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## Resourcefill - a great resource for eco-friendly products

By Diane Claytor



Kristin Crotty, co-owner of Resourcefill, shows off some of her eco-friendly products Photo Diane Claytor

It was a staggering and disheartening headline in a recent National Geographic article: "A Whopping 91 Percent of Plastic isn't Recycled." Look around your house. Think about all the products you regularly use that are made of plastic or come in plastic containers. You use them up and toss them in your recycling bin, thinking you're doing the best you can for our environment. But only 9% of those items are actually recycled! The rest, 8 million metric tons annually, according to the National Geographic story, become plastic waste, eventually ending up in our landfill and oceans.

Kristin and Paul Crotty are doing their part to offset this environmental crisis. The couple recently opened Resourcefill in their Lafayette neighborhood. The environmentally-driven shop's mission is reducing the need for single use plastics and paper by offering refills of home and body care essentials.

The Crottys have always been environmentally responsible, doing what they could to reduce plastic and paper waste. "We've been making our own home and body care products, including lotions, toothpaste and deodorant, for years," Kristin Crotty declares. "I wanted to make sure the ingredients I was putting in and on my body were actually ingredients I wanted in and on my body." They made their son's baby food and formula when he was an infant. They use and reuse cloth towels and napkins, with Kristin Crotty proudly stating, "We haven't purchased a roll of paper towels in over 10 years."

When the pandemic hit, the Crottys were both laid off. Like many, they contemplated their next steps, exploring different business ideas. Friends and family, knowing how eco-conscious the Crottys were and how they often drove through the tunnel to refill/reuse shops, strongly encouraged them to consider opening a refill store in Lamorinda. Kristin Crotty admits that this idea had not previously occurred to them. In late 2020, they decided to go for it. They found the perfect bright, airy location, spent hours researching to make sure that every step of the process was done as environmentally friendly as possible and last month, excitedly opened Resourcefill.

The store has a wide variety of eco-friendly products and the plan is to expand their inventory. According to Kristin Crotty, they look for non-toxic organic products, animal-cruelty free, safe for gray water systems, locally made if possible and, "most importantly, those we can purchase in bulk and then return bulk containers to be refilled over and over again." Every product they carry is sampled to make sure it meets their standards. "In addition to being refillable and safe for both the body and environment," Kristin Crotty notes, "we want to sell excellent products that work in the way our customers expect."

The refill stations include bulk hair, bath and body products, as well as home cleaning items. The process is simple. You bring in your clean container (plastic is fine, Kristin Crotty says), weigh it, fill it with one of their environmentally safe products which are priced by the ounce and weigh it again. Resourcefill also sells empty containers of different sizes.

In addition to the many refillable items, the store carries a vast array of reusable products, including unpaper towels, beeswax wraps to replace plastic wrap, and washable dusters. There is a collection of plastic-free biodegradable brushes because, as Kristin Crotty explains, so many of the brushes we use on our hair and in our home contain plastic. "Every time you use one, little micro plastics are breaking off and going down the drain, ending up in our water supply. We're drinking them, eating them in seafood, breathing them in the air," she says. "When you're done with our brushes, you can put them in your compost and they quickly break down." There are even biodegradable bamboo bandages as well as refillable, plastic-free and compostable pet products.

The Crottys have more products coming and more plans to implement. They will be partnering with TerraCycle, an organization that recycles what many think of as non-recyclable products. There will be a reuse room where high-end second-hand items will be sold, with proceeds helping to fund the TerraCycle program. "Our original plan was to simply have the refill shop," Kristin Crotty explains. "But our space is conducive to bringing even more eco-friendly programs to the community."

There's no judgment, Kristin Crotty assures. "Resourcefill is here to help everyone become more aware of

what products are made of and switching to those that are friendlier to our earth."

For more information, visit [shopresourcefill.com](http://shopresourcefill.com).

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