



Pick up artists

Two men and a truck take on curbside recycling

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While the reality of the supposed July 2007 start date of a statewide curbside recycling program may seem distant, a small Kailua-based organization is eager to help recycle-minded communities in the mean time.

For the past six years, O'ahu Community Recycling has been assisting communities (mostly Kailua, Kāne'ohe, North Shore, Diamond Head and 'Āina Haina) in hauling away household opala and turning it into profits for local schools. OCR knows that most of us would like to recycle, but we are too busy or have better things to do than stand in line and feed bottles to a machine. For a small fee, OCR is happy to do it for you.

"We have pickup every other week, and then we go into different households and have a driver pick up the recyclables. We go to a different area daily," says Fung Yang,

owner of OCR.

For only \$16 a month the organization provides two, 18-gallon bins (property of OCR of course) to put your bottles, cans, newspapers and other recyclables in. All you have to do is divide everything into categories—paper goods and bottles and cans—and put them out on your curb on the scheduled pick up days. They'll even give you a list of what you can and cannot recycle to make your job easier. One hundred percent of the profits are donated to schools within the community.

"It's a triple-win situation. I win because I like recycling, the environment wins and the schools win," Yang says.

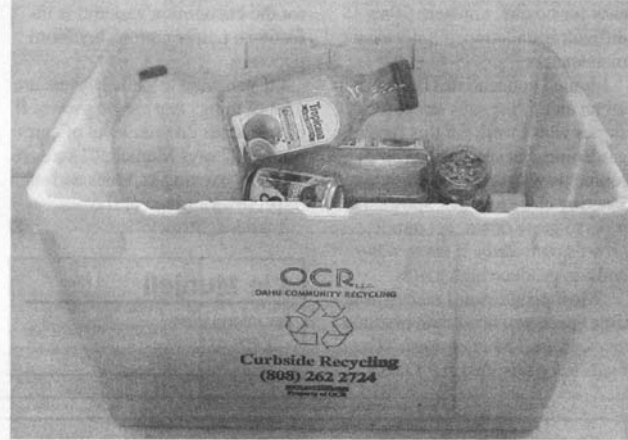
OCR's founder, Bryce Sprecher started the recycling outfit in 2000 after the realization that curbside recycling would probably take years to implement. (This was even before the failure to fully implement Mililani curbside.) About 20 businesses and more than 300

households currently use the service. The group also offers recycling services to condominiums, townhouses, businesses and special events, including on-set productions, commercials, weddings, parties, concerts (the 2005 Kōkua Festival) and the Pro Bowl. They recycled more than 8,000 cans and bottles from the 2006 Pro Bowl tailgate party at Richardson Field. Not bad for two employees and one truck.

Yang says the size of the organization is the only thing stopping OCR from doing statewide curbside recycling.

"Say if you live in Mo'ili'ili and you ask for pickup. We have to say no to you because there's not a lot of people there that request curbside recycling," Yang says.

"Kailua, on the other hand, is a very recycling-friendly community. There are a lot more recycling bins in public places. I want to try and promote recycling plans to businesses and make it an even



more recycling-friendly town. I want to learn from Kailua and hopefully expand the program to other communities like Hawai'i Kai and Mililani.

Yang says he looks forward to the implementation of the city's curbside recycling program because although OCR will have to stop their services to the communities, they can focus on other areas.

"Our goal once the city implements the program is to focus more on special events like the Pro Bowl event. That was really good, because we recycled the items and got a few hundred dollars, and it was donated to the Kōkua [Hawai'i] Foundation."

OCR has been working closely with the Kōkua Foundation's

school-based 3R program for the past three and a half years. They'll even be at this Saturday's Kōkua Festival making sure that all the empty water bottles get put to good use.

"We're going to have a booth set up. We plan on giving people special offers like one month free if they sign up at the Kōkua Festival," Yang says.

O'ahu Community Recycling

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