Upcycle: Imagine a New Purpose!

Environment

Everywhere we look we can find items that can be reused or recycled. Where some see trash, others see upcycling opportunities - a way to turn waste or unwanted products into something of greater quality or artistic value. When we look at "stuff" with a creative, problem-solving mindset we can imagine using old products in amazing new ways.

RESPOND

RESPOND to your home, school, or community environment by identifying things that might be discarded and end up in the local landfill. Collect recyclables such as paper and plastics, old kitchen utensils or furniture, worn out clothing, leftover materials from building projects, broken pottery, or jewelry. Put together an "upcycle collection" or "maker bin" to spark your imagination.

Parker L.

Vincent R.

CONNECT

CONNECT needs and wants using the collected resources. Think of a need, want, or problem that requires a solution. Imagine how your collected items could provide the solution. Think small or large, indoor or outdoor, functional or fanciful.

- Could stacks of old workbooks become table legs?
- Can an old cabinet become a great art supplies organizer?
- Might an old hook be a perfect key and badge holder by the front door?
- How about a pocket from an old pair of pants to hold your mobile phone?

1. WRITE A PROBLEM, NEED, OR WANT.

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2. PAIR WITH UPCYCLE MATERIALS.

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3. SKETCH A PROTOTYPE OF YOUR IDEA.

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THINKING SHEET

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PRESENT your ideas to others.

Use their feedback to make your upcycled plan useful, clever, and visually attractive.
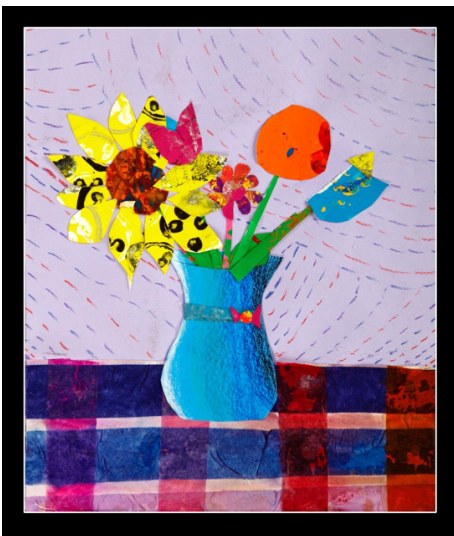
CREATE something new using upcycled resources. Some ideas:

- Glue plastic twist tops to sponge pieces for stamp painting.
- Cut and paint plastic bottles to use as pots for new seedlings.
- Repaint an old coat rack for a costume and drama center.
- Cut and sew together old fabric pockets into a pocket quilt that holds paint brushes, crayons, and other drawing materials.
- Turn waste paper and used paper bags into origami figures to and gift them to community helpers or the elderly.
- Use the opposite side of old board games to create new, original games for family and friends.

Before you discard used objects, put them in the upcycle collection.

Before you purchase some-thing new to solve a problem, look for inventive ways to upcycle what you already have.

Make the inventive upcycling mindset an intentional and ongoing practice.

Savannah S.

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