

Going Green - 2017 (2).docx

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Remember the 4 R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repair

This month I am sharing a statement jointly composed by Partners for the Environment and Greater Buffalo Recycling Alliance:

The Buffalo Public Schools Should Come into Compliance on Recycling

Buffalo is starting to make progress on recycling more and wasting less. Buffalo is to be commended for making recycling a priority. Mayor Byron Works Commissioner Steve Stepniak, and Recycling Coordinator Susan worked hard to educate Buffalo residents on how easy it is to recycle and how good it does for the environment and for the City's finances.

Did you know, for example, that recycling an aluminum can reduces energy consumption and air pollution by 95 percent? Or that every ton of paper we recycle saves 171 gallons of water? Did you realize that recycling saves the taxpayers more than the fees the City must pay for its garbage pick-up and land filling?

Unfortunately, some businesses, non-profit organizations, and even government agencies have not yet got the message. One particular embarrassment is the Buffalo Public Schools. It turns out that most city schools have only partial recycling programs. Very few of them are in compliance with the City's law, which requires all organizations to sort out all recyclable goods, including paper, plastic, glass, and not throw them in the garbage. In addition to breaking an important environmental rule, schools are teaching their students a bad lesson: that it is okay to throw away recyclable goods. The students then take that lesson home with them, and our recycling rates suffer, too.

Setting up a full recycling program at a school is not that hard, and some schools have already done it. The Greater Buffalo Recycling Alliance offers a simple guide with instructions for a successful program. Most schools already recycle cardboard and paper. All that needs to be done is add glass, plastic, and metal. The City will provide them with free recycling pick-up service, so it will not even cost them any money. In fact, it should save them money as they begin reducing the amount of garbage they send to the landfill.

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