

Save Our 'Aina

Clarence T.C. Ching was a strong believer in helping Hawaii and did so by funding the Kukui Gardens. Additionally his Foundation funded the Pueo programs and many schools' expansion. Mr. Ching's altruistic actions have inspired me to help my community and I believe I can do that by encouraging more people to recycle.

"Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" was what all of my teachers encouraged me to do in elementary school. Not only did we have recycling bins available in each classroom, we also had a recycling mobile unit located in the front of the school. However, since then, the recycling bins have disappeared, more recyclables are seen in the trash, and enthusiasm to recycle has lessened considerably. On a personal level, I have noticed when we have refreshments at the end of my games at various community parks, all our recyclable containers are thrown in the trash bin due to a lack of recycling bins.

We can help Hawaii become more "green" by following a simple two-step plan:

The first step is to place more recycling bins around the island to make it easier for people to save their items until they come across a blue bin or recycling center. According to the State of Hawaii's Department of Health Deposit Beverage Container Program, over nine hundred million beverage containers are sold to consumers in Hawaii every year. Although a substantial number of beverage containers were recycled in the past nine years, about 2.1 billion beverage containers were diverted to a landfill, left on the ground, or washed into the ocean. Placing more recycling bins around the islands will encourage people to recycle and could result in creating more jobs.

The second step is for the City and County to offer a two-cent refund on plastic recyclables that are not a Number 1 (PET) plastic, number 2 (HDPE) plastic, or HI-5 plastic

bottle. Economics 101 states that "people respond to financial incentives". Last year, 48 percent of all Honolulu's recyclables were placed in the gray bins to be shipped to landfills (The Economics of Recycling in Hawaii). If the government gives people rewards for recycling, the number of recyclable material that goes to the dumpsites will decrease. After expenses, any remaining money can be used toward beautifying our city.

In conclusion, by following these steps, Hawaii will remain beautiful and abundant in resources. However, if we continue to ignore recycling, Hawaii will become polluted. By 2020 if Hawaii continues to ignore the crucial importance of recycling, global warming will become more prominent, which will increase ocean acidification, glacial retreat, and temperature (NASA Global Climate Change). If we take action now and implement this new plan, we can recycle as much as 6.3 billion beverage containers, excluding other types of plastic and recyclable matter.

Let's recycle and save our 'aina.