

Help Us Trash the Battle Over Recycling!

By Tina Andrews in Meadow Pointe, Wesley Chapel, FL

In the community of Shellwood Place, where there are one hundred fifteen homes, a grand total of fourteen brought their recycle to the curb on September 30, 2009. Two weeks later, on the next recycling day, only eleven homes participated. Many homeowners do not recycle simply because they are not informed with regard to how to recycle here in Meadow Pointe, and where to get the materials to do so.

Pasco County currently conducts a "BLUE BAG" recycling program. Blue plastic bags that hold recyclables can be purchased at locations like Publix, Home Depot and Lowe's. Wal-Mart sells fifty 33-gallon bags in a pack for \$8.00. Recyclable materials are placed in the bags and on the curb every other week on the evening before your trash pick up day.

Pasco County is currently able to recycle aluminum cans, plastic bottles/containers, metal cans, and #1 PET and #2 HDPE plastic. We have the ability to handle more of these types of disposables than we now collect. We do not currently have curbside pick up of newspapers, but many local schools offer drop off points for these. Dr. John Long Middle School and Sand Pine Elementary are currently drop off points inside the Meadow Pointe community.

When utilizing the blue bags, please be sure they are filled to the top. This will save you money and help the environment. Also, please rinse all containers. Remove paper labels from cans. It is not necessary to remove labels from plastic or glass. You may crush any cans or containers, as this will enable you fit more into one bag, but this is not required.

Waste Services of Florida, Inc. is the sole waste collector for the Meadow Pointe community. A large obstacle in getting the recycle word out to homeowners is that direct communication with the waste management company goes only through the HOA or CDD organizations, not directly to the consumers, thus creating a communication gap.

My goal is to help plug that gap and increase the number of households that recycle.

If you have questions or would like more information on recycling in your community, please log onto the Pasco County website at: www.pascocountyfl.net, then go to County Agencies, on the top of the screen. Click the "Utilities Services" title, and then click "Recycling" on the right side of the screen in the "Our Community" box. You may also join the discussion with regard to increasing recycling efforts in Meadow Pointe by logging on to: <http://mymeadowpointe.net/discussion>.

Perhaps if we can show the county that Pasco citizens have a real desire to make a difference, they will consider future improvements to our current recycle program. Of the people I have spoken with, many would prefer recycle bins to the current blue bag program. This would be a very expensive undertaking, as bin collection requires different trucks that actually lift the bins for emptying. Other individuals like the bags, as they can fill as many as they need in any given week, with no overflow. In any case, this kind of discussion does not serve us today. **We should all be encouraged to utilize the program we have in place for now. Then, as the county looks to future budgets, we can advocate for the bin program, if we so choose. First things first!**

If you would like to launch your own effort to increase recycling in your neighborhood, please email me at tandrews1216@gmail.com, or contact Jennifer Seney, Pasco County Recycling Coordinator at (727)- 847-8041, extension 8659.