

Recycling through the Reuse program

... continued from Page D4

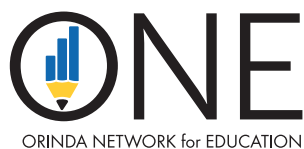
I recently visited the 18,000 sq. ft. warehouse in Pittsburg where all the reusable items collected from the curb are taken. The warehouse is more organized than many homes, thanks to the dedicated staff of MDRR, Jim Nejedly and Adriana Medina. It was a bustling scene of incoming trucks and a sorting crew separating small furniture, appliances, electronics, clothing, home décor, medical supplies, school supplies and books, scrap metal and batteries. Almost 20 tons of batteries were collected in 2022 on Reuse Day!

Adriana had so many stories of where our central Contra Costa reuse items end up, from the Paradise fire victims to Contra Costa schools needing sporting equipment. She happily connected me with "Make it Home," a nonprofit in Walnut Creek that Social Services uses to help furnish apartments for those previously unhoused or aging out of the foster care system. "Giving is not just about making a donation. It's about making a difference," says Adriana, as she expressed how fortunate she feels to see the faces of families receiving some-

thing they need. Furniture in usable condition is the number one item needed.

Since RecycleSmart contracted with MDRR in 2015, over 22 million pounds of reuse items have been donated to East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse, St. Vincent DePaul, HOPE Solutions, Homeless Action Coalition, Uplift Family Services and many other charitable organizations. Over 32,000 homes placed reusable items at the curb in 2022, and RecycleSmart saw the program's highest participation in 2020-2021 when we all had plenty of time to clean house. Residents can also take advantage of the Cleanup Day provided by Republic Services, the day after the Reuse Day, for any junk or unusable materials.

Reuse of materials is even better for the environment and the community than recycling. RecycleSmart is a national leader in curb-side collection of reusable items and has inspired other communities to develop similar programs. We are proving the old adage that one person's trash is another person's treasure. To learn more about the Reuse & Cleanup Days Program, or to look up your upcoming dates with our new search tool, visit RecycleSmart.org/Cleanup.



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