Employee Spotlight: Office of Sustainability

As we gear up for South Bay Earth Day on April 13, the City of Chula Vista's Office of Sustainability has been diligently working to help us learn more about how to do our part in protecting the planet. Formed in 2007, the office educates residents on the everyday things we can do to help the community be more earth conscious.

The Office of Sustainability, which is composed of the divisions of Environmental Services and Conservation, helped the City become one of the first in the state to create a Climate Action Plan. This plan outlines what each of us can do to lower our carbon footprint. A key action is participating in the new food waste recycling effort. Already, the City has distributed 15,000 kitchen waste caddies, allowing residents to recycle meat, seafood, and food scraps. Caddies can be picked up at a few locations listed on the City's Residential Food & Yard Waste Collection webpage.

The office also sponsors the following events to help residents become more sustainable:

- Four annual compost giveaways: residents can visit the Otay Landfill to receive a truckload of compost (multiple visits per specified day) to receive free compost. The office also works with the City's Parks and Recreation to spread compost over park properties to conserve water.
- Zero Waste Academy: these six-week classes allow residents who are passionate about conservation to learn what they can do to spread the message of conversation. The inaugural academy was held last year. The office is looking hold another one this fall.

- Beautify Chula Vista: every year, the City assembles volunteers to remove graffiti and trash. Up to 350 volunteers receive t-shirts and disperse throughout the City to remove trash and beautify our communities.
- Chula Vista Community Shuttle: Residents aged 55 and older living in the western area of the City are eligible to hail a free shuttle for doctor's appointments, grocery shopping and even friend visits through the Ride Circuit app on Mondays – Fridays from 7 am – 7 pm. Save gas and money.
- Partnering with Produce Good: If you have a fruit tree that produces more than you can use, please reach out to local nonprofit Produce Good and their volunteers will glean that harvest for those in need.
- Hazardous Waste Recycling: You've seen the signs around town soliciting the recycling of your old computers. Did you know you can recycle those items—AND oil, batteries and needles—twice a week at the City's John Lippitt Public Works Center, located at 1800 Maxwell Rd.? Hazardous waste recycling is available on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 9 am – 1 pm.
- Sustainable Business Program: If you're a business interested in helping the planet AND saving money, the City provides resources to assist you in becoming more sustainable. The City can provide recycling containers, liners, and food waste containers, among other items, to help you become a designated sustainable business.

We want to thank the Office of Sustainability for all their hard work. The office is composed of Dennis Gakunga, Manuel Medrano, Victor Sanchez, Martie Solomon, Mike Hice, Joseph Coppola, Dave DiDonato, Alejandro Ruiz-Velasco, Mayra Estrada, and Gabriel Castillo in the Environmental Services branch, Coleen Wisniewski, Cory Downs, Janelle Barraza and Lucas Escobedo in the Conservation Branch, and Monica Rodriguez in Economic Development Administration.

For the latest information, check out the Office of Sustainability's Instagram handle at @sustainabilityCV.