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Recycling Group Aims at Public Education

By Carol Buchanan

July 15, 2009 — The Recycling Association of the Virgin Islands has reached many goals since organizing in 2007, but at this point educating the public about recycling is the organization's major goal.

At the monthly meeting Tuesday at the Florence Williams Public Library members of the association agreed public awareness about recycling is a priority, so they brainstormed on how to get the word out.

“We need to do outreach and get everyone on the same page,” said Beech Higby, one of 10 members attending. “The key thing is to make people feel recycling helps them.”

He added it just takes a little imagination, and suggested one approach would be to get the message out to children who in turn will pass it on to their parents. He said they could possibly infiltrate from the teachers' side.



“As a priority we need to get a catchy phrase or statement,” steering committee member Sylvania Golphin suggested. “We should plan on some promotion for September partnering with the Department of Education.”

The description of a glass crusher and how to promote it was brought up by steering committee member Lee Elvins.

Elvins said glass can be recycled and reused on island and doesn't incur a price to ship off island. The glass crusher is placed atop a 50 gallon drum that restaurants and bars could use to break glass down by 80 percent. Then it is pulverized so there aren't any sharp edges and used as aggregate in cement or asphalt. Members suggested purchasing and promoting the crusher at events such as Jump Ups and Christiansted First Fridays.

In other business they discussed the status of aluminum can recycling, which has been at a standstill since hurricane Omar hit last October.

Ez Recycling, in Anna's Hope, was a drop off spot for aluminum can recycling, but Victor Martinez, the owner, ran into financial and equipment problems and hasn't been able to recycle the cans.

In the past people could drop off cans and designate the Boys and Girls Club as the recipients of the cash for the cans. The board of directors of the Boys and Girls Club is looking at business proposals from two recycling companies to restart the program with strong participation of the clubs. Emily Graci, an employee of the Boys and Girls Club, said Wednesday they are still in the infancy stage of planning and a lot hinges on the support of grants and corporate sponsorship. She said they hope to be up and running and doing recycling by the end of the year.

Graci said, in a huge community effort the children in the Club will run an island wide campaign on recycling.

Julie Landreneau, director of the Boys and Girls Club, agrees with RAVI about children getting the message out.

“This is the right thing to do, because kids can be the driving force behind going green,” Landreneau said Wednesday.

The vision of the association is for all residents and visitors to engage in waste reduction practices by supporting and participating in recycling programs.

The next meeting is scheduled for August 11. Further information on RAVI or joining the organization can be obtained by visiting the group's website at [usvircd.org/RAVI/](http://usvircd.org/RAVI/).

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