

## ***Alexandrians: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle! - Contest Winners and Entries!!***

Thank you to all residents who submitted reducing, reusing, and recycling tips. Here are some of the tips, stories, and ideas submitted.

### **Tip #1 – Reducing the amount of trash**

This year Philomena celebrated her 9th birthday at the Alexandria Animal Shelter. She had her friends bring in gifts for the many animals there, in lieu of presents for herself. This is a great way to celebrate with lots of friends, while REDUCING the number of toys that inevitably end up in landfills.

Submitted by Philomena, age 9 - *Winning Entry*



Philomena with her prize.

### **Tip #2 – Reusing items**

If I can't come up with a way to reuse an item destined for the trash, I list it on craigslist.org for free. One man's junk is another man's treasure and in the past I have found homes for mountains of packing materials, old light fixtures, box springs, and other items that would have taken up a lot of space in a landfill.

Submitted by Lindsay Clarke - *Winning Entry*

### **Tip #3 – Recycling other types of plastics**

VHS tapes, CDs, audio cassettes, and clear casings can be recycled through Plastic Recycling, Inc., 2015 South Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis, IN 46225 (317) 780-6100

Submitted by Linda Gallick

### **Tip #4 – Recycling your house**

My husband and I recycled our house! We are currently in the process of renovating our home on E. Howell Avenue. We used a company called Deconstruction Services [www.deconstructionservices.com](http://www.deconstructionservices.com) to gut our home. They specialize in disassembly of single family residences in Northern Virginia and in maximizing the amount of used building materials that can be salvaged. The aluminum siding was recycled. The roof tiles were melted down and used for road patch. Our not pretty but still very usable cabinets were resold to be used in a workshop. The floors, windows, dishwasher, tubs, sinks, and toilets were donated to Community Forklift ([www.communityforklift.com](http://www.communityforklift.com)) and Habitat ReStore ([www.habitatnova.org/restore/](http://www.habitatnova.org/restore/)), a resale business that sell salvaged and surplus building materials. There were some things we couldn't recycle or salvage such as drywall, which had old lead paint on it, but we squeezed every bit of juice out of this turnip that we could. If it could be reused we did it!

We are doing as green of a renovation as we can, so initially we decided to pay the extra money for Deconstruction Services to do the work because we wanted to lessen our landfill impact. However in the end it was a financial no-brainer. It would have cost us money to have our builder do the demolition anyway. Using Deconstruction Services cost approximately \$5000 more. But we were able to take tax deductions in the end that totaled more than that.

Given that, if you're considering doing a major renovation or demolition, there's every reason for the earth, your conscience and your pocketbook to recycle your home or business.

Submitted by Sarah and Bob Soulliere – *Honorable Mention*

### Tip #5 – Ideas on making reducing, reusing, and recycling easy

- Keep canvas bags in the trunk of car to use at grocery store
- Have paper waste bins by desks for all household paper waste
- Empty in paper bags for recycling collection
- Have paper bag near recycling bin to separate household paper
- Print out recycling guidelines and put on fridge
- Keep travel mug handy for use at coffee shops
- Re-fill water bottle at home or at a fountain instead of buying bottled water
- Ask restaurants to recycle recyclables and provide a visible receptacle
- Advocate coffee shops and stores to provide discount for travel mugs and customers who bring their own bags
- Advocate for a plastic bag free city
- Start a Compost
- Have a household drawer for re-using one-sided paper that can be used for notes, phone messages, children's artwork, drawings etc; keep it handy for use in printer
- Tell restaurants to \*not\* include plastic utensils and napkins with take-out food.



Contest winner, Margaret with her prize.

Submitted by Margaret Jenkins - *Winning Entry*

## Tip #6 – 20 things you can do to help the environment

1. Recycle all products possible (paper, beverage containers, metal items - visit Alexandria's online site to see what Alexandria recycles – [www.alexrecycles.org](http://www.alexrecycles.org))
2. Wash / re-use plastic (Ziploc) bags & glass containers
3. Use Goodwill / Salvation Army / FREecycle.ORG / Habitat for Humanity to donate / give away clothes, household goods, and appliances
4. Look on Craig's list before shopping for goods – [www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org)
5. Go DIGITAL - use on-line banking and receive electronic bills as much as possible
6. If you have a baby, check out [www.gdiapers.com](http://www.gdiapers.com) (flushable diapers)
7. Re-use shopping bags (get canvas bags)
8. Use washable utensils / plates or re-use / wash plastic utensils
9. Buy / Eat locally / organically (i.e., farmer's markets) and eat more fruits / vegetables (meat production is environmentally expensive)
10. Buy food items that travel less (are locally / regionally distributed - e.g., farmer's markets, Organic Valley)
11. Sign up on the National Do-Not Mail list (now FREE) to reduce / eliminate junk mail: [https://www.directmail.com/directory/mail\\_preference/](https://www.directmail.com/directory/mail_preference/)
12. Find places that will take (and re-use) packing material (e.g., styrofoam peanuts; plastic, air-filled packing)



Contest winner Robert Johnson

### [www.alexrecycles.org](http://www.alexrecycles.org) – click on **Recycling Other Materials**

13. Drive less (i.e., live closer to work, do errands close together, make single trips, walk if you can) and if possible, telecommute periodically
14. Use compact fluorescent or LED bulbs as much as possible / turn off lights when not in use
15. Get a programmable thermostat (Review how to save energy with appropriate temperature settings)
16. Avoid printing anything if you don't need to - if you do, use recycled paper
17. Buy in bulk (to reduce packaging material)
18. Use eco-friendly cleaning products
19. Look on [www.gaiam.com](http://www.gaiam.com) or [www.newdream.org](http://www.newdream.org) for more suggestions / products
20. If you don't NEED it, don't BUY it.

Submitted by Robert Johnson - *Winning Entry*

For more information on donation programs or what is and is not recyclable in the City of Alexandria, please review the links on the left side bar.