



# Campus California

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

We share one home, our planet; we must  
consider the impact our actions have for the future.

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## Editorial

In the past hundred years, our ability as human beings to save, prolong and enhance life has increased tremendously. We now have the knowledge and capacity to eliminate some of the calamities that cause suffering for a large part of the world's population, especially in developing countries. Problems such as hunger, illiteracy, lack of clean drinking water, lack of education, the AIDS pandemic and environmental destruction. We have an obligation to use this capacity to bring acceptable living conditions and basic human rights to all people.

Campus California was started on the idea that it not only makes sense to transfer surplus from our part of the world to people and countries in need, it is also the right thing to do. Why should we throw perfectly good clothes out to rot in landfills when, on the other side of the world, there are people wearing only rags? Most of us realize that we have a great deal of excess and a genuine problem with waste. With 5% of the world population, our society produces 40% of the world's waste.

Today, Global Warming is an accepted fact. People worldwide are beginning to feel the real cost of feeding a growing planet and to face the reality that oil and natural gas resources are limited.

Humanity's perspective on recycling has also considerably changed in the past decade. Not long ago, second-hand clothing was only for those who could not afford to buy new clothes. But now an overwhelming growth in consumerism has resulted in people throwing out much more clothing - often before it is worn out. It goes against our sense of logic and morality to see items being discarded when they

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Together we can make a difference, one shirt at a  
time!

## Report from volunteers abroad

One of the most important impacts of our work is the financial support Campus California provides for Development Instructor schools in the USA. These are training centers where volunteers from all over the world prepare for the challenges of working in development projects in Africa and Central and South America. The volunteer programs themselves develop over time as well, and recently a big change has been made in how the system works.

The Development Instructors are now organized under the new Trio –system, the volunteers establish groups of three at the beginning of the program. These Trios then train and prepare together, and then travel and work at the same project. They are able to bring more energy, creativity and old-fashioned muscle power to any task, as well as give each other support in a number of ways throughout the program. The following is a report from a Development Instructor Trio in Botswana.

### First Report from Botswana - by Ayumi, Liriko and I.K.

The Botswana TRIO from IICD Michigan is working at a HOPE project in Botswana. Ayumi, Liriko and “I.K”. Traveled to this African country in August 2011 to take part in the fight against the HIV/Aids epidemic. A lot of the work here is based on educating people about the disease so they can protect themselves and about giving support to people living with HIV.

Botswana is a rare exception amongst African Countries, having a small population but huge mineral wealth. The revenue from diamonds and rare minerals allowed the government to institute a free HIV test and anti-retroviral treatment policies with the aim to bring down the 24% infection rate among the adult population. But for these policies to have an effect, other things need to change.

Excerpt from the Volunteer’s report: “We’d like to introduce you to the situation of HIV/AIDS in Botswana and what we are feeling here. Botswana has a big gap between the rich and poor. We got to know a woman is living

with HIV. She receives assistance from the government, less than \$100 for a family of 9. Her mother can’t work; there are no jobs, and the woman takes strong medicine without enough food. When we met her, she couldn’t even walk. She can get her medication in a hospital for free but she doesn’t have the money to go to the hospital and see a doctor. We will support people like her through our project, now we started gardening and raising chickens as an income generation project.”

The HOPE Project provides information to the community on a very basic, person-to-person level, as well as mobilizing the people to take steps to improve their own situation. One of the ways through which this is accomplished are small community gardens promoting sustainable growing practices an increasing local food security or the income generating programs in small scale animal husbandry.



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still have value. Thus we have seen an impressive growth in clothing recycling as more and more people are actively seeking to buy second hand clothing.

With those ideas in mind, Campus California works to mobilize people and resources to support important sustainable development in the poorest parts of the world, and at the same time to

preserve our planet's resources through the promotion of textile recycling.

We provide an opportunity for people to drop off their surplus clothing to be re-used, through collection boxes placed at publicly accessible locations throughout California. The clothing is collected, packed and sold, generating money for the training of volunteers who take part in sustainable development work in Africa and South America.

We believe sustainability to be a very important factor. In order to secure a healthy and prosperous future for all people, we must protect and preserve our planet's natural resources.

It's of vital importance that the development in the poorest parts of the world is sustainable as well, so that the growth can continue, and people can continue to improve their lives.



A warm thank you from all of us at Campus California.

## Thank you Pastor Anderson at Williams Chapel

One of the newest box locations in Oakland is Williams Chapel Baptist Church located on 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. and International Blvd. In early December we got a call from Dr. Anderson, the senior pastor of the church who said he really wanted to have a donation box and a week after it was placed, the box was full to the brim with donated clothing.

We are grateful to the very involved community around the church; by the time you are reading this, there will be a second box

placed next to the first one in order to accommodate all the donations coming in.

I believe the enthusiasm and leadership of Dr. Anderson is a big factor in the success of the idea as well, we hope that the public will continue to support the clothing reuse and recycling program in the future as well.

Please read more about what happens to the donated items and what programs are

supported from the proceeds in the other articles in this newsletter.



## What happens with my donations?

What do you do with all those clothes? People ask me all the time, what is this mysterious process that takes care of tens and tens of thousands of shirts, pants, jeans and shoes that people drop into donation



boxes all over the Bay Area?

One piece of the “puzzle” is a guy called Keni. He is on the road every morning by 5 a.m. in the collection truck, emptying box after box throughout the East Bay. Keni visits over a hundred boxes every week, removing the bags with clothing and piling them up into the truck. At the end of the day he arrives back to Richmond and passes on the truck to Victor the warehouseman. Victor then makes sure the donations are unloaded and properly stored. Once Keni’s truck is done, here comes Alberto and the rest of the drivers with the other trucks.

Once the warehouse crew takes over handling the bags, they separate clothing from other items: Shoes will be packed into large sacks, toys and other

miscellaneous items loaded into large cardboard boxes called “Gaylord”. The books are mostly Veronica’s domain; she picks out children’s books to be donated to a school somewhere in the Bay Area, the rest of the books she packs into another pallet-sized cardboard box.

The biggest job of the warehouse crew is the clothing; they turn the myriad different sized bags into easily transportable bales. Two compact baling machines press 20 000 pounds of clothing into neat bales wrapped in blankets every day.

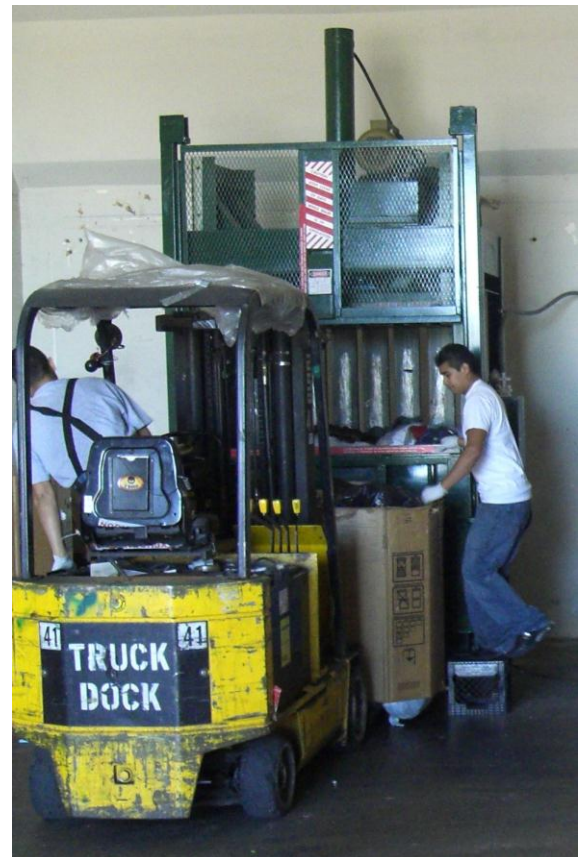
Once these bales are shipped out, they join the nearly 2 million tons of textiles that non-profit organizations and companies across America reuse and recycle every year. Campus California sells the collected items to customers in different parts of the US and occasionally in Central America. These customers then look at each piece of clothing and decide its fate. If an item is in a good condition, it will most likely be

sold again in a thrift store in the US or exported overseas.

A portion of the material is only suitable for recycling, whether in form of rags used in cleaning or auto-repair industry, or as raw materials for new textile production. It is now possible to recycle wool, cotton and some of man-made fibers into new articles of clothing!

If you are interested to know more about this topic, check out the article about sustainable practices in textile production in this newsletter.

The clothing collection program generates funding for several volunteer training programs; you can read about these in other sections of this newsletter as well.



## Three common myths to help you understand where used clothing may be headed:

**Myth #1:** Only rags or scraps go to landfills, not reusable, wearable clothing.

The truth is a majority of all used textiles such as clothes, shoes, sheets and other materials are entering the waste stream. While environmental efforts are growing in the United States, in 2010, the Environmental Protection Agency reported that the recovery rate for all textiles was only 15 percent, while more than 11 million tons of discarded clothing was dumped into landfills last year.

**Myth#2:** donated clothing should be distributed for free to the needy or to local thrift stores.

In reality, in the major population centers like the Bay Area there is insufficient local demand to reuse all donated textiles. Campus California's Public Relations Manager Jan Sako says, "I have spoken to a number of people from the general public who are firmly

convinced that all donated clothing is or should be distributed to the needy locally or sold in thrift stores locally.

People are generally not aware of the vast amounts of textiles that go to landfills because in densely populated areas there are many more people disposing of clothing than poor people needing these or people shopping for used clothing.

We should donate to our church or a charity that distributes clothing locally, but 11 million tons a year represents an equivalent of 22 Billion individual articles of clothing, which is just much more than all the needy people in America can use."

**Myth#3:** It is better to bury textiles in local landfills than transport them over long distances for recycling.

The energy savings and environmental benefits from not needing to produce new

textiles are vastly larger than the energy costs of collecting and transporting used clothing to new markets. There is also the need and cost of safely maintaining the landfills for long periods of time, not to mention that people just do not want to live next to them. So where do we put these landfills?

Some cities transport their discards hundreds of miles away, and at the end of the journey they still have to pay for the disposal. How about letting the reusable and recyclable materials generate revenue and jobs instead? Studies show that on average recycling generates ten times more jobs than landfilling or incineration.



## Campus California expands its operation to Bakersfield

Campus California has recently started collecting unwanted clothes, shoes, toys, and books in Bakersfield.

Bakersfield is a progressive city; a city with an environmental vision. There are many opportunities to recycle paper and metal here, but much less options for clothing, toys and books. We started placing collection boxes in Bakersfield to provide the community with a convenient way to donate these items.

Two volunteers – Francisco from Mexico, and Anji from South Korea spent two weeks in Bakersfield in November

canvassing businesses for permission to host one of our boxes ... It was a great learning experience for them - to learn about the US, to practice their English. They are now preparing to go to Malawi in Africa at the end of January 2012 to work at a development project.

We started placing boxes in the middle of November, in the first phase sixty-five donation boxes were placed in Bakersfield, Arvin, and Lamont. They are emptied weekly, some on Tuesdays and some on Saturdays. The public started dropping donations into boxes right away, showing that the service is needed in the area.

Thank you Bakersfield for your support!



### **Institute for International Cooperation and Development**

**Join and activist program!**

An activist teacher training - 3 years

Fight shoulder to shoulder with the poor - 18 months

It is dawning on more and more people that life on the planet, as we know it, will undergo dramatic changes in the decades to come. The changes we have experienced in the past decades will be minor compared to those of the future.

#### **The challenge?**

Free our society from dependency on fossil fuels, deal with the coming food crises, cope with increased number of natural disasters and the effects of global warming, reverse the widening gap between rich and poor.

Visit [www.iicdmichigan.org](http://www.iicdmichigan.org) to learn more!

## Winter coats for the homeless

Bay Area Rescue Mission is a Richmond-based organization caring for the homeless and impoverished since 1965. The organization provides food, shelter, clothes and job training in different skill-sets. They always welcome donations of any sort; food,



clothing, household items but with the onset of the winter, it is especially important for them to have supply of warm winter clothing on hand for the clients. Campus California donated approximately 50 winter coats and jackets to Bay Area Rescue Mission in December; they will be distributed to the clients as needed.

## Our effort to get books to schools continues...

"Books for Schools" is an ongoing initiative aimed at increasing availability of books at local schools. The recipients can use the books to replenish their libraries or distribute them amongst the students as they see fit.

Only during the last couple of years Campus California distributed thousands of gently used children's books to public schools in Oakland and Richmond. We do not expect this to solve the larger problems plaguing our schools, but we believe it is important for everybody in the community to do whatever little they can to help.

The last school to receive a donation of books so far was Esperanza Elementary, an Oakland

public school serving largely underprivileged students. (95% of the students of this school are eligible to receive free or discounted lunch!) We hope that with the continuing help of the community will be able to keep this project going in 2012 as well.



Thank you everybody who donated books to  
Campus California boxes!

# Campus California Newsletter

Together we can make a difference, one shirt at a time!



Campus California is a non-profit organization. Our purpose is to work towards the humanization of mankind and for the care of the planet and all its species and plants.

This objective is pursued through initiating, running, assisting and promoting activities aimed at protecting the environment, education, international development, cooperation and fighting shoulder to shoulder with the poorest of the world.

Campus California collects and sells used clothing, an activity with a very strong environmental focus. The proceeds generated by this activity are used to support the training of international volunteers to work with sustainable development in the poorest parts of the world.

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