of the class, there was only about 3-4 people that weren't in the class.

- My experience in the mesa community college dumpster dive event on

Friday 18<sup>th</sup> 2011 was very different. I was amazed at the amount of garbage bags piled at the center of campus. Everyone participating may have been a little grossed out at the sight of what was actually in the garbage bag itself after being opened. We found various things that were still recyclable and other items that were not. From what I see and did in that community service project there are a few ways to turn this into a big program or course at MCC.

- My dumpster dive experience was very different than what I was expected, I thought

because Mesa is a clean city, that people living here was very good a recycling, I was wrong. I thought that I would find a few things one or two bottle, cup or can in the trash, but not has many as we found in each bag we open in one day worth. I found that most people don't recycle out of bad habits, they either don't know what is recyclable, and throw everything in the trash. I was also surprise that so many plastic bottle, cans, and cups that should have been put in the recycle bin that sits right next the regular (land fill) trash bin. I think they just didn't care. However this experience has made me more aware of my own choices about were in put my trash, especially my plastics.

- This was my first dumpster dive and it was very interesting. I was expecting lots of

garbage but not as much as I saw. I thought there was going to be few bottles and papers but when opening each bag we found so many different trash. After a while of sorting the trash it wasn't so bad. I found a lot of food containers with half eaten sandwiches and bottles with drinks still in them and pizza boxes with the crust and chicken bones in them. We found a lot of interesting stuff. Over all this dumpster dive was fun and a great first time experience. I would probably do it again.

- The dumpster dive was interesting. It smelled horrible, and digging through other peoples trash was not what I would call fun. But it did give some insight into what people

think is just trash. There were a lot if recyclable soda bottles but not as many water bottles. I didn't think there would be so many because of the recycle bins that are right by the trash bins all around campus. I think people are either being lazy or just don't think about recycling basic things like soda bottles. One thing I liked was the availability of gloves and masks.

- I appreciated the organization of the event from the sign in and instructions to the

clearly-marked bins and cans. I was also glad to find the event held in the shade of the ash trees on center lawn. I was surprised by the amount of liquid and paper, especially paper towels and napkins, that was found in the bags. I think that the campus can do a better job in reducing the amount of napkins, paper towels, and non-recyclable cups that are available. As for recyclable products in the garbage, I think the campus should create and post signs near the trash/recycle bins that educate the student on the materials that can be recycled, and which materials cannot.

- The dumpster dive was an interesting event in my opinion. It was something different because it was very hands on and gave you a feeling that you got up close to the issues. I would have liked to have seen more people involved. The classes seemed to have having a good time for the most part there was a lot of class discussion about the waste issues and how we as a species collectively can help to reduce or waste amount. Over all I thought it was a great event and was beneficial to our understanding. The only thing I could think I would add is to have more people maybe even invite the local community to a similar event.

- I think the dumpster dive was a very worthwhile event. It really surprised me how much of what we throw away is recyclable. I think a lot of people just think of recycling as soda cans and that's it. But there really is a lot more that we can recycle. It was really interesting seeing how wasteful this campus is and the many things we can do to help that. One of the things that I would suggest is just spreading awareness about what can be recycled because I think most students do not know what can be recycled and what can't and it is just easier to throw it in the trash than try and figure out if it is recyclable. Over all this event was well managed and a very good way to bring awareness to the students on campus.