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**Unsung Hero: Celebrate Textile Recycling This Global Recycling Day**



*Donations collected through SMART member Green Zone Recycling's bins waiting to be sorted.*

**ABINGDON, Md.** (March 11, 2020)—The Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles (SMART) Association is celebrating Global Recycling Day on March 18, 2020. This annual awareness day is organized by the Global Recycling Foundation and is designed to promote the role recycling plays in preserving the earth's primary resources. The event's 2020 theme is "recycling heroes" – a salute to unsung recycling heroes across the globe including people, groups, organizations, and businesses who champion recycling practices and habits.

For SMART, increasing awareness of textile (any fabric made of interlacing fibers) reuses and recycling is of utmost importance on Global Recycling Day. Textile waste has a dramatic global impact; the average

US adult discards 81 pounds of clothing each year. Of this, only 15 percent actually gets donated or recycled, with a staggering 85 percent of textile waste directed to landfills.

“SMART’s membership of for-profit companies in the textile reuse and recycling industry are ‘recycling heroes’ worth celebrating this Global Recycling Day because of their combined global environmental impact,” says Jackie King, executive director of the association. “What many don’t realize is that through the work of our members, nearly 1 billion pounds of textiles are diverted from landfills annually, which saves our environment from tons of harsh chemicals, waste products, wastewater and greenhouse gas emissions.”

One member making a significant impact in our community is Green Zone Recycling. The company, founded more than ten years ago by Gage Moretti, operates clothing donation and collection bins in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia. Through partnerships with churches, businesses, nonprofits, thrift stores and property management companies who host the donation bins, Green Zone has collected more than 34 million pounds of textiles from landfills in the past three years alone.



*One SMART member company, Green Zone Recycling, makes a significant environmental impact each year by operating clothing donation bins in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia*



*Discarded textiles baled and ready for distribution.*

On a weekly basis, representatives from Green Zone visit each bin, empty its contents and transport the materials back to its warehouses where they are sorted and baled for distribution to companies who purchase, reuse, and recycle the material. Once the material is sold, a portion of the proceeds are returned back to the collecting organizations to support their programs and services.

“We take great pride in the work we do at Green Zone,” says Moretti. “Our company, like many other SMART members, works to make a positive environmental difference in our communities. Some may call us ‘heroes’ because much of our work is truly centered around making the world we live in a better place – in this case it’s just one discarded textile at a time!”

SMART advises the public to make a difference by keeping textile recycling top of mind. Household items such as clothes, shoes, belts, curtains, purses and stuffed animals can be recycled as long as they are clean, dry, odor-free, mold-free and have not been contaminated with solvent-type liquids. For information on SMART, or to learn what options are available to recycle textiles, visit [www.smartasn.org](http://www.smartasn.org). Please direct media inquiries for SMART to Patrick Seidl at 410-420-2001 or by email at [Patrick.Seidl@fallstongoup.com](mailto:Patrick.Seidl@fallstongoup.com).

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#### **About SMART**

Established in 1932, the Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles Association (SMART) is an international nonprofit trade association that strengthens the economic opportunities of its diverse



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membership by promoting the interdependence of the for-profit textile recycling industry segments and providing a common forum for networking, education and trade. SMART members use and convert recycled and secondary materials from used clothing, commercial laundries and non-woven, off-spec material, new mills ends and paper from around the world. SMART member companies create thousands of jobs worldwide, proving each day you can make money by being social responsible.

#### **About [Global Recycling Day](#)**

Global Recycling Day is an initiative of the Bureau of International Recycling (BIR). BIR is the global federation of the recycling industry, representing the interests of the global industry. One of BIR's key objectives is to promote recycling globally – showcasing its benefits to industry, policy makers and the wider community.