

The Reusable Bag Challenge

Washington DC Trip organizers are looking for St. Mary School families and friends who are willing to underwrite the cost of purchasing reusable bags to offer as an alternative to the one-use plastic bags. In exchange, a company's logo or sponsor's name will be imprinted along with those of up to eight other sponsors. These bags will be sold at \$2 each or 12 for \$20. Proceeds will go towards the trip's fundraising efforts.

Here are some website links where you can find out more about the effects of the growing number of plastic bags that end up in our landfills including what albatrosses on Midway Island are feeding their young and how sea turtles mistake them for jelly-fish, their primary food source:

<http://science.howstuffworks.com/great-pacific-garbage-patch1.htm>

<http://www.reusablebags.com/facts.php?id=2>

The site above has a counter that shows the number of bags used this year at a rate of about 10,000 bags per second. The site below has some basic information on the numbers related to plastic bag use, but notice that the copyright date is 2004-2005, which means these numbers are significantly obsolete by 2008!

<http://www.myownbag.com/activism.html>

Countries all over the world are coming up with initiatives to reduce the use of plastic bags by taxing those who use the bags or giving rebates to shoppers who bring in their own reusable bags.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2205419.stm>

We acknowledge that we can't save all of the world's problems in one fell swoop, but we can start with something as simple as this. Some sources say it could take up to 1,000 years for plastic bags to biodegrade. Recycling is a novel effort, but it, too, comes with a price.

Consider this: most families who shop weekly probably use at least 10 plastic bags a week which translates to 520 bags a year. Multiplied by the 306 student families plus the 33 staff families, we, as a school community, consume about 176,280 bags a year! What better way to affect a change than making a commitment to reduce the use of plastic bags by using reusable bags.

Won't you help? Interested underwriters, please contact Cecile Mantecon at mantecon@stmarygilroy.org.