



Sustainable Solutions: Your Guide to Healthier Homes and Communities

October 2023



Happy Valley's collection event: a win for community collaboration!

The City of Happy Valley recently completed a successful large household item collection event in partnership with Metro, Les Schwab, and three haulers who donated their time and fuel.

Over the course of the day, they collected 29 tons of bulky waste and 10 tons of recyclables. More than 200 tires and 50 car batteries were collected for recycling. Metro's household hazardous waste team collected nearly 500 pounds of hard-to-dispose items like sharps, batteries, CFL lightbulbs and prescription medications. This event was a great example of the impact a community can have when they work together toward the same goal.

Metro's [Regional Refresh Fund](#) partially sponsored the event. The fund accepts applications from nonprofit organizations, public agencies, schools, and business district associations on an ongoing basis for cleanup projects.



Garbage: A modern Halloween scary story

It's spooky season! The scariest thing about Halloween is the sea of plastic things that are used just once before going in the trash. With a little planning, you can reduce impacts to the environment and your wallet.

Create a costume Reuse costumes from previous years, DIY with what's already in your closet or trade with family and friends. Thrift stores are a great resource too, and don't forget online resources like buy-nothing groups and Facebook marketplace.

Be a packaging know-it-all Say no to excess packaging when possible and brush up on what can and can't be recycled. Throwing a party? Make homemade sweets instead of buying plastic-wrapped treats. When it comes to trick-or-treating, all candy packaging goes in the garbage bin.

Don't get tricked by trick-or-treat bags Wicker baskets, buckets and reusable shopping bags all make great trick-or-treating tools. Get crafty and have kids decorate an old pillowcase in the theme of their costume.

Pumpkins – the plastic-free decoration The most iconic Halloween decoration is also a natural and compostable option! Carved pumpkins are a great way to decorate with natural items, and you can toss jack-o-lanterns in the yard debris bin at the end of the season.



Metro grant supports a new donation center in Gresham: Community Warehouse+

With support from a [2022 Metro Investment and Innovation program grant](#), [Community Warehouse](#) expanded into Gresham with a new donation center. Community Warehouse+ is the organization's third location and brings important services to a new part of the region. The project is a collaboration with [ReClaim It!](#), and provides space for other reuse organizations to co-locate and share resources.

Grant funds help cover the cost of renting the warehouse and staffing to accept and redistribute household goods, including mattresses, tables, chairs, dressers, bedding and kitchenware.

The new space provides Community Warehouse with more storage during peak donation seasons so they can be fully stocked year-round and able to provide high demand items to the community members they serve. Community Warehouse estimates the project will enable the recovery and redistribution of an additional 200 tons per year.

The new Community Warehouse+ donation center is open Thursday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Visit the [Community Warehouse website](#) to learn more about furniture donation.



Cleaning mason bee cocoons in the fall

Native bees, including mason bees, are important pollinators for flowers and food. Attract them to your garden by growing native flowers and gardening without pesticides. Add bee blocks to your garden to provide them a home.

To prevent bacteria and mite infestations that can harm the bees, clean the bee blocks and bee cocoons in late October or November after the bee larvae are safely in their cocoons.

Watch these instructional videos to learn how to clean mason bee cocoons at home.





Community Spotlight

[My Hair My Health PDX](#) was started in 2015 through the Oregon State University Extension Service to work collectively with local organizations to use hair practices to promote healthy habits among Black women.

In the winter of 2017, the organization partnered with [Sah'Rah Stylz](#) to host pop-up tours at several Portland metro area Black salons. These events brought Black women together to discuss ways to incorporate healthy eating and physical activity into their lives. It also ignited sisterhood and the need to foster community while discussing and exploring cultural topics that bring women together. The events continue to grow, and feature keynote speakers, panel presentations, documentary screenings, vendors, workshops, food sampling, movement breaks, demonstrations and giveaways.

In 2020, My Hair My Health PDX began partnering with [Metro's toxics reduction education program](#) to also offer resources that increase awareness of toxic chemicals in products used in health and wellness, promote safer alternatives including DIY recipes to make at home and provide tips for preventing toxic waste from entering our waste stream.

In 2021, My Hair My Health PDX became a nonprofit organization, separate from OSU, with the vision of continuing to build a collaborative village. They continue to host events, and offer resources, networking opportunities, workshops, and classes that uplift the mind, body and soul while connecting people to themselves and to one another.



DIY personal care products

Many personal care products from the store are packaged in single use plastics that end up in the garbage. They may also have unhealthy ingredients like synthetic fragrances or trace amounts of formaldehyde and lead.

To find out how safe your products are, search The Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep [online database](#) or use their [Healthy Living App](#). It's also easy to make your own products from ingredients you already have at home.

Sugar body scrub recipe

- 1/4 cup – sugar or brown sugar
- 1/8 cup – grapeseed, olive or coconut oil
- 4 drops – essential oil (optional)

Directions: Mix well and store in a lidded container. The sugar scrub will last for months.

Calendar of Community Events

Join Metro garden educators at the Oregon Zoo Wildlife Garden during the [Zoo Howloween event on Saturday, October 28th and Sunday, October 29th](#). Enjoy a scavenger hunt in the garden to discover ways to help beneficial spiders. Learn how to create a healthy, wildlife-friendly garden through fun activities. Ask our garden educators how to manage garden pests without pesticides. Find out how Northwest native plants will attract beneficial wildlife. With

zoo admission, all ages are welcome to join in this family fun event! Drop in anytime between 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Connect with our Community Partners

Follow the links below to connect directly with our community partners to find out how you can support their work, find upcoming events, classes and volunteer opportunities in your neighborhood.

- Check out the new **Community Warehouse** donation center in Gresham during [regular donation drop-off hours](#) to donate unwanted furniture, kitchenware, small appliances, linens, or home decor. Don't have a way to transport your donations? Now through December 31st, all standard pick-ups will be available on a pay-what-you-can sliding scale, with rates as low as \$20! [Schedule your items to be picked up at home!](#)
- [ReClaim It!](#) offers a variety of workshops that highlight the creative possibilities of materials that would otherwise end up in landfills. The upcoming October Workshop Series will explore the many ways to reuse fabric, fiber and felt. More information is available on [ReClaim It's website](#).

Stay Informed

Subscribe to Metro's quarterly newsletter, Sustainable Solutions, which provides resources for waste prevention from Metro and community partners. Learn helpful tips for recycling, gardening and reducing toxic chemicals in your home and yard.

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