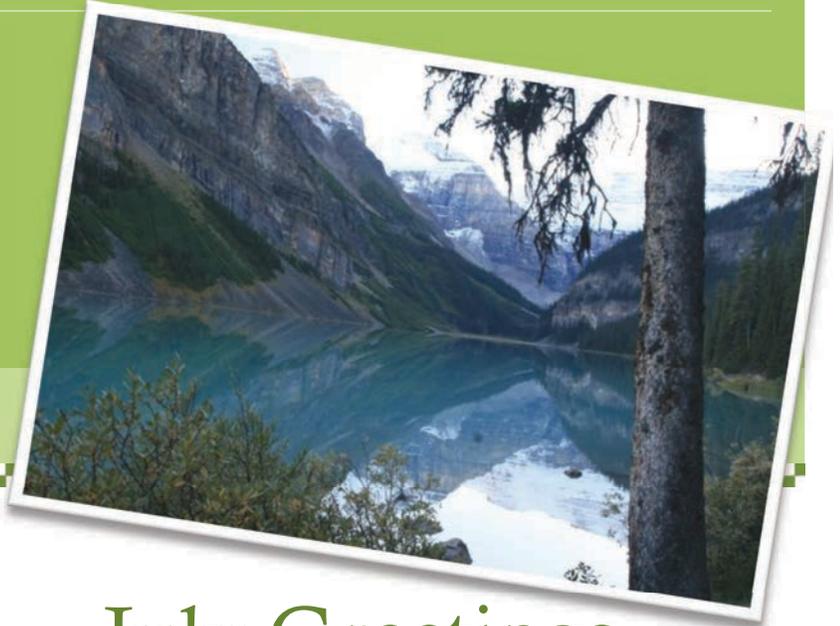


Pacific Northwest Litter Pick-up Project

Green Friends

Nature on its own is indeed beautiful and clean. The hills and rivers do not need us to clean them. In fact it is nature's water which cleans us; it is trees which purify air for us. Because we have littered, we have spoilt its pristine beauty.

Amma



July Greetings

This month is the first anniversary of the Green Friends Pacific Northwest Litter Project! We started in July 2011 with 10 members and by June 30, 2012 had 261 members. By the end of June we had picked up 1975 hours of litter. We will certainly go well beyond 2000 hours this month!

This issue of the newsletter contains reports from Amma's Pacific Northwest Tour as well as information about turning plastic back into oil, recycling cigarette butts, and living a plastic free life. These news items all came from members. Be sure to send the interesting news you become aware of.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter.

Karuna

Contents

July Greetings
Good News!
Litter Project Membership
Litter Project Hours
Aluminum Can Report
Singing for Amma
Greening the Tour
Stories and Reflections

Green Friends is a global grassroots environmental movement which promotes environmental awareness and local participation in conservation efforts throughout the world.

Green Friends is one of the projects of Embracing the World, a not-for-profit international collective of charities founded by internationally known spiritual and humanitarian leader, Mata Amritanandamayi (Amma)

To join the Pacific Northwest Green Friends Litter Project write Karuna at pnwgreenfriendslitterproject@gmail.com

Interesting Reading

From Usha in Salt Spring Island:

Convert plastic waste back to Oil

<http://www.flixxy.com/convert-plastic-to-oil.htm>

From Ameya in Olympia:

Recycling Cigarette Butts:

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/story/2012-06-14/cigarette-butt-recycling/55674502/1#.T9-dCIRDFfU.email>

(Update: TerraCycle's cigarette butt recycling has begun in Canada.

<http://www.terracycle.ca/en-CA/how-terracycle-works>)

From Ajayya in Olympia:

Plastic Free Life

Beth Terry started eliminating plastic from her life in 2007.

<http://myplasticfreelife.com/plastic-free-how-i-kicked-the-plastic-habit-and-how-you-can-too/>



Litter Project Membership

As of June 30, 2012, we had 261 members.
33 new members joined in June!

("Members" are individuals who signed up for the project or who have participated in work parties.)

Litter Project Hours

In June 2012, 44 members and their guests reported picking up 146.78 hours of litter.

(The statistics below relate to members who report having picked up litter. They do not include those who do not report or who reported 0.)

Members Average: 3.34 hours

Range 2 minutes to 24 hours

Median: 1 hour

The group has picked up 1975 hours of litter since the project began in July 2012

Aluminum Can Report

Washington State Litter Project members collect and sell aluminum cans gathered from the litter they pick up and from friends, family and colleagues.

In 2011 they sold 323 pounds of aluminum cans for \$151.04.

During June 2012 they sold 48 pounds of aluminum for \$ 20.53 which makes 261 pounds and \$125.47 for 2012 to date.

All funds were donated to the Pacific Northwest Amma Center.

The Litter Project entertainment program was featured on www.amritapuri.org home page for much of June! At the time this newsletter was being written, the picture of Amma blessing the earth (taken at our Pacific Northwest Programs) was being shown on: <http://www.amritapuri.org/yatra>.

Many, many thanks to Eric Morris for loaning us the Earth Balls to use in our programs.



Many of us experienced the joy of singing for Amma and the devotees who attended the June 1-3 Pacific Northwest Retreat at the Hyatt Regency Bellevue.

Within days there was an article about our performance on www.amritapuri.org.

Partial article:

Amma's commitment to taking care of Mother Nature, being good stewards of our Mother the Earth, is not restricted to India {ABC news}. People all over the world are responding—including Amma's children in the Pacific Northwest. On the second night of the retreat there this year, members of the Pacific Northwest Litter Campaign, not yet a year old, arrived in the hall from two back doors—a procession of children and adults, led by Atlas—well, a devotee, anyhow—holding over his head a great globe: the earth that needs to be clean and litter-free.

As they made their ways down the side aisles, the participants showed what it is they do: using sticks with grabbers on the end, they picked up (mostly imaginary) litter all along the route, and then ranged themselves across the stage where they sang three songs about caring for Mother Earth.

Litter Project members sing for Amma!



One of the songs, composed by one of the satsang members, sounds like a good candidate for a work song for litter-picker-uppers all over the world. The tune is catchy, and the words say tell how to avoid making litter, and how to help when someone else has dropped it:

*Picking up litter it's easy to do
It's up to me and it's up to you
Picking up litter can be a lot of fun
Let's go outside and get the job done.*

*Plastic bags are floating in the steams
Picking them up is not as hard as it seems
Grab a friend and go for a walk
Picking up litter while you talk.*

To read the full article go to:
<http://www.amritapuri.org/15146/12pacific.aum>

Greening the Tour

From Vandya Sexton:

A valiant effort was made at Amma's Pacific Northwest Programs to recycle and compost whatever we could in order to keep it out of the landfill! We worked within the parameters of the Hyatt Regency's excellent green program, knowing that next year we might purchase more compostables and bring in our own totes to improve upon what the venue already has in place. Since this year was really an experiment to see just what bliss-filled Amma devotees and attendees would tolerate, we were pleasantly surprised that so much attention was paid to the signs and bins. We're expecting that our program will evolve and change as necessary each year as local requirements for recycling often change to become more inclusive.

The diligent Recycling/Composting/Garbage sevites sorting at the stations often overheard wonderful comments and saw many approving and sometimes confused smiles. The "trick" seems to be having adequate signage without overwhelming the sleep deprived recyclers with too many choices!

Special thanks to Ananya, Sarvesh, Donna and Visala for their extraordinary contributions.

From Karuna Poole:

Vandya's Recycling/Composting/ Garbage program was one aspect of Greening the Tour. The other components consisted of the Water Project and the Green Friends Tables.

The Water Project made it possible for us to eliminate plastic water bottles from the program. Attendees were able to get single cups of filtered water or fill their water bottles at the Water Project table. Many people made a financial donation in thanks for receiving the water. We also sold metal water bottles at the table. Sale of the filtered water and water bottles raised \$1,489.42 for Amma's charities.

The Green Friends table had two components, the Litter Project educational display and a Plant Sale. Many people expressed amazement about the toxicity of cigarette butts and 30 new people joined the Litter Project.

The plants at the Plant Sale were plants left from the Olympic Peninsula and Seattle Satsang Plant Sales. In addition, several devotees grew plants especially for the tour plant sale. This sale raised \$178 for Amma's charities.

Special thanks to Pujita, Mary, Nika, Clarice, Achintya and Donna for working so tirelessly at these stations.

From Nika on Bainbridge Island

Thirst quenching devotees came to the water table!

I truly enjoyed filling up water bottles with reverse osmosis quality water on donation basis . We also sold 143 steel water bottles with Amma's logo on it !

Please come back next year during Amma's visit !

From Clarice in Seattle:

When I first agreed to be a co-coordinator for the Green Friends table I pictured myself sitting at a table in the hall watching Amma give darshan. I had been used to being a greeter outside the hall so the thought of sitting rather than standing was also a plus. Then I learned the table would actually be outside the hall and realized I would need to adjust my picture. Initially I was sad, but then thought of it as being "different," not "worse" and not "better." I had not thought about the fact that the plants would need tending and watering so again adjusted my picture. I learned much about the plants from those who stopped by the table to visit and we all began to notice that the plants were flourishing. The growth was noticeable. At one point a retreatant walked by and commented what a great seva I had to be surrounded by the plants. By the end of Amma's visit I had that same sense that it had been a blessing to be surrounded by and tending to the plants.

Stories and Reflections

From Surabi in Pt. Angeles:

The Peninsula College Environmental Science class had the opportunity of choosing 3 out of 5 "Lifestyle project" areas. Many students chose litter as one of their options. The students collectively picked up litter for 24 hours.

Here is an excerpt from a student's journal submission:

"Tonight I did my hour walk and it was a perfect day to do it. My dad and I did the same walk that we did last week but went further than last week (of course). We brought five bags and at first we didn't find a lot because last week we picked it up.

Further down the road we started finding tons of garbage; newspapers, tissues, napkins, cigarette butts, coffee cups, plastic bottles and a lot of alcohol cans and bottles again. The funny thing is, I was picking up a beer can that was in a ditch, and I did a double take and found a bike seat in the ditch!! What an odd thing to find, and it looked in near perfect condition. I don't understand why someone would dispose of a bike seat in a ditch! Weird. Also, we were picking up a beer can and found four more buried in grass underneath it. Made me think; how much garbage is under all this tall grass and in the parts of the ditches filled with water?!

My dad said, "It's sad to think a lot of this garbage may eventually end up in the ocean." And it's true and very sad to think about! So as before, I found pretty much the same, and filled three bags of garbage and two bags of recyclable materials. Still amazes me that people just throw things out their windows. My dad and I are going to turn this into an every other week thing, where we'll pick up garbage a long our road! Definitely enjoyed doing this the most!"

From Radha in Puyallup:

My daughter and son in law were visiting me this week, so we ended up picking some litter on our walk at Puyallup river walk. It's funny when they saw me picking litter, I did not even ask them, they automatically started to pick up. My son in law started to pick up beer bottles and cans teenage kids left. It's nice to see that how we can influence others with our actions without saying much.

From Aparna in Redmond via Washington D.C.:

This is a picture of one of our youngest and most enthusiastic members picking up cigarettes outside of the Washington D.C. hotel where Amma's programs are being held.

