

I CARE | recycle

WHERE DOES RUSH RECYCLING GO?

Since Rush's recycling program began last spring, the Medical Center has recycled approximately 600 tons of waste, saving 1,875 cubic yards of landfill space. In addition, more than 90 percent of construction waste has been recycled. Rush's recycling committee got a behind-the-scenes look at where the Medical Center's recycled material goes when the group visited Allied Waste Service's reclamation facility on Chicago's South Side in the fall. The facility processes 3,000 tons of waste a month from all over the city, operating 24 hours a day, six days a week.

The recycling process is relatively simple. Trucks unload waste on the ground, which is then sorted into what are referred to as commodities — paper, metal, plastic, cardboard and trash. Workers sort the loads further, looking for any contamination within their particular commodity. Allied's employees process the loads into bales which they then ship away. Cardboard, which can be recycled up to four times, can be shipped as far away as China for reuse. Items that can't be recycled are sent to landfills.

According to the facility's manager, the most important thing Rush employees, students, patients and visitors can do to help recycling efforts is to keep Rush's recyclables separate and clean. "Just a little bit of contamination, meaning trash, liquids, medical waste, etc., can ruin an entire load of recyclable items," says Kevin Krus, Allied Waste recycling manager. "That's why we ask that everyone please make sure their glass and plastic containers, as well as cans, are empty before placing them in the proper bin."

In other recycling news, people have asked if the Triangle Office Building (TOB) recycles. Although there are no individual recycling kiosks at the TOB and all its waste goes into one dumpster, the garbage still is sorted at the Allied

Waste reclamation facility. The Medical Center recycles 80 percent of the TOB waste. Again, it's important to rinse out all plastic, glass and metal containers before throwing them away to help make this program work.

As announced when the recycling program began, the program is being implemented in phases. Currently, there are more than 30 recycling kiosks placed throughout the campus in public walkway areas.

"We have applied for a state recycling grant, which if awarded to Rush will help fund additional recycling containers for the Medical Center," says Mary B. Gregoire, PhD, RD, director, food and nutrition services. "While the current economic crisis continues, we believe it is especially important to move forward with Rush's recycling efforts. Not only is recycling good for the environment, it also saves Rush thousands of dollars a month in waste disposal. It's a win-win for everyone involved."

"We'd like to thank everyone for participating in the program and helping make Rush more environmentally sustainable," Gregoire adds. •

For more information about Rush's recycling program, please visit the Rush intranet at <http://iris.rush.edu/osd/recycling.html>. Do you have suggestions about recycling? Or are you interesting in joining the recycling committee? Send an e-mail to rush_recycles@rush.edu.



Rush's recycling committee visits Allied Waste Service's reclamation facility on Chicago's South Side to learn what happens to Rush's recyclables once they leave the Medical Center.



A "bale" of recycled cardboard can be shipped as far away as China for reuse.

RUSH'S RECYCLING PROGRAM IS EASY TO USE

Rush's recycling bins are color-coded or marked with identifying signs:

- **BLUE** containers for paper (including newspapers, envelopes and magazines)

Rush is recycling cardboard as well. Nonwaxed cardboard boxes that do not contain food residue can be broken down and left by the paper recycling bins. Small paperboard boxes can be placed in the paper recycling bins.

- **GREEN** for glass, #1 and #2 plastics, and cans
- **BLACK** or **GRAY** for food waste and other nonrecyclable trash