

# GreenWays

THE QUARTERLY COMMERCIAL NEWSLETTER FROM GREENWASTE PALO ALTO FALL 2010

## GreenWaste Progress Report

July 2009 – June 2010

Palo Alto has greatly reduced the amount of garbage sent to landfills this year. While recycling and composting are great alternatives to landfilling, preventing waste is an even better option. You can reduce your waste by purchasing in bulk, reusing and repairing items or eliminating junk mail through opt-out lists. By reducing our garbage, we also significantly reduced our community's carbon footprint.

Right now, you're probably wondering "What does my garbage have to do with my carbon footprint?" The disposal of garbage produces greenhouse gas emissions in a number of ways: First, the decomposition of waste in landfills produces methane, which is 21 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Second, emissions are created by transporting our garbage to the landfills. Finally, fossil fuels are needed to obtain raw materials for new products, manufacture and ship these new products when we replace our disposed items. Therefore, when we reduce our garbage and increase

our recycling and composting we can reduce our carbon footprint!

### Recyclables

With more items than ever now accepted in our expanded recycling program, our community was able to increase recycling by 1,926.68 tons! That's a 14.6 percent increase from 2009. We've made very good progress, but we're still putting too many recyclable materials in the wrong bin! An audit has found that 43 percent of the items in our garbage were actually recyclable! Take a refresher course on what goes into your recycling bin by reading our Commer-

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The amount of carbon we have saved from reducing our garbage is equivalent to the carbon savings we would get if all the houses on Waverley Street were powered by 100 percent renewable energy.



### Contact Information

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Landfill**  
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# ALL BUSINESSES CAN COMPOST

While restaurants are a natural fit for adopting composting, offices actually produce more compostable waste than you would expect. We met with five businesses to learn how they started composting. If you're looking to increase your company's sustainability and save money, sign up for our compost collection service. Contact us today at (650) 493-4894.



## VMware

Started Composting: July 2009

VMware, the global leader in cloud infrastructure, was the first corporation in Palo Alto to sign up for GreenWaste's compost collection service, and the first Palo Alto business to divert 90 percent or more of its waste from landfill. Their zero waste philosophy is: pay attention to what we introduce into the work environment, use items that can be reused, recycled or composted. To find out more about their program, we met with Doris Lippitt, Administrative Services Manager at VMware.

**VMware helps companies reduce resources and increase efficiency. How do you put these principles into practice at your office with regards to waste reduction?**

**Doris Lippitt:** Being "green" at VMware means more than just reducing the need for servers and lowering IT operational

costs through virtualization. It's who we are as a company. We are taking big steps every day to reduce our waste and encourage employees to recycle as much as possible.

**Tell us about your Zero Waste Café.**

**DL:** Early in the process of developing the concept for our café, we decided that we wanted to divert as much waste as possible from going to the landfill. We partnered with our food service provider to ensure everything in the dining area of our cafeteria is reusable, recyclable or compostable.

**What steps did you take to transition your employees to composting?**

**DL:** We think that training is the most important piece. We have very consistent messaging on our intranet, we offer program presentations in open forums and we provide information on day one for all new employees. The program is consistent throughout all of our buildings including all processes and signage.

**Our community is aiming to reach zero waste by 2021. Do you think VMware will be able to reach that goal by then?**

**DL:** Year to date in 2010, we are diverting over 90 percent of our waste from going to the landfill.

**How do you feel about your experience working with GreenWaste on compost collection?**

**DL:** Our experience with GreenWaste has been very positive. Our GreenWaste representative is part of the facilities green team that develops the programming and tracks the metrics. He is a valuable resource for our onsite waste management programs.

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## Patagonia

Started Composting: July 2009

Beloved around the world for their cool outdoor clothing as much as their environmental passion, Patagonia's mission statement—"Build the best product, cause no unnecessary harm, use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis"—is reflected in their commitment to composting at their stores. We interviewed Alie Keegan, Assistant Manager at Patagonia's Palo Alto store, to learn more about their approach to composting.

**How does composting fit in with Patagonia's environmental initiatives?**

**Alie Keegan:** Way too much stuff these days ends up in the trash at the end of its useful life. We're working to change that.

There is little difference between our employees putting their lunch scraps or used paper towels in the compost and customers putting their Patagonia fleece in the Common Threads Recycling Program bins. The items get broken down and turned into something new and useful. Our compost turns into rich soil for growing plants and food, and worn out fleeces get turned into useful garments.

**Tell me about your compostable collection practice at the Palo Alto store.**

**AK:** We have small compost bins throughout the store. The bins in the bathrooms collect used paper towels, the bins behind the cash registers collect thermal receipt paper, and the bins in our break room collect lunch waste.

**When did you start composting?**

**AK:** We started in 2007 with a worm

composting system. It was great but it couldn't handle all our paper waste. When I learned about GreenWaste's compost collection service I called them to sign up and was put in contact with an outreach representative—she's always there to help. Since we started composting with GreenWaste we have reduced our trash by 50 percent or more.

**Our community is aiming to reach zero waste by 2021. Do you think your store will be able to reach that goal by then?**

**AK:** Yes! We are up to the challenge to find new ways to cut down on the remaining things we use that have to go directly to the landfill.

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## Wu Orthodontics & Mulcahy Dentistry

Started Composting: December 2009

We sat down with Connie Lyssand, Office Manager at Mulcahy Family Dentistry, to learn more about their zero waste practices.

**When people think about business composting, they don't usually think about the dentist's office. What can you compost at a dentist's office?**

**Connie Lyssand:** There is actually quite a lot! For us, it's typically cotton swabs, cotton pads and paper towels.

**Many people are reluctant to start compost collection at their offices because they are afraid it will smell. But looking at this**

**office, it is spotless and I don't smell anything.**

**CL:** People think it's like composting at home where you only take out the trash before pick-up. We've never had that problem here because our compost is taken out often.

**Do you have any tips for businesses thinking about starting the compost services?**

**CL:** Evaluate your waste—you'll realize it's easier than it looks! Also get in touch with GreenWaste for guidance.

Mulcahy Family Dentistry  
1795 El Camino Real  
Palo Alto, CA 94306  
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The first green-certified orthodontic office in Santa Clara County, Wu Orthodontics makes trips to the orthodontist fun. Keep your teeth in top shape and you'll not only walk out with a WUnderful smile, but maybe also a free iPod! We catch up with Lisa Ma Wu, Practice Relations Coordinator at Wu Orthodontics.

**Why was it important for you to work towards becoming green certified?**

**Lisa Ma Wu:** We already have the basics of zero waste such as digital charts, digital x-rays and energy efficient equipment so it was an important next step to get our community involved. We motivate our patients with Damon Dollars for sustainable behaviors such as bringing their own toothbrush and biking to their appointments. Patients can redeem their dollars for gift cards and iPods.

**Do you have any tips for businesses thinking about starting the compost services?**

**LMW:** Talk to other businesses that have gone through the process. Get in contact with GreenWaste and the Bay Area Business Program because they are really helpful.

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## Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati

Started Composting: August 2009

When staff at legal powerhouse Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati (WSGR) aren't working on ground breaking court cases, they're devising out-of-the-box strategies to reduce their environmental impact. We sat down with Kristin Ashby, Property Manager, and Gail McFall, Community Affairs Manager, at WSGR to learn how they made their workplace more sustainable.

**When did WSGR start compost collection and how did you go about it?**

**Kristin Ashby:** We started planning a couple of months before we rolled out the composting program in August 2009. We worked with the various departments to develop a plan that would make it as easy as possible for them to start composting.

**Gail McFall:** We also created our own internal marketing material, such as personalized signage with pictures of items we typically have around.

**Many business owners say they're too busy to compost. Attorneys are pretty busy people. How did you help your staff adapt to the changes?**

**KA:** I think the key is to make it as easy as possible. We have bins located within a few feet of most people's offices. Training and buy-in from upper management were very important.

**GM:** Ongoing communication is also important to keep it fresh in everyone's minds.

**WSGR is now at an 85 percent waste diversion rate. Do you think you can reach zero?**

**KA:** I sure hope so! With our continuing

evolution of the program and more education I can see us meeting the deadline. Since we started the compost collection service we've decreased the volume of our garbage by 40 percent.

**Tell me about your garbage-free offices!**

**KA:** We encourage staff to get rid of the trash can under their desk. One: it means you aren't tempted to throw recyclable and compostable waste into the garbage. Two: it's one less plastic bag that goes to the landfill. About 100 of the 950 employees at our office have committed to not having a garbage can in their workspace.

**Do you have any tips for businesses thinking about starting compost collection?**

**KA:** Utilize your on-site resources and ask the folks at GreenWaste to help you. Don't be afraid to start small and then expand your program as you see fit.

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