

RISE ABOVE

Save our world

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Did you know that there is an eighth continent on earth? Well, there is another continent the size of Ontario and Texas combined, made entirely of plastic! In the modern world, everything around us is covered in plastic, making it extremely difficult to escape.

Humans adapt to a routine. We follow the same routine every day. What we don't notice is that most things that we see and touch are made of or covered in plastic - from our food to our furniture. Our actions are going to leave a mark on this world, and it is up to us to decide whether that mark is going to be good or bad.

Plastic is a limited resource - we use oil to make plastic, and since oil is limited, so is plastic. Plastic water bottles can take 450 years to decompose, while other plastics, such as plastic bags can take up to 1000 years! At the rate that we're producing waste, our world might as well be covered in plastic! We dump plastic in oceans and landfills, plastic not only covers our oceans but also our land.

In the community of Malton, a survey was conducted. It consisted of 35 subjects. The questions asked were: "Do you think that littering is a problem in Malton?", "Do you recycle?" and "Do you think that recycling is a problem in Malton?".

According to the survey, 5/7 subjects notice littering in Malton but don't think that it's a big problem. Although, a little can go a long way. Innocent little baby turtles are being born in plastic. They did nothing to deserve that. It all starts with a person creating waste and just throwing it away, in the garbage, on the ground or even in the water. It started small, but it grew to become such a big problem.

It was also determined that 27 out of the 35 subjects recycle. When surveyed whether they recycle or not, most added the statement, "I do recycle, sometimes". When asked what they meant, the majority stated that they recycle what they

know for sure is recyclable, but some other items baffle them (e.g., Styrofoam, pop cans, coffee cups etc). They were informed about the Peel Region website - which has a list of items that are recyclable. Another problem was encountered, a portion of the subjects didn't have access to the internet. They were then encouraged to make a trip to the Malton Community Centre, to the library. They could access technology from there and a little trip could go a long way!

Recycling can make a difference to stop plastic pollution. By recycling, you reduce the amount of waste - including plastic - that goes into landfills and ruins our world. Recycling is just one of the many ways that we could work to a healthier world.

Canada has already started to make a difference. The Canadian Plastics Industry Association (CPIA) works with the government and international associations to find out the effects of land and water pollution. They did a survey around Toronto. It showed that the most littered items in Toronto are paper (e.g., napkins), gum and cigarette butts. Understanding the problem is a huge TO DO before you try to make a difference to solve it. Many communities are hosting clean-up days and educating students about preventing litter. Canada is moving to a cleaner and more inclusive world!

You don't have to be an important person to make a difference to change the world. Any little thing that you do can make a difference. You could bring reusable bags to grocery stores; saving money (some stores cost a few cents for plastic bags) and the environment. You could use reusable plastic instead of one-time-use plastic. You could hold onto your garbage until you reach a garbage bin until throwing it away.

You may be thinking; 'why should I care?', 'Why should I put in the effort?'. First, you have got to realize that this is our world. This is *your* world. Would you do anything for a loved one? Treat this world like it's your own because it is. It's all of ours and we must take the responsibility of keeping it clean and healthy. Second, little innocent creatures are dying because of our actions. Little baby turtles, fish, innocent chubby squirrels. They did nothing to deserve this. We are not the only ones in this world, and we must stop acting like we are! This is an injustice! If one of those creatures perish, we will also die! It's a domino effect, so we must stop this! You may have to put in an effort here and there, but it will be worth it in the end.

Our world gave us home, but what are we giving back? What are you giving back? Humans are negatively affecting the environment, but the adults of the future, the children of the world, need to learn how to clean up the mess that is already created and prevent any further damage - use reusable items and create less waste. We need to learn how to help the environment, help save our home, one step at a time.

Bibliography

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