

donate recycle don't throw away®



Dear Family,

An important part of teaching children responsibility involves demonstrating how to take care of different types of resources. At school, that might involve treating books with care or using the back of a sheet of paper. At home, that might mean being careful not to stain or tear new clothes or recycling glass and aluminum. Using what we have, and using it wisely, makes sense!

We've been learning about a different type of recycling in our class: recycling clothing and other textiles. Did you know that the average person throws away 70 pounds of clothing per year—and that 95% of textiles (even those that are worn, torn, or stained!) can be recycled? It's true! When you donate your old clothes, linens, and other textile items, they're reused in many ways:

- Resold through charities' secondhand clothing stores
- Sent to developing countries
- Turned into wiping rags, which are used in many industries
- Processed back into fibers and turned into home insulation, carpet padding, stuffing for pillows, yarn, paving materials, and money

You can even donate a single shoe or mismatched socks! The soles of shoes are used to make paving materials, and socks become stuffing for pillows, sleeping bags, and animal beds. Clothing and textile items simply need to be clean and dry to be recycled.

Right now, 21 billion pounds of textiles end up in landfills annually. But they don't have to. By teaching our children to donate and recycle textiles, we'll be teaching them to be responsible citizens. And that's what we want for all our children!

To learn more about textile recycling or to find a donation center near you, visit www.smartasn.org.

(teacher's signature)

Activities to do at home:

- Challenge your child to point out charity drop-off boxes around town. Keep track of how many you can spot in a day or a week. Also keep track of any postcards or flyers that you receive advertising charity pickups for clothing donations.
- Choose one portion of a closet or drawer to clean out each Saturday morning. Keep the task small and manageable; spend 15 minutes or so. Gather the items to donate in a bag or box; then, once it's full, drop off the donation.
- Write a letter to your city manager requesting that textiles be included with other recyclables available for drop-off at the recycling center or for curbside pickup.
- Encourage children to share what they've learned about textile recycling with family and friends. Many people don't realize how many textiles end up in landfills unnecessarily. Family and friends will appreciate the information!
- Share the book *Something From Nothing*, by Phoebe Gilman, which follows a piece of fabric as it goes from being a baby blanket to a jacket to a vest to a tie, and so on.