**Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**

**What is the difference between Reducing, Reusing, and Recycling?**

**REDUCING** is the act of keeping consumption to a minimum to lessen the negative effects it has on the environment.

Keeping purchases to a minimum is an important way of **reducing** the toll on the Earth's resources. Lowering consumption is the key to the concept of reducing, which can apply to physical objects as well as natural resources, such as gas, electricity and water. Not to be confused with reusing or recycling, **reducing means lowering or eradicating use from the start.** Cutting back on unnecessary purchases lowers the rate at which materials are used, but also effectively lowers the energy, gas and transportation costs that are accrued when an item is made and sold. The term "reduce" clearly applies to lifestyle. Reducing driving would mean combining trips, carpooling, and walking, biking, and taking public transportation when possible. Taking shorter showers, landscaping appropriately to the local climate and replacing older, less efficient appliances with Energy Star appliances all fit under the reducing concept.

**REUSING** is when a product that is newly purchased is put to another use after the first use is completed.

"**Reuse**" is a broad term that combines reusing materials and using items that have reusable qualities. Paper plates are an example of a non-reusable product. Cutlery that can be reused prevents waste at the landfill, but it also lowers the amount of energy needed to manufacture new products. Less pollution results, and more natural resources are left intact. Consider the possibilities of an item before discarding it, as it might be reused toward a different purpose than originally intended. An old shirt may become a car rag. **Though reuse is different from reducing use, when an item is reused, consumption is reduced as a by-product.**

**RECYCLING** is the processing of used materials into new products to prevent waste of potentially useful materials.

The term "**recycle**" refers to the process in which an item or its components are used to create something new. Plastic bottles are recycled and made into carpet, pathways and benches. Glass and aluminum are other commonly recycled materials. Recycling is technically a form of reusing, but it refers more specifically to items that are discarded and broken down into their raw materials. Recycling companies convert the original item and then sell the now-usable material. Some companies purchase second-hand material and use it to manufacture a new product, which is another form of recycling.

**SUSTAINABILITY** is based on a simple principle: Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. Sustainability creates and maintains the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations.

To live a sustainable life, one must strive to meet the needs of the present without

compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.