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RESTROOM ASSOCIATION (SINGAPORE) NEWSLETTER – June 2004

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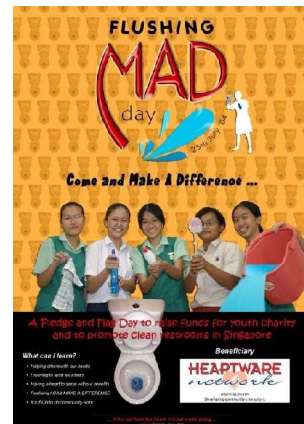
Toilet Training for Teenagers



RAS held a training session for about 200 secondary school students on 21 June 2004 at Kuo Chuan Presbyterian Secondary School. 'Flushing MAD Day' is a partnership between two non-profit organizations to promote the spirit of volunteerism and inculcate social responsibilities in our youth. In collaborating with Heartware Network (HW) it has resulted in the creativity and commitment of a group of teenagers to the MAD (Make a Difference) movement and combining the washing of toilets as meaningful service learning.

Synergy is created with Restroom Association of Singapore (RAS) training the youth how to Keep Toilets Clean, while Heartware Network (HW) adds a new twist to their MAD Days. While spreading and impacting Singapore with the "heartware" quality of "exemplary quality service" and "doing things from the heart", HW also aims to raise funds for youth development work.

Heartware Network is organising a flag day with a difference on Youth Day, 25th July 2004. Targeting to raise \$150,000 in this Pledge and Flag day, these funds collected will enable us to continue into our 5th year to



inspire, incubate and train more youths in Making A Difference and developing them to become community champions!



Prior to the actual flag day, they will also be collecting monetary pledges and providing “hands on” learning, under proper supervision, to encourage the washing of toilets. The youth organisers thought that this would also be a meaningful and humbling activity to promote community service and doing things from the heart. At the same time, they are helping the Restroom Association of Singapore to raise awareness about the importance of clean restrooms in Singapore, especially after the post-SARS period. For more information, visit

www.heartware.org

A Closer Look at Toilets Around Us

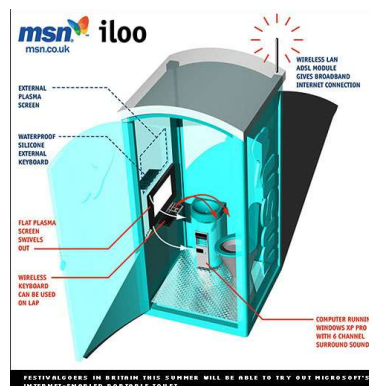
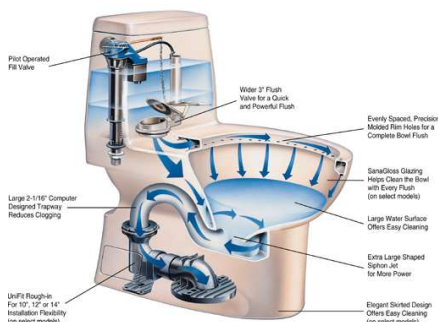
Evolution of the Humble Toilet



Different Situations Require Different Needs



Technology + Toilets 😊



News Bites

Paul McCartney Used a five-star toilet, 28/06/2004 - 07:14:47, Ireland on-line
<http://breakingnews.iol.ie/entertainment/story.asp?j=109052290&p=yx9x5z996>

United Kingdom - At a major music festival, Paul McCartney ordered a special five-star toilet for him and his wife Heather Mills to use at the weekend's Glastonbury Festival.



McCartney was determined not to use smelly portable toilets and arranged for a classy bathroom, situated in his camping compound, which also included a banqueting tent, offices, dressing rooms and kitchens.

A festival source says, "It wasn't just a festival performance for McCartney, it was the final gig of his European tour.

"He wanted to make sure everything was perfect for him and Heather and unaffected by the mud.

"His toilet was top-of-the-range and kept spotless."

She-pees at the Glastonbury Festival
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/music/3816715.stm>

For others, its how to beat the Glastonbury toilet horror

Even the most seasoned festival-goer is likely to baulk at the sight and stench of a brimming Glastonbury toilet.

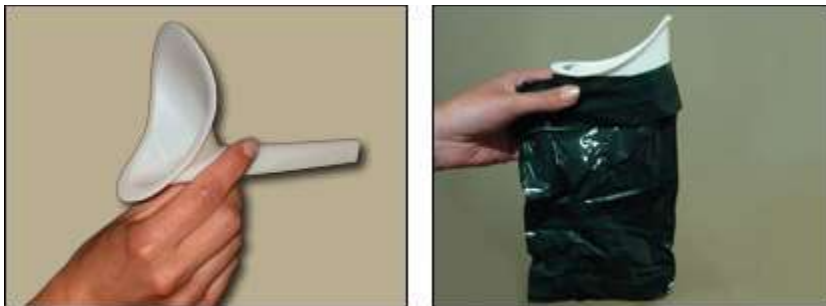
It's something most blokes, if they're lucky, will only have to experience a couple of times over the weekend but women have to brave the cubicles of doom every time that nature calls.

Not only that ladies end up spending a considerable amount of the festival queueing - missing the music into the bargain.

This year, the festival's organisers have sought to redress the balance with the introduction of female urinals - or She-pees - guarded by concierges to keep the boys at bay.

But other minds have been at work on the same burning issue. Two products have just been launched to festival-goers, promising differing solutions to how a girl can get a swift comfortable pee and still keep her dignity.

The Whiz is a funnel which allows a woman to go standing up - in the She-pee for instance. Taking a different tack, the Go Bag is a pouch of crystals which turn liquid into a solid gel for easy disposal.



Both products were originally developed for the medical market and have undergone clinical testing.

World Environment Day Special

Volunteering for a Sustainable Environment

World Environment Day (WED), commemorated each year on 5 June is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action.

World Environment Day was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972 to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Another resolution, adopted by the General Assembly the same day, led to the creation of UNEP.



Today, about 2.4 billion people do not have access to even a simple latrine. As a result, human waste heavily pollutes many rivers and lakes in developing countries. *The most important source of water contamination in developing countries is human faeces, due to the lack of adequate sanitation facilities.*

Low or non-existent capacity in wastewater treatment is another major factor causing water pollution in most parts of the developing world. In Latin America, only about 14 per cent of urban wastewater receive proper treatment before discharge. Although the level of sewage treatment is reported to be higher among Asian cities (on average about 35 per cent), it is still unacceptable that most of the wastewater is directly drained to various water bodies. Standard wastewater treatment is almost non-existent in many African cities. Toilets, and lack of them, have a major impact on environmental sanitation. Like toilets, there are also many other types of environmental concerns.

Many countries, including Singapore marked WED with meaningful activities. For example, in Norway, the children's environmental organisation Inky's Ecodetectives, now a partner of UNEP, directly or indirectly participated in the following activities to highlight WED 2004:



- In the two riverbank towns of Hamar and Gjøvik, separated by Norway's largest lake Mjøsa, the 5th of June will have joint opening activities, connecting the two towns in their quest to clean up their lake.
- A WED newspaper supplement was published on the 3rd of June. The paper will also highlight the Millennium Development Goals.
- In the city of Bergen, Inky's Ecodetectives will name Bergen a Green Children's City, and a variety show for schoolchildren will take place in the main town square on 4 June.
- In Trondheim, named a Green Children's City on

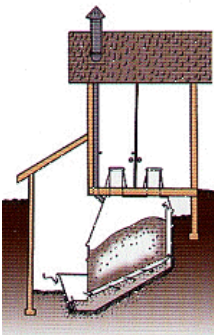
WED 2003, there will also be a Green Week leading up to 5 June.

- In the arctic town of Tromsø the 5th of June will be celebrated under the midnight sun with a carnival and a storytelling festival.

More information can be found at www.blekkulf.no

Environment Projects by Volunteers

The following excerpts are from World Volunteer Web which shows Volunteers from around the world doing their part for a sustainable environment. This is to mark World Environment Day.



More than one billion people do not have access to safe drinking water and some two billion people lack access to proper sanitation services. Working closely with communities and municipalities, volunteers are helping strengthen local capacity in various countries to ensure the sustainable use of, and equitable access to, natural resources.

They are involved in a wide range of activities: from clearing streets of garbage and recycling solid waste to mobilizing local people to promote environmentally-friendly habits, all geared towards creating and maintaining a sustainable and healthy environment. They also provide technical expertise in water and sanitation, support efforts to generate income in an environmentally sustainable manner, and engage in environmental awareness campaigns and education programmes.

On the occasion of the World Environment Day (June 5) World Volunteer Web brings you a collection of select volunteering initiatives that are contributing to a better environment. Examples of organizations offering such volunteering opportunities are highlighted here. For more details, please visit http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/events/UN_days/EV/initiatives.htm

Green Canadians, Green Volunteers



Restoring wildlife habitat, cleaning up river valleys, teaching children and adults how to reduce their impact on the environment: there's no limit to worthwhile environmental work.... E.g. New Canadians from Somalia, ready for a planting in Etobicoke's Alex Marchetti Park.

But who does it? Overwhelmingly, volunteers do. Now, through the efforts of the Environmental Volunteer Network, new Canadians are gaining job skills through volunteering while also contributing to a greener Ontario.

The Environmental Volunteer Network is an innovative partnership between the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). The program matches area residents with volunteer opportunities in the environmental sector.

“Through the Environmental Volunteer Network and our partnership with OCASI, we are better able to encourage stewardship initiatives among all residents, and particularly among the new Canadian population,” said TRCA Chair Dick O'Brien.

With the support of a C\$124,300 Ontario Trillium Foundation grant, the Network is providing training, resource materials, and volunteer placements for newcomers to York, Peel, Durham, and the GTA. The program aims to assist them in building sector-specific knowledge and transferable workplace skills to help them gain paid employment.

The Environmental Volunteer Network has built a successful model that brings energetic and enthusiastic new Canadians together with resources and expertise from the environmental sector, for the benefit of all Ontarians.

Compost critters delight students, benefit environment



Did you know worms can eat their own weight in food each day? Could you make a cozy “bed” for red wigglers? The students at St. Francis Catholic School in Windsor can. If you ask them kindly enough, they may even let you stir their compost heap...but you'll have to wait in line. For example, students from St. Maria Goretti school display compost from Project Pile It

St. Francis is one of nine schools in Windsor that are participating in “Project Pile It,” an environmental recycling program initiated by the Environmental Performance Foundation of Canada (EPF) and funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

“Our goal for Project Pile It was to teach kids that waste equals food,” says Rawle Cameron, president of EPF. “We surveyed students about their knowledge of composting and about the amount of food waste in landfill sites. The results led us to introduce ‘vermicomposting’ to the students.”

St. Francis students received a pound of African red wigglers, two tanks and tutoring from EPF staff in the art of composting with a worm farm. Project Pile It quickly became a huge success after its introduction in November 2002. “It was almost too successful,” says Cameron. “The kids were practically fighting to be on this team.”



“Our program has brought businesses and the community together to find environmental solutions,” adds Cameron. “Our grant was initially designed to develop an environmental program for children in one school, but the program has been so successful that we’ve introduced it in 9 schools, with plans to expand to 15 more next year.”

Teacher-volunteer Nancy Knowles supervises Project Pile It at St. Francis. “Children volunteer to collect garbage from classrooms for the compost,” she says. “Every Friday afternoon, 30 kids show up to stir the compost pile, to see if any food is left.”

Knowles says the students are collecting 15 to 25 pounds of compost weekly. “Project Pile It has taught the children how to reduce school garbage. They have learned about teamwork in maintaining the worm farm, and they understand the environmental benefits of composting.”

Project Pile It came full circle last week as the nutrient-rich compost, prepared by the red wigglers, was used to fertilize the canna lilies planted by Knowles and her students in St. Francis’ 400-foot spring garden. For more information, visit http://www.trilliumfoundation.org/OTF-English/html/story_gallery/sg-environment.htm#evn

Singapore Doing its Part



During WED, the inaugural Singapore Green Plan 2012 Awards was launched. On 5 June 2004 at Upper Pierce Reservoir Park, the Minister for the Environment, Mr Lim Swee Say, presented the Awards to six proud recipients.

The SGP 2012 Award, which builds on the former Green Leaf Award, recognizes outstanding individuals, organizations and companies that are role models of environmental protection and have contributed significantly to Singapore’s efforts to achieve environmental sustainability and attain some of the targets set out in the SGP 2012. The SGP 2012 is Singapore’s blueprint for environmental sustainability.

The six recipients of the SGP 2012 Awards 2004 are

1. Individuals:
 - i) Lady Yuen-Peng McNeice - for her lifelong contributions to nature conservation and education.
 - ii) Mr Jack Sim - for tackling the public health concern about dirty and poorly maintained toilets; and bringing a fresh perspective and approach in dealing with the issue locally, as well as internationally.
2. Organisations:
 - i) Singapore Environment Council - for its significant contributions of environmental programmes and activities in support of the SGP 2012.
 - ii) Nan Hua Secondary School - for its exemplary achievements in environmental programmes; both within the school and with other schools.
3. Companies:
 - i) STMicroelectronics Pte Ltd - for its best practices in energy efficiency, waste and water recycling, and pro-environment culture company-wide.
 - ii) HSBC - for its contributions to nature conservation and education, and a pro-environment culture among its staff.

The SGP 2012 Award is a hand-made triangular plaque moulded from recycled glass and laced with a molten lava-like texture featuring three luminescent shades of blue, green and bronze, symbolizing water, nature and land-based issues. Its triangular shape represents the close partnership of the 3P (people, private and public) sectors on environmental issues.

'Work with your whole Heart, for in this area there is little competition'



When Jack Sim, founder of Restroom Association of Singapore (RAS) became a recipient for the Singapore Green Plan 2012 Award (SGP 2012), he had this to say "It gives legitimacy to our work, which is all about a very special kind of subject..." ('Mr Restroom among 6 honoured for green efforts', 8 June 2004, Strait Times). RAS promotes and educates the public on the importance of clean public toilets.

With deep conviction, he has turned his zeal and passion for toilets that something needs to be done about public toilets and our attitude towards it. These campaigns include:

- The Happy Toilet Programme in May 2003, which helped to raise the standards of toilet designs, cleanliness and maintenance
- The 2003 school – available for primary, secondary & tertiary levels - project, the Happy Toilet Education Programme, to create awareness among about toilet etiquette and why there is a need to keep the toilet clean e.g. Si Ling Primary School, Heartwork Network etc.

- Training to design better public toilets under the National Skills Recognition Scheme (NSRS), with Workforce Development Agency (WDA)
- Creating the World Toilet Organisation (WTO), the first world body founded and registered in Singapore. The main thrust of WTO is to be an advocate for environment sanitation. A series of World Toilet Summits, which were held in Singapore, Korea and Taiwan over the last three years, served as a platform for a global audience. This year's summit will be in Beijing, China, and in 2005's in Belfast, United Kingdom.
- Started the annual World Toilet Day, which will be on 19 November, to promote toilet awareness globally.

Jack had this to add, "we had so many people helping us, and this award couldn't be achieved without them. My inspirations come from them. I would also like to share my belief with everyone - 'Work with your whole Heart, for in this area there is little competition'. Thank you all!"



Attend the WORLD TOILET SUMMIT 2004 from 17 to 19 November 2004

The 4th World Toilet Summit will be held in Beijing, China. The topics include *A global perspective on the relationship between Toilets and quality of life; world class tourism and toilets; social and economic returns in investments for Toilets; catering to the diversity of culture – toilets for different cultures etc.* International speakers on Tourism, Design, Maintenance and Environmental Sanitation will share their views on these and more. For more information, please visit www.worldtoilet.org