

"one man's trash..."

Solid Waste District of La Porte County



Winter 2021

Your guide to reducing, reusing, and recycling

Every "litter" bit hurts

Litter is stuff that ends up on the ground or blown into trees, lakes, rivers, or oceans where it doesn't belong. It could be used plastic bags, food wrappers, cigarette butts, or other trash. Litter can cause people and animals to get sick, and it makes our community look messy and neglected. Sadly, littering has gotten a lot worse during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Single-use face masks, gloves, cleaning wipes, and takeout food containers now litter streets, beaches, parks, and parking lots. Some people act like the "don't litter" rules don't need to be followed now. They are very wrong. To keep people, animals, and our environment healthy, we need everyone to work together to place all trash and recyclables where they belong.

Unwanted, used, disposable face masks, gloves, and wipes belong in the

trash can. If they are thrown on the ground or left in a shopping cart or parking lot, this trash will likely stay on the ground because people are concerned that it may contain COVID-19 germs and they don't want to pick it up. Disposable face masks and gloves are made mostly of plastic. Plastics break into smaller and smaller pieces outdoors and take hundreds of years to break down completely.



Image courtesy of The Recycling Partnership

According to a study by Keep America Beautiful, if an area already looks littered, people think it is okay to throw more trash there. So please do your part to put litter where it belongs, especially during

these stressful times. If we all choose to stop littering, people and wildlife will be healthier and our roads, streams, and other areas will be more beautiful than ever before. Thank you for doing your part!

Sign up for Clean It Up 2021!

This April and May, we need your help to clean up La Porte County. Gather your family, friends, or community group, or go out on your own and help us beautify our surroundings.

Do you have a favorite park, natural area, or neighborhood where you have seen trash accumulate?

Now is the time to do something about it. We will provide you with the supplies you need.

Call us today at 219-326-0014 or email sgeeburns@solidwastedistrict.com to register for Clean It Up 2021.



Credit: nih0001 | iStock | Getty Images Plus

Drop-off program guidelines, including TerraCycle

For the safety of our residents and staff:

- Only one person at a time will be allowed in the drop-off area.
- Prescription bottles for recycling must be dropped off in a small box suitable for mailing.
- Due to decreased storage space, please bring only two bags of items or less per week.

We thank our residents for following these temporary guidelines which allow us to continue to provide these services. Visit our website and Facebook page for periodic updates. Thank you!



Turner Talks Trash from the Executive Director's Desk

District residents love to recycle! But sometimes it can be a bit confusing to know how and where to recycle each item. Help us recycle better by learning what goes into the recycling bins, what is collected at our offices for recycling, and what is collected for special disposal.

Curbside Recycling Toters — Cardboard; paper; plastics marked #1–5 and #7; metal and aluminum cans; and glass jars and bottles ONLY should be placed into the toters. All recyclables should be empty, clean, and dry and all cardboard flattened. Recyclables should be placed loose into the toters, NOT in plastic bags.

TerraCycle and Other Collections at the Office — We collect a variety of hard-to-recycle items, including plastic bags and empty prescription drug containers, in special drop-off containers at our District office, located at 2857 West State Road 2 in La Porte. Visit www.solidwastedistrict.com/recycling-dropoff-programs for up-to-date details. Note: These hard-to-recycle items are NOT accepted in curbside toters.

Yard and Green Waste Drop-Off — Residents can drop off yard waste at no charge at the Compost Facility, which is located north of the Fairgrounds, across from NIPSCO, at 724 Zigler Road in La Porte. Drop off residential grass clippings, brush, and logs only. NO landscape timbers or building materials are accepted. Yard waste must be un-bagged or in PAPER bags. Please empty and take home with you any plastic bags used to haul the yard waste. No trash is accepted.

Household Hazardous Waste — Collections for HHW will begin again in May 2021 and will continue throughout the summer and fall. Please store HHW at your home until then. Keep an eye on our Facebook page, website, and newsletter for dates and details.

Electronics Recycling — Unwanted electronics, such as TVs, computers, monitors, and printers, can be dropped off for FREE recycling year-round during normal business hours at 724 Zigler Road in La Porte or in Michigan City at 1027 Hitchcock Road. NO fluorescent light bulbs, household hazardous waste, or appliances are accepted. We also accept electronics at our 5-in-1 Collections at the La Porte County Fairgrounds. The next event will be held in May 2021. Visit www.solidwastedistrict.com/electronic-recycling or call 219-326-0014 for more information.

We are so very thankful for La Porte County residents and their efforts to recycle. We need everyone to do their part by being realistic about what goes into curbside recycling toters and what can be recycled through our other programs. For more information, visit www.solidwastedistrict.com or call 219-326-0014.

Recycle right and recycle realistically!

Clay

"WHAT YOU DO MAKES A DIFFERENCE, AND YOU HAVE TO DECIDE WHAT KIND OF DIFFERENCE YOU WANT TO MAKE."
~ JANE GOODALL

Problem waste? No problem!

Thank you to all who attended our 2020 "problem waste" collection events. Our next event will be a 5-in-1 Collection in May 2021. Keep an eye on our spring newsletter, website, and Facebook page for the exact date and time. We will be accepting the following problem wastes that should never be placed in the trash or the recycling toter: tires, appliances, electronics, confidential paper for shredding, and household hazardous waste (household, lawn, and automotive chemicals, batteries, fluorescent bulbs, sharps, and medications).



First
event of
2021!

Credit: rastudio | iStock | Getty Images Plus

Have an old TV or computer to discard?

Don't put it in the trash!



Credit: TCaseidy / iStock | Getty Images Plus

In Indiana, it is illegal to place electronics, such as televisions, computers, game controllers, tablets, smartphones, and other electronics, into the trash. Electronics contain several types of recyclable materials that are useful in making new electronics and which could contaminate soil and groundwater if disposed in landfills. That is why, for example, if you set a television at the curb for pickup, your garbage provider will leave it there — usually with a tag explaining that they aren't allowed to pick up electronics for landfill disposal.

Instead, please bring that TV and all other unwanted electronics to one of

our Electronics Recycling locations for FREE recycling year-round. These are the locations and hours:

- 724 Zigler Road LaPorte
Open Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.
- 1027 Hitchcock Road, Michigan City
Open Monday–Friday, 7 a.m.–3 p.m.

We also accept electronics at our 5-in-1 Collections at the La Porte County Fairgrounds. The next event will be held in May 2021.

Visit www.solidwastedistrict.com/electronic-recycling or call 219-326-0014 for more information.



Credit: baranodev / iStock | Getty Images Plus

Global e-waste reaches 59 million tons in 2019

It's that time of year when we buy new laptops, smartphones, tablets, appliances, and other electronics as holiday gifts, leaving many needing to find a home for the electronics those new items are replacing. Have you ever wondered what happens to old electronics after they leave your home?

This summer, the United Nations released a report, "The Global E-Waste Monitor 2020," highlighting how much electronic waste (e-waste) the world creates and where it goes. This report found that 53.6 million metric tons (Mt) of e-waste was generated in 2019, a growth of 9.2 Mt since 2014. That's more than 59 million U.S. tons.

In addition to last year's high number, the report found e-waste is projected to grow to 74.7 Mt by 2030. While growth in electronic use continues, recycling has so far not kept up with the creation of e-waste. The world needs to recover more electronics to reuse their precious materials, such as gold, silver, copper, and platinum, as well as rare-earth elements. In fact, the 53.6 Mt of e-waste is equal to about \$57 billion of high-value materials that were dumped or disappeared instead of being recycled and reused.

"By improving e-waste collection and recycling practices worldwide, a considerable amount of secondary raw materials — precious, critical, and non-critical — could be made readily available to re-enter the manufacturing process while reducing the continuous extraction of new materials,"

the report said.

Of the 53.6 Mt created, only 17.4% was officially collected and recycled. That leaves 82.6% (44.3 Mt) unaccounted for — that's a lot of trashed or improperly disposed electronics. Even broken or unusable e-waste can be recycled for materials or disposed of in a way that does not leak hazardous chemicals into our soil or waterways.

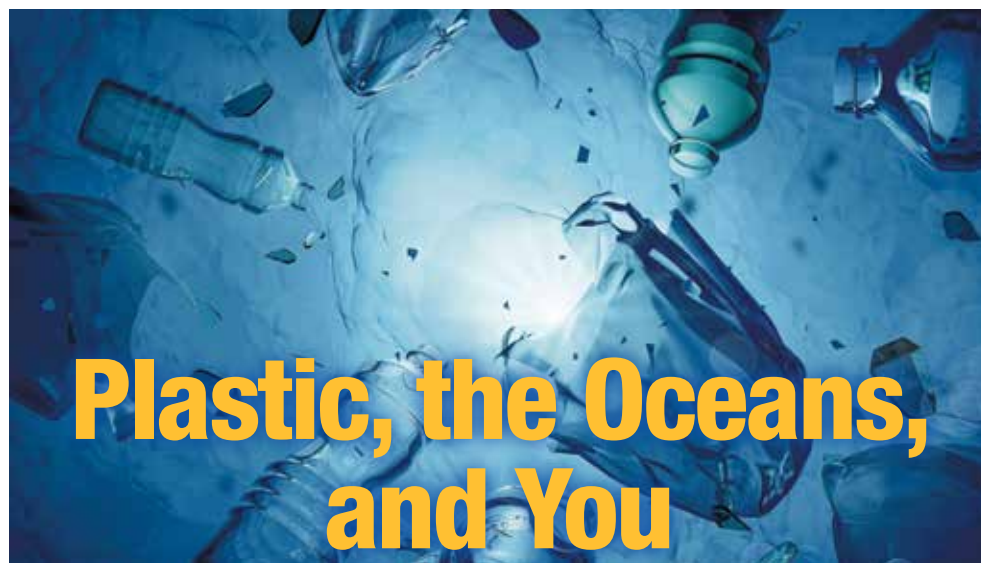
Even though many countries, such as the United States, have e-waste collection systems and regulations in place, the report reveals that we can do more to implement recycling efforts and ensure more of our electronics are properly collected and reused to keep harmful chemicals out of our environment and communities.

You can do your part by donating, reusing, or recycling your e-waste instead of throwing it away. Check out the article at left for more information. To read the full report, visit <http://ewastemonitor.info>.

Did you know?

- The U.S. generated about 7.6 million tons of e-waste in 2019.
- In 2017, only about 1.1 million tons of U.S. e-waste was recycled.
- On average, each American created 46 pounds of e-waste in 2019.

Source: The Global E-Waste Monitor 2020



Credit: salarsent / iStock | Getty Images Plus

Plastic, the Oceans, and You

A message from guest writer and Master Recycler Cherie LeFevre

If you are like so many others during this time of pandemic, you want to help the world in some way. Now you can do this online wherever you are comfortable.

It is no secret that plastic has become the bane of our existence, and it is particularly devastating in our oceans where it pollutes, becomes an eyesore, and is responsible for the destruction of wildlife. Enter Free the Ocean (FTO) in 2019.

Every day, as part of the opening ritual on your computer, visit this website to play a one-question trivia game. When you click an answer, it helps remove one piece of plastic trash from our oceans, and you will be educated in the process. Do you know that there are roughly 5.25 trillion pieces of trash in our oceans? Do you know that micro-plastics have been found in birds, glaciers, rain, and human tissue? Are you

aware that 93% of receipts contain BPA (a common type of plastic)? Because they are made from more than one material, it is impossible to separate them during the recycling process.

Earlier this year, the 2020 International Coastal Cleanup Report was released. Volunteers removed nearly 5 million food wrappers from beaches and waterways last year. Food wrappers now are the number one item found — outpacing straws, bottle caps, and cigarette butts, which contain plastic fibers and have typically topped past lists. Food wrappers are uniquely challenging because they are virtually unrecyclable. It is possible to recycle a cardboard pizza box but not if it is tainted with cheese or grease. In addition, there are few eco-friendly alternatives to food wrappers.

On the website, www.freetheocean.com, you can create an account to track

your personal trivia statistics. At this writing, more than 10 million pieces of trash have been removed by people playing the game in all 50 U.S. states, as well as in countries all over the world. You will also be able to watch the total number rise.

Even as we face social distancing and serious health and economic challenges, there are ways to protect the environment from plastic pollution. We can reduce consumption, choose products that are not overpackaged, support companies that reduce waste, and support legislation that pushes for positive change. On October 1, 2020, a country-wide ban went into effect prohibiting plastic straws, stirrers, and swabs in England. In the Maldives, legislation to ban single-use plastic bottles becomes law in three years; however, one of the islands already has implemented this practice. Its trash has been reduced twelve-fold.

The FTO website also features alternative products for home, lifestyle, pets, children, and more. For example, there are plastic-free deodorant, shampoo, and hair conditioner bars. Over 552 million shampoo bottles are ending up in landfills and the ocean every year. Doggie pickup bags made from corn and plant starches are an earth-friendly alternative to plastic poop bags. Bees Wrap can store food and replace plastic wrap. Best of all, each purchase helps to remove plastic pollution. So far, more than 298,000 pieces of plastic have been extracted from the oceans and coastlines through purchase of FTO products.

We can all help in ways big and small. It is a matter of selecting one item to change or eliminate and then moving on to a second, a third, and so forth. Remember, if we are not a part of the solution, we are a part of the problem.

Ken Butler's melodious bones

It's trash day. Those passing by homes and buildings glimpse unwanted items peeking out of trash carts and dumpsters: a rusty snow shovel, an old golf club, and a broken store mannequin. Most of us see worthless junk. But a gifted few see this everyday discarded trash as the melodious bones of musical instruments just waiting to be created.

Ken Butler, a talented artist, musician, and inventor, is truly the father of this craft. For over 40 years, he has been turning trash into a sometimes beautiful, sometimes wacky, and always interesting hybrid of art and music. Growing up, Butler excelled in art school and loved music, but he was told that he could not be respected in either field if he were to combine the two. Fortunately for us, Butler has had the tenacity, creativity, and intellect to prove them wrong.

Butler created his first instrument in 1978 when he discovered a rusty old hatchet in the basement of his Portland, Oregon home. At the time, he had been working on a visual art project involving what he describes as a "rather guitar-looking X-ray of a human head and backbone." Butler believes that is why he saw the shape of

**Bricolage / ,brĕkō'läZH /
(noun) a construction made
from materials at hand**

a violin when he picked up the hatchet. Holding it at his neck like a violin, he found that the hatchet felt quite right.

"I hurried upstairs and was amazed to see how perfectly it fit into my violin case," Butler reflects. "I then put two strings and two tuning pegs on it and plugged it into my guitar amp and was quite stunned that it sounded like a horrible violin." Although he didn't realize it at the time, that hybrid hatchet would spark the transformation of the art world, the music world, and Butler's career, as well.

To date, Butler has created about 400 different musical instruments from found objects, including an old hockey stick, a broken snowshoe, and a taxidermied large-mouth bass. "What can I say?" muses Butler, "I look at trash and see it transform into something else in my head all the time."

Now living in Brooklyn, New York, Butler comments that the sheer density of humans living nearby makes for a spectacular assortment of trash just waiting to be made useful again. Although many artists create unique art from repurposed objects, Butler takes it to the next level by giving his art the additional purpose of creating music. According to Butler, his work embraces the French term *bricolage*, which he defines as "creating a new world or dimension by reusing, reimagining, transforming, and merging found objects."

Butler has performed on "The Tonight Show," alongside musician Laurie Anderson, and at schools and venues throughout the world. New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art displays a permanent collection of Butler's hybrid instruments, which are the ultimate example of repurposing.

For more information and to see photos and videos of Ken Butler's extraordinary hybrid instruments, visit <https://kenbutler.squarespace.com>.



Photo by Jesse Winter, courtesy of Ken Butler

Inspired to make your own trashy musical instrument?

As long as there has been trash, there have been people compelled to save it from the landfill and give it one more chance at being useful. Entire TV shows, books, websites, and blogs revolve around this very topic. Whether it is repainting a piece of furniture, salvaging parts of an old house, or grabbing a perfectly fine but unwanted item discarded by a neighbor, reusing, repurposing, and reimagining are all worthy of consideration.

Ken Butler's hybrid instruments inspire everyday people, as well as fellow artists, including the co-founders of Bash the Trash, John Bertles and Carina Piaggio.

Bash the Trash, based in Hastings, New York, uses Butler's concept of creating musical instruments from trash and adds to it the science of sound and the message of sustainability. Working in schools and teaching institutions, Bash

the Trash teaches kids and adults how to create musical instruments from trash, the science behind how these musical instruments make melodious sounds, and how to live a more sustainable lifestyle.

"The three S's — science, sound, and sustainability — are at the center of the Bash the Trash message," comments Bertles. "We love how art and science work together in what we do."

For more information about Bash the Trash, including their programs, live-streaming events, and online classes, visit www.bashthetrash.com.

For free online tutorials on how to create your own trashy musical instruments, go to the Bash the Trash YouTube channel and look under "Instrument Making Instructional Videos." While you are there, browse their other educational videos for entertainment and inspiration.

Owning less to enjoy more

"Mess and clutter stand in the way of our productivity, stress us out and keep us stuck. Our stuff stands in the way of the lives we dream about," writes Lindsay Miles. "When I think about why I was hoarding stuff in the first place, there were a couple of reasons. One was that I cared about waste; I wasn't going to sling perfectly useful items in the bin," she continues. "However, there was more to it than that. I'd never needed to declutter. I'd never learned to let things go," confesses Miles in the introduction of her book, *Less Stuff: Simple Zero-Waste Steps to a Joyful and Clutter-Free Life* (Hardie Grant, 2019, 224 pages). Due to a spacious childhood room and an even more spacious attic, the author admits, "There was never any need to get rid of anything, nor any inclination to do so."

She goes on to say, "Somehow I'd let the fact that stuff was inherently useful blur the real question: Was it useful to me?" If you are someone who cares about the environment and could benefit from minimizing your possessions, this is the book for you. Miles focuses on the emotional causes of materialism and clutter for a full third of the book before tackling the room-by-room process of right-sizing your possessions. The final third deals with responsibly separating from those items you no longer need and learning from the experience so that you can continue to live clutter-free long after your initial journey through the process.

Minimalism is a lifestyle that turns its back on consumerism and materialism. A person discovers what they really need and they let go of the rest. This reduces the time and debt that go along with the acquisition, maintenance, and storage of things, leaving more time for the experiences and relationships that bring joy. The goal of the zero-waste lifestyle is to refuse products and packaging that are not necessary and reduce consumption to what is needed. Miles believes the goals of zero waste and minimalism are compatible: "At the heart of both is the idea of intentional living. Realising what we truly need, making do and choosing well."

Obstacles to right-sizing our possessions are many. Miles writes, "Advertisements tap in to what we value, and then activate these values to persuade us to buy products." Defining your values builds resistance to these messages. A "scarcity mindset" tells us there is never enough, and we fear letting go of things we may need at a

later time. Weighing the time, distance, and money required to replace an item against the emotional and financial cost of storing it can help you overcome this objection.

We hold onto items for the very reason we should let them go — we do not use them. We regret the purchase and think disposing of the item is admitting failure. Miles suggests, "Don't think of it as failing, because it isn't. There was a lesson in there to be learned. We can take the lesson on board and let the item go." Many unused items are related to our "fantasy self," that person who is going to lose a few pounds, take up a new hobby, or tackle a home improvement project. "When we like an idea, but not enough to prioritise it, the items that are attached to the idea remain unused," says the author. "We need to recognise our fantasy self in order to let these items go."

Miles' action plan calls for a labeled, six-box system: donate, sell, recycle, repair, junk, and other. While most of these categories are self-explanatory, "other" includes items you are undecided about, which belong to someone else, or for which you need more time to evaluate. Room by room, every item is picked up and evaluated. "Once a box is full, or you have a couple of boxes of the same category piling up, act on them," encourages Miles. This batching of items brings efficiency. If dealt with one at a time, the process will take too long. And, if nothing is disposed of until the end, there will be no sense of progress and you will feel overwhelmed.

After detailed advice on how to sell, donate, repair, or recycle your unwanted items, Miles wraps up the book with advice on choosing better. "The things you've decluttered will tell you a lot about yourself and the choices you made in the past... Understanding your previous decisions can help stop you [from] repeating the same patterns again." Before buying new items, she advises, "Ask yourself if you really need it. Can you borrow it? Can you make do without?" Perhaps a used item would fulfill your need at a lower cost and with less consumption of fuel and resources. Miles writes, "Think about the end of its life before you make the choice to take it home with you." Consider whether the item is durable, repairable, and ultimately, recyclable. As Miles says, "When we buy less, we can choose to spend better. We can vote with our wallets for the kinds of businesses we want to see supported."



Photo courtesy of Ken Butler

Curbside Recycling Schedule

- A** City of La Porte – South of Hwy. 2 and West of Monroe (Hwy. 4); North of Hwy. 2 and West of Hwy. 35
- B** City of La Porte – East of Hwy. 4 and South of Hwy. 2, including Kankakee Township; East of Hwy. 35 and North of Hwy. 2 to Brighton Street
- C** City of La Porte – East of Hwy. 35 and North of Brighton Street; Town of Westville; New Durham Estates Mobile Home Community; Cass Township; Dewey Township; Hanna Township; Prairie Township
- D** Clinton Township; Noble Township; Scipio Township; Town of Wanatah
- E** Johnson Township; Lincoln Township; Pleasant Township; Union Township; Washington Township
- F** Michigan City – South of 12, South of MLK Drive, West of Karwick Road; Pottawattamie Park; Village Green
- G** Michigan City – North of 12, North of MLK Drive, East of Karwick Road; Springfield Township; Long Beach; Michiana Shores; Shoreland Hills; Beach Walk; Green Acres; Sheridan Beach
- H** Coolspring Township; New Durham Township (excluding the Town of Westville and New Durham Estates); Weatherstone Village; Terrace Acres
- I** Center Township (outside city limits)
- J** Galena Township; Hudson Township; Wills Township; Trail Creek (Michigan City); Rolling Prairie Mobile Home Park

Recycle Toter Reminders:

- Place at curb by 6 a.m. of pickup day.
- Locate toter at least 4 feet from items such as mailboxes, trees, or parked vehicles.
- If recycling pickup is missed, please call 219-326-0014 within 24 hours. We will get a truck back out to you!

NOTE: Township is outside of City limits. Never remove toter from assigned address.

January						
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Weds.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
					1	2
					Holiday No Service	J
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	A	B	C	D	E	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	F	G	H	I	J	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	F	G	H	I	J	
31						
February						
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Weds.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
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28						
March						
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Weds.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
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	A	B	C	D	E	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	F	G	H	I	J	
28	29	30	31			
	A	B	C			



Holiday tree-cycling

We only enjoy our fresh-cut holiday trees for a few weeks out of the year, but recycling them can be a great way to keep them in use year-round as mulch or compost. To recycle your real tree, remove all lights, ornaments, tinsel, and garland, as well as the metal or plastic stand. Residents can drop off holiday trees at the District's Zigler Road Compost Site. Hours are from dawn to dusk daily. Please do not use plastic tree bags. If you do put your tree in a bag, remove it from the bag at the Compost Site and take the bag home to throw in the trash or reuse next year. The Washington Park Zoo in Michigan City and many local livestock farmers accept bare Christmas trees, as well. Visit the Zoo's website or check with a farmer you know for details. If you live in a city or town, your local street department or trash hauler may pick up your tree at the curb for composting, so check with them about the schedule.

Did you know?

Holiday cards and gift boxes are recyclable, but wrapping paper and bows are not. Reuse them or put them into the trash.



- www.facebook.com/LPCoRecycling
- www.twitter.com/LPCoRecycling
- www.youtube.com/LPCoRecycling
- www.lpcorecycling.tumblr.com
- Green E-Club: <http://eepurl.com/eiyHs>

We want your suggestions, questions, and comments!

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PLEASE RECYCLE AFTER READING.

Resolutions for a new and improved year

Whatever resolutions you made for 2020 were probably revised by the COVID-19 pandemic, which rewrote much of life over the past year. As you face 2021 with hope and caution, consider some of these resolutions that will reduce waste, save money, and help you cope with the year ahead.

- **Focus on family fun:** Last year offered many of us a lot of time with our families. This year, plan ahead for family time by swapping board games, jigsaw puzzles, magazines, and books with friends and neighbors. That way everyone gets some fresh fun. You might also look for items to borrow from the local library or purchase used items at a secondhand store.
- **Make meal prep more exciting:** Are you tired of making and eating the same meals? Shop your own pantry, fridge, and freezer for items that have been forgotten and then search for new recipes to match what you have on hand. Simply search online for the ingredients plus "recipe" and you

may be pleasantly surprised with a new family favorite.

- **Cook with scraps:** Using up all of the food you have stretches your grocery shopping dollars and reduces your food waste. Search online for "cooking with scraps" for creative recipes that use up all of the food you buy.
- **Shop smartly online:** Online shopping now reaches into every corner of our lives. It's very easy to make impulse purchases with just a couple of clicks. Instead, shop online as you would at a physical store by setting a shopping time and using a list.



Whenever possible, choose the option to "ship items together" to reduce traffic, packaging waste, and vehicle emissions. Plus, you can often get cheaper shipping this way.