Continuing the Thread: Campaign Update and Creation of the Re-Clothe NY Coalition

NYSAR3 Conference 2016

Dan Lilkas-Rain, Recycling Coordinator, Town of Bethlehem
Chairman, NYSAR3 Re-Clothe NY Campaign
NYSAR³’s Statewide Textile Recovery Campaign

- NY’s first statewide effort to target a specific category of recyclable material

- Partnered with Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles trade group (SMART) and Council for Textile Recycling (CTR). Extremely helpful expertise and resources!
Why Focus on Textile Recovery?

- “Forgotten Recyclable” comprising 5+% of waste stream (as much as 7% or more in NYC)
- Only approximately 15% of textiles currently recovered, making it the next “low hanging fruit” after organics

![Estimated MSW Generation in New York State](image)
Why Focus on Textile Recovery?

- Already a “robust reverse supply chain” existing (Unlike organics, infrastructure exists throughout U.S.)
- Significant economic and environmental impacts (far greater than most traditional recyclables)
Economic Impacts

- Estimated 1.4 billion pounds of textiles discarded each year in New York State, with a potential value of $130 million
- 1000+ new jobs in statewide reuse and recycling industries could be created if all textiles recovered
Environmental Impacts

Textiles currently being recycled in U.S. annually is the estimated carbon reduction equivalent of removing nearly 1 million passenger cars from nation’s roads.

Compared with:

- 170,000 cars for yard waste recycling
- 210,000 cars for U.S. glass recycling
- 640,000 cars for U.S. plastic recycling

Textile recycling has the carbon reduction equivalent of roughly these three other major recycling categories combined. That’s with only 15% of textiles currently being recycled!
What can be donated?

Clothing:
- Tops, sweaters, sweatshirts
- Dresses
- Outerwear (coats, jackets, blazers)
- Bottoms (pants, slacks, jeans, sweatpants, shorts)
- Suits
- Socks
- Pajamas, slips
- Bras, underwear

Footwear (single or in pairs):
- Shoes
- Heels (wedges, pumps)
- Flats
- Sandals
- Flip Flops
- Boots
- Sneakers
- Cleats
- Slippers
What can be donated?

Accessories:
- Hats
- Bags (purses, totes, backpacks, duffle bags)
- Belts
- Gloves
- Ties
- Scarves
- Bathrobes

Linens:
- Sheets
- Blankets
- Towels
- Curtains/Drapes
- Aprons
- Dish cloths
- Cloth napkins
- Table linens
- Comforters
- Throw rugs
- Placemats

Other:
- All stuffed animals
- Halloween costumes
- Sports jerseys
- Pet beds and clothing
- Rags
- Pillows
- Canvas
NYSAR$^3$’s Statewide Textile Recovery Summit

- Very successful first Statewide Stakeholder Summit, April 2014
- Hosted and facilitated by Center for Sustainable Community Solutions at SyracuseCoE

- Dialogue focused on obstacles and challenges of textile recovery, as well as outreach strategies to achieve project goals.
- 50 participants representing a diverse group of stakeholders from municipal level, public and private industries, educators and students
NYSAR³’s Statewide Textile Recovery Campaign

- Ribbon cutting at NYSAR3 Conference: Nov. 5th
- Official Launch: America Recycles Day: Nov. 15, 2014
Campaign Successes:

- Campaign collected over 100,000 pounds of textiles in the immediate wake of the program launch, Nov. 2014
- Several million pounds since, and rising...
- Media: November 2014 alone the campaign achieved: 156 Media Placements, 178,474,916 Unique Online Impressions with $253,264: Media placement valuation
- Campaign received 2015 EPA Environmental Champion Award!

NYSAR3 Board member Melissa Young, and ‘Re-Clothe NY’ Campaign Chair Dan Rain accepting EPA Award on April 24th.
Successful Tools and Strategies

1. Partnering with CTR and SMART
2. Engaging broad spectrum of stakeholders; “Rising tide raises all boats” strategy
3. Municipalities and NY State passed resolutions in support of campaign
4. Traditional and social media
5. Webinars
6. Website tools
   - Public info pages
   - Search tool
   - Media and outreach toolkit
Successful Tools and Strategies cont.

- Focusing on economic impacts: 130 Million in revenue, 1,000+ jobs created
- At local level: e.g. $3.3 Million in Albany County potential lost revenue
- Town of Bethlehem: just with two collections and ongoing at just 3 bins in first 9 months: $4,771. Added a couple bin locations: Over $12K to date!
- Focusing on eco-impacts
Successful Strategies: Remind of eco-impacts

Example: “Your jeans are thirsty!”

- 2,900 gallons over the life of one pair of jeans = 10,978 Liters
- The UN determines that each person should have access to 20 L of clean water/day.
- So one pair of jeans reused would supply about 549 people’s water needs for a day
Or about 457 cases of bottled water!
Challenges

- Keeping momentum going after initial launch, and between Earth Day and ARD
- Consistency across collectors/Bin Labeling
- Changing longstanding public perceptions about what is acceptable (types of materials and condition)
- Metrics: Getting accurate baseline or collection data is a big challenge
- Challenging market conditions
- Getting fashion design and retail stakeholders to the table
NYSAR³’s Statewide Textile Recovery Summit

- Second Statewide Stakeholder Summit, 2015
- Hosted and facilitated by Center for Sustainable Community Solutions at SyracuseCoE

- Identified the need to address campaign challenges by establishing a coalition, modeled in part after the collaboration of the WNYCDG
Addressing Challenges

- Partnered with the Product Stewardship Institute to help form Re-Clothe NY Coalition
- Coalition members adopt standards for consistent bin labeling; list of accepted materials and messaging; sharing data; codes & profit status.
- $20K grant through the NYS Pollution Prevention Institute to create tools and enhance outreach
- Public awareness campaign for America Recycles Day – Nov. 2016
NEW YORKERS TRASH AN AVERAGE OF 70 POUNDS OF CLOTHING, SHOES, & TEXTILES ANNUALLY.

KEEP YOUR TEXTILES OUT OF THE TRASH: RECYCLE!

Re-Clothe New York
Visit bit.ly/Re-ClotheNY for a list of acceptable items and textile collection locations.
GO ON A TREASURE HUNT AT YOUR LOCAL THRIFT STORE. **BRING OLD CLOTHES TO DONATE** WHILE YOU’RE THERE.

HELP OTHERS, **BUY YOURSELF A NEW WARDROBE, AND SAVE MONEY. IT’S A WIN-WIN!**

**Re-Clothe New York**

Dan Lilkas-Rain
Recycling Coordinator, Town of Bethlehem, NY
Chairman, NYSAR3 Re-Clothe NY Campaign
518-439-4955 ext. 1510
drain@townofbethlehem.org
www.nytextiles.org
www.townofbethlehem.org