

The Campus Green



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September 2017, Issue 24

Dorm Room Recycling Bins!

Students living on campus, have you noticed the recycling bin in your room? Recycling bins are new to student dorms this year! Thanks to the Office of Environmental Health and Safety, students in a PSP Community Organizing class last semester, and ResLife, every student dorm room or apartment now has a recycling bin. The recycling bins are labeled with a mixed recycling sticker to help you learn the basics of recycling in Rhode Island. These recycling bins are property of Residence Life and, therefore, if they are damaged or go missing, you will be charged to replace them. They are labeled with your dorm and room number so if you see bins in the trash room or in the hallways, please return them to their respective rooms. If you have any questions about whether something is recyclable or not, feel free to send an email to recycling@providence.edu, call 401.865.1881, or follow @pcgogreen on Instagram to learn recycling tips!



Plastic Film Should NEVER be put in the Recycling

Although plastic bags are recyclable, they cannot go in the mixed recyclables bin or tote. Anytime a plastic bag is put in the recycling, regardless of whether it is used to hold recyclables or not, it gets caught in the recycling sorting machine at the Central Landfill's Materials Recycling Facility. This forces workers to stop the machine, halting the sorting process, climb on the machine, and use tools to pry the plastic out of the gears. Doing this is dangerous for the workers and causes a huge reduction in their productivity due to lost time ensuring the machine is working properly. This problem is definitely an avoidable one if we spread the word that plastic bags never belong in the recycling bin. That being said, any stretchy plastic bag, not just the white or clear plastic bags from that store, such as newspaper bags, English muffin bags, salad bags, and Ziplock bags with the zipper cut off, can be placed in the plastic bag recycling drop off areas at your local grocery store. These recycled plastic bags are then molded into usable objects such as park benches. Though this is a great way to recycle plastic bags, it is far better to use a reusable tote or ask for a paper bag when shopping anywhere.



Keurigs are the hottest new item in offices around campus. However, the K-Cups produced from the single-serve coffee are hugely wasteful. The creator of the Keurig, John Sylvan, has feelings of regret after making such a wasteful product. In fact, he doesn't own one himself, stating it is expensive to use and that its not difficult to make drip coffee. According to TIME, the Keurig pods disposed of in 2014 alone would already circle the Earth 12 times. In an article written in the New York Times, "Keurig acknowledges that over all, the greenhouse gas emissions associated with its coffee system are higher than those from brewing an equivalent amount of coffee the old-fashioned way." Keurig is working on creating a recyclable K-Cup, but making them



in the first place is still hugely energy-intensive. Just because something is recyclable does not mean it will be recycled. Recycling centers still need to be able to collect these small plastic cups with their existing sorting machines and someone needs to be willing to buy the K-Cups from them. The Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation, the company responsible for recycling in Rhode Island, does not accept K-Cups in the recycling because they are too small for their machines to accurately sort and process. Ms. Hoover of the Natural Resources Defense Council said, "single-serve coffee is a solution to something that wasn't a problem." Keurigs were created to ensure that everyone can have a beverage of their choice, but is it really that difficult to agree on a type of coffee that most people like? A French press is also single-serve coffee but does not create nearly the amount of waste a Keurig does.

Green Mountain is a company that bought Keurig and prioritizes sustainability. They came up with an idea to reduce the massive amount of waste generated by K-Cups. The program they created is called Grounds to Grow on that came to this campus thanks to Alyssa Marton, Assistant Director in the Office of

Academic Affairs. This program sends boxes in which you place used K-Cups, and once the box is full you put the pre-labeled box in the mail. The company turns the grounds into compost and the plastic cup into energy. The plastic is converted into energy by burning it, thus turning it into steam and then electricity. Facilities using this waste-to-energy technology have implemented various air pollution control equipment such as scrubbers and filters to reduce the pollution associated with the burning of plastic. They claim it is renewable energy, but that is still up for debate. Either way, it seems better than throwing all those plastic cups in the trash. I, myself, will be sticking to brewing coffee in a pot. If you have a Keurig in your office, care about reducing waste, and would like to be a part of the Grounds to Grow on program, email aduryea@friars.providence.edu for a box and list of instructions!

Interested in learning how faith and environmental protection intersect? Want to meet and network with groups and companies in RI that prioritize the environment?

Come to the 10th Annual Interfaith Conference on Climate Change on October 16th in '64 Hall from 5:30-9:00pm!

Tim DeChristopher will be speaking and dinner will be provided!

Admission is \$10 for students and \$30 for general admission!

Registration deadline is October 8th!

Register here: <http://www.ri-ipl.org>

Interfaith Power & Light

**10th Annual Interfaith Conference on Climate Change:
Transforming Prayers into Passionate Action**

*featuring Tim DeChristopher,
a prominent leader in the Climate Justice movement
with the music of Bryan Cahill*

What?
Enjoy a delicious dinner, network with climate change enthusiasts, and take local climate action all in one evening! Our educational conference will inspire immediate climate action and a group of Rhode Island based environmental companies and organizations will be available to assist you.

Where?
Providence College
'64 Hall, Slovic Center
251 Huxley Avenue
Providence, RI 02908
All attendees must park in the Johnson Parking lot.

When?
Monday, October 16, 2017
5:30 PM - 9:00 PM

General Admission \$ 30.00
Student \$ 10.00



Tim DeChristopher

Register: www.ri-ipl.org

Basic Recycling Guidelines at PC

At Providence College, we have single stream recycling, which means that most recyclables can go in the same recycling bin. Mixed recycling includes plastic containers, aluminum cans, glass bottles and jars, cartons, and paper.

Cardboard, however, is recycled separately because it is sold separately from other mixed recyclables, and provides the college with credit on our waste and recycling bill. On the loading dock outside the back of the Peterson Center as well as down by Physical Plant, there are huge dark blue cardboard compressors. All the cardboard on campus is put into those compressors, unless it is improperly put into recycling bins around campus. It is not the job of ABM staff members to sort through your trash and recycling to check whether your waste has been properly sorted. In order to perfect your recycling, please pay close attention to the mixed recycling stickers on totes and bins around campus. In order to properly recycle cardboard, please breakdown cardboard boxes and leave them **outside and next to** the recycling bins and totes, in trash



rooms, offices, and all indoor recycling bins around campus. If you are walking outside around campus, please find an indoor recycling bin to place your broken down cardboard box next to.

In your personal dorm rooms or offices, please do not line your recycling bins with a plastic bag unless you plan on leaving the plastic bag in there and emptying only the loose recyclables into the recycling tote. As mentioned above, plastic bags are really harmful to recycling sorting equipment.

If you do not have a recycling bin in your office please use the information below to contact the Office of Environmental Health & Safety.

Copy and paste the link below in your browser to watch a video explaining how to recycle right in RI:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_L7Ch8Nyrw

Shredded Paper Cannot go into Mixed Recycling Totes

We shred massive amounts of paper every single day at PC. Unfortunately, shredded paper is not accepted in the mixed recycling stream, or your curbside recycling, in Rhode Island. When shredded paper goes through the sorting machine at the recycling center, it is shredded into even smaller bits and creates a kind of paper dust that coats everything in the room. Paper dust cannot be salvaged or recycled and is very difficult to clean up. However, you have the option to compost your paper shreds or drop them off at the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Center in Johnston in the Small Vehicle Area.



In order to reduce the amount of documents we shred at PC, we need to understand exactly what is a

document with sensitive information that needs to be disposed of properly. Documents with social security numbers, bank or credit card numbers, medical records, or forms of ID are considered sensitive documents. Instead of shredding, you can use a sharpie to black out sections of the paper with the sensitive information or you can cut them out, ensuring that the paper is intact and can still be recycled. Items with your name, address, and phone number are not sensitive. The RIRRC website suggests attending shredding events where you can bring up to two recycling bins full of sensitive personal documents per vehicle. The next Shred RI event at 2111 Plainfield Pike in Johnston, RI takes place on November 4th from 8am to 12pm.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact us at the Office of Environmental Health & Safety.

401.865.1881
 recycle@providence.edu
 www.providence.edu/recycling

Newsletter brought
 to you by Alex Duryea,
 Sustainability Coordinator