Hats Off to Some Solutions to Pollution

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Hats off to Some Solutions to Pollution

Third Place Timed W.A.R.P. Winner
By Suraj Patel of Erick High School

“Sooner or later, we will have to recognize that the Earth has rights, too, to live without pollution. What mankind must know is that human beings cannot live without Mother Earth, but the planet can live without humans.” — Evo Morales

America throws away more trash than any other nation, filling not only our landfills, but the world’s largest landfills to the brim. Is that what we call trash truly trash or are we just throwing away hidden treasure? According to Utah Recycles, the total annual flow of waste in the American Industrial System is 250 trillion pounds! The trash we throw away is treasure only if we know how to use it. There are many solutions to pollution but not everyone is willing to adapt or change their perspective on what is really happening to our planet. That is where the problem is.

The U.S. has 3,091 active landfills and over 10,000 municipal landfills, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Municipal landfills water and air emissions are hazardous. All landfills will eventually fail and leak hazardous materials into ground and surface water. The Municipal landfills uses plastic pipes in their landfills. Plastics do not have the durability needed for the conditions of landfills. Plastic pipes allow chemicals and gases to pass through them later becoming brittle and eventually breakdown. According Leak Location Services, Inc. “82% of surveyed landfill cells had a leaks” (Landes).

Old and new landfills are typically located next to large bodies of water, making leakage detection and remediation extremely difficult. Federal and state governments have allowed landfill operators to locate landfills next to water bodies. These landfills should not be placed near any place that will cause the environment harm. There should be special places for landfills, for instance the desert or any barren place like that (Landes).

In order to turn our trash into treasure, we need to take the proper steps. The environmental pollution that is created through the trash we throw out is outrageous. We have to do something about it or else it will not be long till the inevitable happens. First let’s identify the main sources of Environmental Pollution. Pollution from automobiles have been one of the leading causes of pollution for over a century. The emissions of fossil fuel plants and the dumping of hazardous materials into our waters. There are many more, but those are the main ones.

How can we turn this trash into treasure? RECYCLE! Why recycle? Its saves money, improves efficiency, reduces energy/fuel use, saves landfill space, improves air/water quality, and reduces the rate of global warming. Here are some facts about recycling presented by Arch Utah Edu: “One ton of recycled Aluminum saves: 14,000 kWh of electricity. 1,1663 gallons of oil. 237.6 million Btu’s of energy. 10 cubic yards of landfill space.” “Recycling paper takes 74% less air pollution and 35% less water pollution. Americans throw away 4.5 million tons of office paper each year. That’s enough to build a wall a paper 12 feet high from New York to Los Angeles. Every Sunday, 500,000 trees are used to produce the 88% of newspapers that are never recycled.” These are just the basic facts, imagine if you knew them all (“Utah Recycles”).

How can we tackle these issues? There are many practical solutions that everyone can pitch in to help. For starters, converting to Solar Energy is an amazing idea. Harnessing the suns energy helps the environment over burning fossil fuels. Another alternative to Solar Energy is Wind Energy, wind is another great energy to harness while keeping harmful emission to a minimum due to it being a renewable source of energy. Reducing Electro Magnets Radiation (ER) is a great way to help reduce environmental pollution.

Even doing the little things help, throwing the piece of paper in the recycling bin, conserving water, making sure the lights are turned off. All of these are little contributions, but they add up. If we keep going at this rate, global warming will reach new highs, there will be no more Antarctic, and so many species of animals will be affected. At the end of the day, we need to learn how to respect and care for the place that lets us live; we call her “Mother Earth.”