

Grey to Green: Reduce, Reuse Recycle with California Grey Bears

10 Good Reasons to Recycle at Grey Bears:

1. We take all recyclables taken at curbside, plus metal, plastics, computers and printers, monitors, TVs, appliances, paper, batteries and other materials. Additionally, the recycling center at the Buena Vista Landfill takes oil and antifreeze. For a complete list of what we accept at each location visit www.greybears.org.
2. We have two convenient locations. Mid-county at 2710 Chanticleer down from Sutter Maternity, and in South County at the Buena Vista Landfill. Both sites are open 7 days a week from 7:30 - 3:30.
3. We offer commercial cardboard and plastic film collection service through our affiliate SCRAP (Santa Cruz Recycling Alliance Program). If you are a business generating lots of cardboard call SCRAP at 831-479-1107.
4. We offer one stop shopping Mon.-Sat. at our Thrift Store and weekdays at our Computer Store for outstanding bargains – a reuse advantage.
5. We care about the environment. We received the Sustainable Quality Award for our social responsiveness and environmental stewardship.
6. We gratefully accept your household items at our Thrift Store, including clothing, shoes and accessories textiles, housewares, linens, plants, jewelry, furniture, antiques, appliances, wheelchairs, walkers and canes, bicycles, books, music, videos, puzzles and games, cars and boats.
7. We divert food waste, make and sell compost from our Earth Tubs, have a vermiculture (worm compost) area and host workshops at our facilities.
8. We promote recycling by educating school-age children about the benefits of reducing waste from the landfills.
9. We offer free and low cost classes to seniors including a computer lab available to all members.
10. We care about people. All proceeds from our operations go into our Brown Bag Program and we provide fresh produce for 4,000 seniors every week.

SOURCE: www.greybears.org

From a simple act of kindness, the California Grey Bears has grown into one of the most successful food distribution and recycling non-profits in the country. Over 38 years the Grey Bears Brown Bag Program has delivered more than 60 million pounds of fresh produce and groceries to thousands of Santa Cruz County seniors. And the need is growing. Everyday more seniors become food insecure. So how does Grey Bears do it?

“In one word, volunteers,” says Ron Stephenson, 73, who has managed the Grey Bears electronic recycling program the past seven years. Volunteers have been at the core of the Grey Bears mission since the very beginning when two UCSC students and some seniors took their surplus garden produce and gave it to seniors who needed it. And though they have grown into a more diversified \$1.4 million operation since then, the basic premise of generating value from “waste” has remained constant. Volunteers can choose from a wide variety of activities to suit their needs, interests and experience.

“500 volunteers do pretty much everything at our main Chanticleer Avenue campus. They help with recycling, staff the office, run our thrift store, help prepare daily lunches, collect food and then sort, prep, assemble and deliver the bags to 4,000 seniors all over Santa Cruz County every week.”

To fund the Brown Bag Program, Grey Bears started a recycling program and built a successful thrift store – one of the no-so-best-kept secrets in the county. They first hired a full-time recycling manager in 1988 after they had acquired the first lot at 2710 Chanticleer Ave. They transformed an old chicken coop into a warehouse where the bagging



Grey Bears volunteers Ken Miller and Tom Cunningham take apart old computers to separate components for recycling.

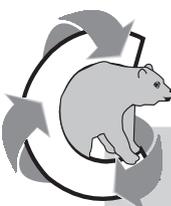
still takes place. Since then they've acquired two other adjacent lots, now amounting to four acres and a complete recycling operation and thrift store. Grey Bears also has a contract with the County to operate the recycling center at the Buena Vista Landfill which has been instrumental in their ability to meet the increased demand for brown bags. These programs along with county and jurisdictional grants, donations and events, including their beloved holiday dinner, underwrite the Brown Bag Program.

Both Chanticleer Avenue and the Buena Vista facilities are “one stop shops” to recycle everything from metal, plastics, computers

and printers, to paper, batteries, oil, antifreeze and other materials. The Chanticleer campus accepts appliances – anything with an electric cord - with no drop off fees.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a Grey Bear, the only requirement is to be age 55 years or older. Membership costs just \$20 per year and entitles you to receive a brown bag of fresh and nutritious groceries 48 weeks a year. Members also receive the Grey Bears monthly newsletter, Sandi's Garden & Kitchen Notes, access to free and low cost classes, use of the computer lab (complete with high speed internet) and discounts from dozens of area stores and services. There are no income requirements to join. Grey Bears shares the bounty. Their Board of Directors has made a commitment that no senior goes hungry in Santa Cruz County.

Grey Bears hosts a Volunteer Recognition Luncheon on May 25, a barbecue Harvest Picnic is held at Harvey West Park in the September, and their holiday dinner will be on December 4 this year. All seniors are invited and the events are free.



California Grey Bears

“Seniors helping seniors since 1973”

Grey & Green – Turning Recycling into Food

Join – Members receive a weekly bag of groceries plus many other benefits.

Volunteer – Join with others who find fun, value and friendship in service.

Donate – Help us carry out our mission serving seniors in need.

Brown Bag Program – Serving SC County seniors for 38 years!

Recycling Centers – we accept everything including e-waste
Santa Cruz – 2710 Chanticleer Ave
Watsonville – Buena Vista Landfill
SCRAP – Cardboard recycling for businesses

Thrift Store – Values galore! Vintage clothing to rare treasures

Events – Holiday Dinner, Harvest Picnic, Volunteer Luncheon

