

Level Up Your Earth Day With Lessons from 2020

By Kim Pranievicz

By some accounts, [Earth Day](#) is the largest secular observance in the world, celebrated by over a billion people each year on April 22 — and last year was its 50th anniversary. Unfortunately, the world wasn't able to give that milestone as much attention as it deserved. Caught up in pandemic worries and financial uncertainty, many Americans stayed home from community demonstrations in favor of personal sustainability pledges and socially distanced conservation hikes.

But after spending more time at home over the past a year — sifting through our closets, planting gardens and tending sourdough starters — we have all learned more about the energy and resources we consume ... and what impact they have on the planet.

This Earth Day, let's take the lessons of 2020 into account as we aim to encourage "a greener lifestyle":

- **Refresh your summer wardrobe — without the waste.** Did you know that a single cotton T-shirt requires more than 700 gallons of water to produce? Textile mills are one of the [largest contributors](#) to landfills across globe, and the average person goes through more than 80 pounds of clothing and fabric in a year.

The solution is simple: Get in the thrifting habit! Visit your local Goodwill to find great brands at a fraction of the retail price — all with a next-to-nil environmental footprint. (Reorganizing your closet? Don't forget to set aside any lightly used clothing to donate.)

- **DIY your living room décor.** Last year, more Americans embraced [frugal living](#): shopping smart, saving more and increasing the lifespan of household items by finding unconventional ways to repurpose them.

This year, it's time to double down on DIY. Use that empty glass candle jar to store hair ties or cotton swabs. Transform that worn T-shirt into a dusting cloth, cat toy or a braided rug. Upcycle a cute sweater find at Goodwill by adding a little pizzazz of pearls around the neckline, shoulders or cuffs. Give an old patio chair a new lease on life with a fresh coat of paint. If you have kids, encourage them to get involved with arts and crafts.

- **Don't need it? Donate it!** When you clear out your closets, don't toss out that board game, those too-small shoes or that stack of DVDs. Instead, set up a donation box for items that can go to your local Goodwill: clothing, kitchen wares, linens, and even some types of furniture and electronics.

At Goodwill, we diverted 16 million pounds of household items and textiles from Central Florida landfills in the last year *alone*. What's more, 90% of the revenue from sales in our 30 local stores goes directly toward our nonprofit network of job connection resources for neighbors in

need. It's a win-win-win — but we all need to do our part when it comes to green initiatives not only this Earth Day, but every day.

Kim Pranievicz is Vice President of Marketing and Mission Advancement for [Goodwill Industries of Central Florida](#). The nonprofit has 30 retail locations across Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Lake, Brevard and Volusia counties, including newly opened store in Lady Lake, Viera and Lake Nona.