

**FINAL REPORT**  
**Recycling Internship for Greater Cleveland and Northeast Ohio**  
A Report Submitted to the American Chemistry Council  
November 15, 2018

**Goals:**

The goal of this internship was to develop a comprehensive overview of recycling programs in the Greater Cleveland area and recommend how to advance recycling in the region. Programs in the region for waste reduction and reuse were also identified.

**Objectives:**

- Learn best practices of recycling in Cuyahoga County and along coastal Lake Erie
- Assist with the planning and implementation of partner recycling events/programming
- Assist in advancing a social media presence for partners
- Identify challenges and opportunities for recycling in the region
- Identify gaps in recycling services and messaging
- Explore existing programs for waste reduction and material reuse, e.g. Skip the Straw
- Apply a racial equity lens to recycling programs in the region
- Make recommendations to partners and to the [ZeroWasteNEO Working Group](#) for advancing recycling in the region
- Identify a new program to increase recycling in the region and develop an implementation plan for the program.

**The Partners/Primary Contacts**

- [City of Cleveland Office of Sustainability](#), Cathi Lehn, Ph.D., Sustainable Cleveland Manager
- [Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District](#), Diane Bickett, Executive Director
- [Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District](#), Jan Rybka, District Administrator
- [Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Training Program](#), Emily Kuzmick, Coastal Training Program Coordinator
- [Ohio Sea Grant](#), Sarah Orlando, Clean Marinas Program Manager
- [Upcycle Parts Shop](#), Nicole McGee, Founder and Director

**Meet the intern, Claire Bruch**

Claire is a graduate of the 2017 [Master Recycler Program](#) offered by the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District. She has volunteered for several zero and reduced waste events over the last couple years and is very enthusiastic about interacting with the public and educating them about recycling guidelines. She is a graduate of Kent State (2013) and currently works for Ohio City Provisions and Fresh Fork Market.



## Overview of Tasks Completed by Intern Organized by Partner

### City of Cleveland Office of Sustainability, Cathi Lehn, Sustainable Cleveland Manager

- **Education and outreach (tabling)**
  - A Day in the Life of Rocky River
- **Zero or reduced waste events volunteer/coordinator**
  - Northeast Ohio Litter Summit
  - Sustainable Cleveland Summit
  - Citywide Potluck
- **Event waste and recycling associate**
  - PorchFest
  - Open Streets Festival
- **Discussion facilitator**
  - Common Ground
- **Event assistant**
  - [Great Lake Erie Boat Float](#) (photos [here](#))

### Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District, Diane Bickett, Executive Director

- **Marketing Assistant**
  - **Social media**
    - Reuseday/Reduceday Tuesday posts
    - “What Do I Do With It Wednesday” posts
    - Recycling Do’s and Don’ts
  - **Blogs**
    - Skip the Straw
  - **Newsletter article**
    - Skip the Straw campaign
    - Single Use Lunchbox Swaps
- **Zero waste event volunteer**
  - Burning River Fest

### Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District, Jan Rybka, District Administrator

- **Neighborhood Clean Ups**
  - Euclid Creek
  - Tinker’s Creek
- **Education and Outreach**
  - Euclid Beach Live
  - Clean Boating brochure layout

### Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Emily Kuzmick, Coastal Training Program Coordinator

- **Clean up**
  - Huron pier
- **Marine Debris Workshops**
  - Planning and participant

Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Emily Kuzmick, Coastal Training Program Coordinator (continued)

- **Monofilament recycling receptacles**
- Contacted marinas
- Delivered receptacles
- Assembled and painted receptacles

Ohio Sea Grant, Sarah Orlando, Clean Marinas Program

- **Shrink Wrap and Poly Film recycling workshop**
- Assisted with planning and contacting stakeholders
- **Education and outreach (tabling)**
- Steelhead Expo at Rocky River Reservation
- Ohio State Fair in Columbus, Ohio
- Ohio State University Stone Lab in Put-In-Bay

Upcycle Parts Shop, Nicole McGee, Founder and Director

- **Education and outreach (tabling)**
- NEORSO Open House
- **Programming**
- Accepted donations and organization
- Assisted with workshops
- Brainstormed marketing ideas

**Final project**

Claire's final project idea can be found in Appendix A.

In summary, Claire would like to create a safe space where everyday people can come and talk about climate change, environmentalism and politics. She would like this space to be a free educational space where guests create and discuss. This would also be a zero waste space.

The partners agreed that a space like this is a good idea and necessary for the region.

**Racial equity exercise**

In the development of the updated [Climate Action Plan](#), the City of Cleveland developed a Racial Equity Tool to be used for area programs. Cathi and Claire took the Upcycle Parts Shop through this tool (see attached)

Claire also went through the Racial Equity [Groundwater training](#) and found it useful and enlightening.

Groundwater and Phase 1 Workshops are presented by the [Racial Equity Institute](#) (REI) and coordinated through [Cleveland Neighborhood Progress](#). The Groundwater training is a 3-hour introduction to Racial Equity. REI organizers use stories and data to present a perspective that racism is fundamentally structural in nature. By examining characteristics of modern-day racial inequity, the presentation introduces participants to an analysis that most find immediately helpful and relevant.

## **Financials**

The partners received a \$5,000 grant from the American Chemistry Council. The Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District served as our fiscal agent.

Claire completed a total of 307.5 hours at \$15/hour for a salary of \$4612.5 paid over 5 payments (see attached documents).

She was also reimbursed for 717 total miles at a rate of \$.54/mile for a total of \$387.18. This did not include travel from home to a partner's office space.

## **The Advantages/Benefits of this Internship**

The partners felt that the benefits of this internship were the following:

- Some of our partners had not met previously. This was an opportunity to bring all the partners together and to learn from each other about programming.
- Claire provided assistance to the partners for our many programs throughout the summer

## **Challenges Encountered**

- Communication among many partners could have been improved.
- There was not a common focus either conceptually or geographically.
- We were slow in finding tasks for Claire during the first month.
- Our goals and objectives may have been a bit too ambitious.

## **Challenges for recycling in the region**

- Gaps were specifically identified for the following:
  - Shrink wrap and poly film recycling
  - Monofilament recycling
  - Changing recycling guidelines and public education about those changes
  - The limited opportunities in general to recycle plastic

## **Next steps**

- The partners agreed that they should plan to meet regularly and bring additional stakeholders to the table. The ZeroWasteNEO Working Group may be able to help facilitate this.
- Ohio Sea Grant will continue to explore options for shrink wrap and poly film recycling for the region
- ODNR will continue to monitor monofilament receptacles and strive to identify additional partners.
- The Office of Sustainability and partners continue to identify event organizers interested in coordinating zero and reduced waste events.
- It is recommended that all programs should use the racial equity tool.
- If a similar internship is pursued in the future, it is recommended that the partners identify a centralized theme and a project in which all partners participate, e.g. video series on proper recycling.

## Appendix A.

### NEO Recycle Intern Final Project

Submitted by Claire Bruch

Part of this internship was to come up with a project going forward. I've had a lot of thoughts and ideas. One was to work with a local artist to create window clings for peoples cars to help them remember their reusable bags. This is already in place though with Don't Break the Lake. Then I thought about an art piece people can interact with at various street festivals to help them know how to recycle. I wanted to work with Erin Guido and John Paul Costello of So Fun Studios with this project because they do a lot of interactive sculptures already. I know though that these art pieces can be difficult to transport and a lot of the time a person promoting recycling is by themselves and that would be asking a lot of someone. I thought about getting local celebrities involved, such as Slider and the Hot Dogs at the Cleveland Indians' games. There are the Hot Dog races, which everyone loves. Maybe there could be a "Green Game" they could play later in the game. There is already a big initiative for the stadium to recycle so this could be something they are on board with. They could have big cut outs of different items, trash and recycling, and the Hot Dogs could run around picking them up and throwing them either in a big trash can or recycling can and Slider could be there interfering, just as he does with the races, or maybe holding up red and green flags if they get it right or wrong. Could be fun.

A way to get to do each and every one of these things though is to do what I've been wanting and working to do for a long time. I want to take the road of an entrepreneur and start my own business. So here is my project and business outline:

1. What kind of business.
  - a. I want to create a safe space where everyday people can come and talk about climate change and environmentalism and politics.
    - i. How?
      1. To get everyday people involved it needs to be in an easily accessible community setting.
        - a. Near public transportation.
        - b. Ample parking.
        - c. I am thinking either Downtown, Ohio City, or Lakewood.
  - b. I want it to be educational.
    - i. In what ways?
      1. I want to host speakers on broad spectrums of things.
        - a. Art, environment, politics, town halls, cooking, self care, etc.

2. I want to have educational material on hand.
  - a. Brochures not unlike the ones I've been working on this summer.  
Reading material. Music.
- c. I want it to be a free space.
  - i. How to get funding and be operational?
    1. Perhaps be a non profit and apply for grants.
    2. However, I'd like to try a for profit.
      - a. Take donations.
      - b. Cafe/bar.
        - i. What kind of cafe?
          1. Seasonal and local menu.
- d. I want it to be zero waste.
  - i. How can it be zero waste?
    1. All reusable serviceware.
    2. Partnership with Rust Belt Riders.
    3. Teach others of the zero waste lifestyle and provide tools for achieving such lifestyle.

That is a rough outline but I believe I can make it work. My hope is that if I can get people together in a casual fun setting, a lot of necessary and empowering changes can happen in the community. I am very involved in my community and just want to share that and create a place where others can feel involved and important to their community.