

Recycling to Create a Better Future

One day, I went for a morning jog in my neighborhood. As I listened to Kolohe Kai through my AirPods, the sun was rising on that beautiful Sunday morning. BANG! Out of nowhere I tripped on a broken piece of chair. As I pulled myself off the wet grass, I looked around and saw a pile of old furniture that had been abandoned on the side of the road. After that day, I've begun to notice stacks of discarded items on the side of the road. Sometimes a truck would pull over to pick up a shelf or maybe a table. This led me to start to think about how useful these items still are, even though they had been thrown away. Ironically, some of the items were dumped next to signs that said, "NO DUMPING ALLOWED." Eventually these gently used items will end up in the dump. If we continue to throw away items that are still useful, in 50 years the landfills will be too full, the road will be full of trash, and there will be no sidewalks. My theory is that we can reuse these items to make them useful again. I have solutions on how we can turn rubbish into refurbished pieces which can be beneficial to many people in a variety of ways.

One way to increase the recycling of items dumped on the side of the road is to use these items to teach vocational skills in high-school wood-working classes. This will be a multi-step process. First, community members will contact their neighborhood school, and tell them that there are items on the side of the road. These items can be dropped off to the school, or picked up. Then, the high schoolers will learn how to use wood-working skills to fix the items. Once the items are fixed, someone can volunteer to drop the items off to homeless shelters.

Another way to reduce the amount of bulky items left on the side of the road would be to pay people to bring the items to recycling centers. The items brought in could be broken down

and made into packaging materials such as bags, clothes, etc. The recycling centers would make their own money for the city, and would save the city money because the city would no longer have to pay people or companies to pick things up.

The final solution to the problem of having trash on the side of the road is to organize groups of volunteers to participate in clean-up days in their communities. This solution was inspired by how Clarence T.C. Ching helped his community when he built the Chinese Cultural Plaza down in Chinatown. It was built as a community gathering place where people could come together to socialize and reconnect with friends. This led me to think that when members of the community get together to clean-up their neighborhood, the results can be very successful. As neighbors get to know each other, the sense of pride and teamwork can improve the quality of life for everyone. This is what the Chinese Cultural Plaza has done for the Chinese Community.

There are many solutions to the problem of having too many bulky items on the side of the road. Bringing the items to wood-working classes, paying people to bring the items to recycling centers, and scheduling community clean-up days for picking up trash on the side of the road. Those solutions will prevent overflow in landfills. It would give homeless shelters items to use. It will make our sidewalks cleaner and safer. If we don't fix this, in 50 years the sidewalks will have a ton of items and trash all over it, and the landfills will be overflowing. You can tell that this is a big problem for our island, let's fix it before it gets worse.