

TerraCycle helps turn waste into wanted items

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Most kids toss their non-recyclable drink pouches in the trash.

Dixon Grove Junior Middle School students donate their drink pouches by the thousands to TerraCycle, a North York-based company that repurposes them into fashion bags, tote bags, lunch bags and pencil cases.

TerraCycle gives the Etobicoke elementary school two cents per pouch, proceeds of which will send students to the Humber Arboretum and the Don Valley Brickworks before the end of the school year.

Dixon Grove collects more drink pouches for TerraCycle than any other school in Toronto.

Students at The Westway-Kipling Avenue-area school diverted more than 3,000 of the pouches from landfill.

TerraCycle is one of the world's leading "upcycling" companies. It collects non-recyclable items like Kool-Aid and Del Monte drink pouches, Glad sandwich bags, Mr. Christie's cookie and cracker wrappers and Nestle chocolate bar wrappers and converts them into insulated lunch bags, totes, coolers and bottle caddys.

"It's about eliminating the idea of waste," said Luisa Girotto, TerraCycle's GM in Canada. "In nature, there is no waste. Each organism is dependent on another organism."

As school was ending for the year, TerraCycle officials gave the school a turquoise bench made from 12,800 drink pouches by an American manufacturer. TerraCycle sells the benches in the U.S.

"We can't do it unless people like this in Canada say, 'I believe. I believe this is the right thing to do,'" said Girotto, who delivered the bench with her colleague TerraCycle communications manager Laurent Cassar. "TerraCycle has proven to mankind there is no waste if you repurpose it."

Across Canada, TerraCycle

recently hit a milestone of one-million drink pouches collected.

That's enough drink pouches to cover nine hockey rinks or 33 basketball courts, company officials estimate.

More than 2,700 schools, non-profit organizations and community groups from nearly 3,000 communities across the country have joined TerraCycle's drink pouch brigade.

TerraCycle has donated more than \$20,000 to Canadian schools and non-profits for the pouches in the 18 months the firm has operated in Canada.

The company collects one million drink pouches every three days in the U.S., where it has operated for four years. It even collects dirty diapers.

TerraCycle converts the drink pouches into garden paving stones, fences, flat and high back park benches, children's picnic tables, bike racks, even toilet seats.

"Our scientists know how to break down the components and work with manufacturers (to make new products)," Girotto said, noting the company has created a plastic garbage bin out of 1,200 potato chip bags in the U.S. "We solve for it. We have to."

TerraCycle "brigades" include drink pouches, cookie and cracker wrappers, nut and trail mix packages, yogurt cups, chocolate bar wrappers and sandwich bags and containers.

TerraCycle makes 200 "upcycled" products sold at major retailers like The Home Depot, Wal-Mart and Whole Food Markets.

Canadians Tom Szaky and Robin Tator founded TerraCycle nine years ago in the U.S. Szaky is TerraCycle's CEO, Tator the company's head of business development in Canada.

The men realized garbage could be repurposed when they were filling pop bottles with worm excrement to be used as organic fertilizer.

TerraCycle will operate in 20 countries by the end of 2011.



Staff photo/CHLOE ELLINGSON

BMO teams up for Pride and Remembrance

Lourdes Soares warms up for the Pride and Remembrance run Saturday in a Team BMO-led stretching and yoga session at the BMO branch at Church and Alexander on July 2. Coinciding with Toronto's Pride Week, the five-kilometre race, now in its 16th year, aims to foster community spirit, goodwill, volunteerism and sportsmanship in the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) community. Funds raised this year go to the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT), the Triangle Program (Canada's only high school program for LGBT youth) and the Pride and Remembrance Foundation.

Continental Hair gives back to those suffering hair loss, especially children

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For nearly 50 years, the Suba family has been providing a special sense of comfort and normalcy to women dealing with thinning hair or hair loss due to chemotherapy, alopecia or other medical causes.

Husband and wife team Peter and Emma Suba founded Continental Hair in 1963, offering high-quality wigs, hairpieces and other options to men and women

who were suffering from hair loss. Now under the guiding hand of their son, Michael Suba, the Yorkville salon works almost exclusively with female clientele.

After a childhood spent largely in salons, Suba had little interest in continuing the family business.

That all changed in 1990, when he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease.

"I went through six months of chemotherapy and 20 doses of cobalt bomb radiation, but oddly enough

I didn't lose my hair," he said. "But when I was in treatment, I would run into a client of ours at the Sunnybrook Cancer Centre – it was called the Bayview Cancer Centre then – and they'd talk about how much of a difference our hairpieces made in their lives. I realized how important it was, what we do."

Continental Hair has also worked with the Canadian Cancer Society to ensure children going through chemotherapy treatments

have access to hairpieces through the Wigs for Kids program.

This helps defuse at least one concern among youngsters who have been diagnosed with cancer by helping them feel less self-conscious about their appearance.

"There are lots of alternatives for adults, but for kids there's nothing," Suba said.

"We want to do what we can to help Canadian children under 12 by making custom pieces that fit them."

Wal-Mart helps fund green roof

Growing for Green, founder of Ben Nobleman Park Community Orchard in York, was one of the successful recipients of the Wal-Mart-Evergreen Green Grant.

In addition to the continued development and

maintenance of the fruit orchard at the park, a green roof was introduced to the park to teach volunteers about green roof care and maintenance.

The finding will also allow various events to be

organized, including a fruit tree pruning workshop, educational day for underprivileged youth and the second annual Harvest Festival.

The organization is run by volunteers and receives no formal funding.

Front Street Capital gives to hospital

Hundreds of key players in the Canadian financial and philanthropic community gathered at C Lounge recently to celebrate the beginning of summer while raising awareness and funds for Joe's Team Triathlon, benefiting Princess Margaret Hospital.

To assist in helping Joe's Team surpass its \$1 million fundraising goal, Front Street Capital (FSC) hosted the inaugural Front Street Capital Summer Solstice party, with all proceeds going directly to the triathlon.

The Summer Solstice event and team fundraising efforts raised in excess of \$25,000.

In its first four years, Joe's Team has raised \$3.2 million, making this the largest third-party fundraiser for the Princess Margaret Hospital and the third largest fundraiser of any kind for the hospital.



Staff photo/CHLOE ELLINGSON

Thanks to a grant from Wal-Mart, Ben Nobleman Park Community Orchard was able to install a green roof on its shed. Orchard co-ordinator Susan Poizner helps add a green roof on the orchard shed July 10.

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