

Bags for the Ocean

Thank you for your interest in learning more about Bags for the Ocean and how you can get started impacting change at your school.

For more information about our organization and mission, be sure to check out <https://bagsfortheocean.weebly.com/>

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Welcome!

Welcome to Bags for the Ocean. We're happy to have you joining us on this mission to reduce plastic waste in our oceans by creating clubs in your campus communities.

Every year, millions of tons of plastic get dumped into the oceans. This trash winds up littering our beaches and being consumed by marine species, destroying ocean ecosystems in the process. Disposable grocery bags are one of the major forms of plastic that end up in the ocean and it is with this in mind that I created Bags for the Ocean.

In order to promote a more eco-friendly environment, we not only wanted to reduce plastic waste but also repurpose household items we no longer use. We decided to take our old tee shirts and sew them into reusable grocery bags. No more worn out clothing taking up space in our dressers, and no more discarded plastic littering our oceans.

Recently as people push for reducing plastic waste, I have often seen the statistic that because of the effects of cotton farming on the environment, a cotton reusable bag would have to be used 1,000 times to create less waste than plastic bags. Whether or not that's the case, repurposing old tee shirts means that no new resources are being used to make your reusable bag, so it's a win/win situation.

In this packet you'll find all the tools you need to start a chapter of Bags for the Ocean at your school. What unifies all chapters of Bags for the Ocean is the desire to eliminate plastic waste from our oceans, so any steps you take to pursue that goal can be part of a Bags for the Ocean club! Whether your club sells bags and donates the funds, makes bags and gives them away as part of an educational event, promotes reusable bag use, performs trash clean-ups, or some combination of these, I welcome you to the Bags for the Ocean family.

Sincerely,

Emily Tamkin

Founder, Bags for the Ocean

Requirements for Starting and Maintaining a Chapter

Starting a Bags for the Ocean chapter at your school is an exciting step toward reducing plastic waste in the ocean. Ideally your chapter will grow over the years and build its own traditions as it becomes part of your school community. Here are the steps to take in order to start a chapter on your campus and start spreading this worthwhile mission.

- Visit your school's Student Leadership office to talk to them about the club you're interested in starting. Your school might have a process for registering official student organizations that takes place at the start of the semester, and it might provide official student organizations with funding. Talk to the relevant office at your school, such as the Student Life or Student Activities office, about what is required.
- Recruit a minimum of 2 members (all members must be students at your school)
 - Select one member to be President
 - Select one member to be Treasurer
 - President and Treasurer must have a minimum 2.0 GPA and be enrolled full-time at your school
 - You may have other executive board members as you see fit. You may assign positions to members of the club or have general membership. Your treasurer will be responsible for tracking any funds donated and communicating this information to Bags for the Ocean, and your President will be responsible for meeting and maintaining your school's club requirements.
- Find a faculty or staff advisor if required by your school
- President and Treasurer must attend a chartering meeting, typically held at the beginning of every semester
 - Fill out a Chapter Registration Form (included in this packet) and submit to Bags for the Ocean (emilytamkin@gmail.com).
- Review your school's specific requirements and responsibilities of Student Organizations. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in line with any requirements for forming, maintaining, and advertising school clubs. You are responsible for any consequences of failing to meet such requirements. You are responsible for any club events put on by your chapter.
- Before January 31st of each year, active club chapters must complete the Year End Report (included in this packet) and submit the report to Bags for the Ocean

emilytamkin@gmail.com). The treasurer should note what information is required in the Year End Report so that he or she can be sure to track that information during the year.

- ❑ If you wish to discontinue your chapter, simply notify Bags for the Ocean emilytamkin@gmail.com and submit the Year End Report at the time of discontinuing your chapter.

I encourage you to share your success stories (with photos), questions, press, events, and any other Bags for the Ocean news with me! Sharing these stories on the website can motivate other club chapters and give them ideas. It can also help individuals get inspired to eliminate single-use plastic bags from their daily lives. So whether you put on a tee-shirt drive, designed a great poster, or had a grocery store event, please let me know!

Chapter Registration Form

This form can also be found in PDF form on the Bags for the Ocean website.

Bags for the Ocean Chapter Registration	
	Date: _____
President Name:	_____
School Name:	_____
City, State, Zip:	_____

Please return this form to Bags for the Ocean at emilytamkin@gmail.com to register your chapter or to register a change of presidency for your chapter.

Year End Report

This form can also be found in PDF form on the Bags for the Ocean website.

This form must be submitted to Bags for the Ocean (Emilytamkin@gmail.com) for each year of activity, by January 31st of the following year. If you would like to discontinue your chapter of Bags for the Ocean at any time, you can notify Bags for the Ocean and submit this form with your info from the current year thus far.

If you do not submit this form by January 31st of a given year, you certify that you did not collect any donated items, donated funds, or raise any money as a Bags for the Ocean chapter in the previous calendar year.

Amount of tee shirts donated to your chapter:

Value of cash donated to and/or raised by your chapter:

Approximate value of other items (not money or tee shirts) donated to your chapter:

Number of bags created:

Number of bags sold:

Number of bags given away:

Value of cash donated by your chapter:

If not \$0, please list the name of the 501(c)3 to whom the cash was donated:

For cash donated to causes or organizations NOT recognized as a 501(c)3, please include that amount under the value of cash "spent", below.

Value of cash spent by your chapter:

Activities Suggestion List

Involvement in your local community and school is essential in maintaining a successful Bags for the Ocean club. Listed below are a number of activities to get involved in your community.

Tee shirt Drives:

Tee shirt drives are a great way to both collect the shirts necessary for manufacturing your reusable bags, and to get your community and campus involved in your work.

Promote your tee shirt drive by advertising with posters, announcements through your school's newspaper, and social media. Advertising well in advance helps ensure that as many people as possible are aware of the event and can gather their donations ahead of time.

Determine an easily accessible and well-known drop off location so that those interested in donating don't have to go too far out of their way to participate.

Consider offering an extra incentive for trading in a tee shirt. For example, offering a raffle ticket that gives the winner a free bag makes the event more exciting and prompts people to donate their old tee shirts and learn about the club.

You can find other tips for collecting tee shirts [here](#) and suggestions for a different kind of tee shirt drive (which worked great!) [here](#).

Bag-Making Meeting:

As the club revolves around the production of tee-shirt bags, getting club members and friends together to make them is a great way to connect with your members and get work done.

Be sure to have all of the necessary supplies gathered and set up ahead of time so the event is organized and everyone can get started quickly. You'll need good quality scissors, plates or other similar round objects for cutting the top of the bag, a sewing machine, and thread. You might need an iron and ironing board if your donation shirts are not folded, and you might also use binding tape to make a strong seam on the bag easily (you can do without).

Bags that are sewed only along the bottom work just as well, and they require minimal sewing machine skills. If you are selling your bags for more than \$1 or \$2, you might consider making a seam around the handles too, as the bag looks more professional.

Here's a tip: making bags out of tank tops is a great way to start, because there's no cutting needed and the handles are already made and hemmed! You just need to sew the bottom shut.

Don't have a sewing machine? Don't know how to use one? Ask around. There is someone in your community (Teacher? Student's mom? Fellow student? Someone who lives nearby?) who

has a sewing machine and would let you use it, and even teach you how! Your school may have sewing machines you can use and a teacher who can teach you to use them. Or, if your school provides club funds, you may be able to purchase a cheap, used sewing machine and learn to use it via YouTube videos. You can do it!

Prior to starting, explain the bag-making process in a way that's easy to understand so that everyone is clear and can minimize waste. If you can find a facility nearby that allows you to donate fabric scraps, then you can donate the cut-off sleeves and create no waste.

Talk to Businesses about Signage:

Connecting with local businesses to see how your club can get involved is an incredibly valuable way to increase public awareness about the detriment of utilizing simple plastic materials such as straws and plastic bags. Offering businesses posters discussing the benefit of saying no to plastic products reminds consumers to be conscientious about their day to day decision making. There is a sample poster included in this packet, but I encourage you to make your own that are specific to your school, community, or town.

Organize a day with your fellow club members to go around and speak with local businesses. This is a great opportunity to spend more time with club members and get to know the local businesses near you.

Always be respectful when approaching businesses and employees. Be courteous when offering them a poster or flier to put up and understand that many businesses have policies of not taping to walls or windows. If a certain store has a cork-board for posters and flyers, always ask before hanging a poster.

Posters on plastic waste can be found online, and an example poster can be found on the Bags for the Ocean website and in the next section.

Tabling and Selling Bags:

Selling and distributing the reusable bags that your club generates is a cornerstone of being a member of Bags for the Ocean. One of the best ways to do this is to speak to one of your local grocery stores or markets to get permission to set up a table outside of their establishment to distribute your bags. If this is not available, setting up a table to sell on campus works perfectly as well. Tips for selling and requesting to table outside of stores are contained later in this packet.

You can also find some tips on grocery store tabling [here](#).

Sample Poster for Businesses

ABALONE - ALBACORE - ANCHOVY - ANGELFISH - BARNACLE - BARRACUDA - BLUE CRAB - BLUE WHALE - BULL SHARK - CLEANER WRASSE - CLOWNFISH - COD - CONCH - CORAL - CUTTLEFISH - DOLPHIN - DRIFTFISH - SEA COW - DUNGENESS CRAB - EEL - ELEPHANT SEAL - EMPEROR SHRIMP - ESTUARINE CROCODILE - FAN WORM - FLOUNDER - FLYING FISH - FUGU - GIANT SQUID - GREAT WHITE SHARK - GRUNION - HADDOCK - HAKE - HERRING - KIND MACKEREL - KRILL - LAMPREY - MAHI-MAHI - MANATEE - MANTA RAY - MUSSEL - NEEDLEFISH - RIBBON WORM - PORPOISE - PRAWN - PUFFERFISH - REQUIEM SHARK - SEA TURTLE - SEA URCHIN - SPONGE - TUBE WORMS - UNICORN FISH - YELLOWFIN TUNA - YELLOW TANG - ZOOPLANKTON

**By 2050, there will be
more plastic in the ocean
than fish.**

Keep our TRASH out of their HOME
BRING A REUSABLE BAG!

Suggestions for Getting Shirts

In order to reduce further waste, Bags for the Ocean makes it a point to use recycled materials for the creation of bags. Here are some suggestions for gathering tee shirt donations.

Tee shirt Drives:

As mentioned before in the activity suggestions, one of the best ways to amass shirts for bag production is having a drive. It's also a great idea to accept donations while you're selling the bags to kill two birds with one stone. On college campuses, there are always students with more tee shirts than they'll ever wear. Be sure to let sororities, fraternities, clubs and other organizations know about the event so that they're able to participate by dropping off their spare tee shirts.

While it's great to give these unwanted tee shirts a second life, if you find that your school's departments and clubs have a LOT of unwanted tee shirts from past events, consider taking a picture of what you collect and sharing an article in your school newspaper or elsewhere that encouraged your school to skip the "swag" and use their funds and resources for something less wasteful. Remember, you don't want to punish or shame the same people who helped you, but you might approach it as a collective problem your campus community can solve together. The idea is, "Hey, we're making thousands of tee shirts a year that people wear just once - maybe we could spend that money on something else and help to eliminate waste? For now, here's a way we can put those tee shirts to good use."

You might also want to consider setting up collection bins outside of businesses or on school campuses. It's important to pick an area of high traffic to create a visual reminder that the event is happening and make donating more accessible for everyone.

The importance of marketing the drive and spreading the word beforehand can not be overstated. Be sure to take to social media, school announcements, posters, word of mouth, and whatever other means necessary (within your school's rules) to ensure that you have people committed to bringing shirts.

When people donate, make sure to let them know what the shirt is being used for and where the profits from the bag go! If they have a second, it's nice to let them know a little bit about the organization and whether or not they will have the opportunity to purchase their shirt in bag form. Overall, be courteous and thank everyone for their donation.

Donation Discounts:

Another way to incentivize donations is by offering a discount on a bag purchase if they donate a tee shirt along with it. If you don't happen to be selling bags on a day that you want to be offering this discount, hand out vouchers so that those who donate can come back and get the discount when you happen to be selling bags next. Otherwise, as the price of each bag is up to

each individual club, take the liberty of offering discounts wherever you see fit in order to increase the number of distributed bags. Remember, the focus of the organization is not profit so much as the promoting of sustainable practices and reduction of waste. Some organizations create bags just to give them away, which is also a good option if you feel that's a better fit for your school.

Collecting at Pre-Planned Events:

Making tee shirt collection a part of already well-attended events is another great idea to collect shirts. Chat with the coordinators of whatever event you'd like to collect at and see if they can send an email out to those in attendance asking them to bring old shirts. For example, you can talk to coaches before big meets or games and ask them to email parents and athletes. You might even be able to get them to offer a discount to anyone who brings a shirt to donate.

Additionally, see if teachers can have students bring in tee shirts to class as well. Working the drive into a coordinated event increases participation and is a great way to spread the word about the organization.

Instructions for Making Bags

Repurposing your old tee shirts into reusable shopping bags is a simple but fun craft project. Here is a simple step-by-step guide, courtesy of <http://www.instructables.com/>.

Materials:

tee shirt
Pen or pencil
Plate
Scissors
Straight pins
Sewing machine or needle and thread

Step 1:

Choose an old tee shirt and smooth it out on a flat surface.
Use scissors to remove your sleeves (without cutting off the seams).

Step 2:

Position a plate about halfway over the neck of the shirt.
Trace the plate with your pen or pencil.
Cut along the traced line with your scissors.

Step 3:

Turn the shirt inside out and pin the bottom of the shirt closed (along the hem).

Step 4:

Use a sewing machine or needle and thread to sew the bottom of the tee shirt hem closed.
Reinforce your bag by sewing it along the hem a second time.

Tips for Selling Bags

Bag-selling is a key activity for Bags for the Ocean clubs, and often one of the most fun and rewarding parts because you can see the direct impact of all of your work collecting shirts and making the bags.

Before you go out to start selling, clearly identify the organization that you choose to donate the proceeds of bag collection to. Bags for the Ocean chooses not to specify direct organizations for donation because the projects you complete as a club (collecting shirts, making bags, selling in your community) all become more meaningful when the proceeds of the work go to your club's choice of organization. Of course, if the organization of your choice is related to ocean conservation, or nature conservation in general, that is even more preferable as it connects strongly with the purpose of bag distribution.

When choosing an organization to receive your donations, ensure that they are a non-profit. Or, you can raise funds that will go to another club at your school. When you choose an organization to donate to, I also recommend you research into how they utilize their funds to verify their legitimacy and that your club supports their efforts in their entirety. We recommend contacting the organization ahead of time to introduce yourselves, your club's mission, and your intentions to donate.

The pricing of the bags is up to each individual club depending on your goals. If you'd like to focus more on the distribution of bags and the impact of reducing plastic in your town, it might be worthwhile to distribute the bags and simply request a donation instead of setting a fixed price, or ask for a \$1 donation per bag. Otherwise, setting a price comparable to bags sold in stores (generally \$2-5/bag) is also reasonable.

As previously mentioned regarding shirt collection, setting up deals where people can receive discounts for donating shirts can help garner business. Additionally, offering discounts for those who buy more than one, or who choose to sign up for email alerts from the organization you choose to donate to is a great way to boost interest and distribution.

If those who stop by your table or booth have a moment, taking a second to describe the goals and methods of Bags for the Ocean makes a greater impact on those you interact with. Having a couple facts about the impact of plastic usage, being able to tell them about organization you're donating to and the work they do, as well as other things they can do to limit waste will make an impression and help ensure they remember their reusable bags instead of buying plastic.

If your school or local store allows it, you could set up an event to give out bags at their checkout, encouraging shoppers to use the bag right away. This may be memorable for shoppers and help them refuse plastic bags in the future. Farmers markets can be a great place

for this kind of activity, because shoppers are often buying large and bulky produce that requires a bag, and are often receptive to local, package-free, or environmental messages.

Above all, be sure to be kind and courteous. Not everyone will have time to stop and chat, and not everyone will buy a bag, but that's okay. Be especially sure to thank whomever gave you the opportunity to table outside of their store or on your school campus. Above all, have fun and at the end of the day, even if you did not sell every bag you made, you had the opportunity to make an impact on some people's lives and ensure that meaningful quantities of plastic stay out of landfills and the ocean.

Form for Club Records

This form can also be found in PDF form on the Bags for the Ocean website. This form does not have to be submitted to Bags for the Ocean, but can be used for your own records.

Bags for the Ocean Records Form	
	Date: _____
Club Chapter:	_____
tee shirts Donated:	_____
	tee shirts _____
	Made:
# of tee shirts Sold:	_____
	tee shirt Cost: _____

Club Constitution

New chapters of Bags for the Ocean can use this example when creating their club's constitution and bylaws if doing so is desired by the club or required by their school.

Article I: Name and Purpose

The name of this club shall be Bags for the Ocean: [University Name] Chapter.

Article II: Mission and Philosophy

The mission of Bags for the Ocean shall be to reduce plastic waste in our oceans by impacting change locally through the creation and sale of recycled tee shirts as reusable bags. All profits will be donated to local non-profits or other relevant school clubs whose mission it is to promote conservation of our oceans and other ecological spaces.

The mission of Bags for the Ocean shall be consistent with the mission of [University Name].

Article III: Membership

Membership shall be open to all [University Name] students and must comply with federal laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, sex, handicap, age, sexual orientation, or political or religious affiliation. Compliance with these laws means that membership, benefits, and the election of officers will not be made on the basis of these factors.

Bags for the Ocean shall maintain a minimum of 2 fully enrolled [University Name] students (or greater, depending on your school's requirements).

Article IV: Officers and Duties

The Officers of Bags for the Ocean shall consist of, at minimum, a President and a Treasurer who shall constitute the Executive Board of the Organization. Clubs are required to have a full time faculty or staff member as their advisor if required by the school. The advisor shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Organization. Ex-officio members shall serve only in a non-voting capacity.

Officers must be full-time students with a minimum 2.0 GPA.

The officers shall be elected by ballot at the last meeting of the spring semester by a majority of the vote cast for that office. The officers shall serve for one year and their term of office shall begin at the commencement of the fall semester.

The President shall call all meetings of the Membership, regular or otherwise, and shall serve as the chairperson of such meetings. In addition, the President shall, with the advice of the Executive Committee, plan and coordinate the events to be sponsored by the Organization in

forthcoming terms; with the Treasurer, if applicable prepare and present an annual budget request to the appropriate funding source, and shall serve as a liaison with the Office of Student Activities.

The Treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining accurate financial records of the Bags for the Ocean and shall be allowed to request payment on behalf of the Organization. The Treasurer, with the President, shall prepare and present any budget requests to the appropriate funding source. The officers shall insure that all funds are properly kept within the University accounting system. Outside bank accounts are not permitted.

Any Officer of the Organization may resign at any time by delivering a written notice or email of such resignation to the President, or in the case of the resignation of the President, to the Vice President.

When an Officer position is vacated, the Executive Board shall hold elections as soon as possible to fill the position by following the Bags for the Ocean's election procedures.

If any Officer of Bags for the Ocean is absent from the [University Name] campus due to a leave of absence or studying abroad, the Executive Board shall hold elections to fill the position by following the Organization's election procedures.

Any Officer of Bags for the Ocean may be removed from such office by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Members.

Article V: Meetings

Regular meetings shall be held monthly during the regular school year.

Special meetings may be called by the President with the approval of the Executive Committee.

A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of the membership.

All Members shall be notified via E-mail of any Meeting and the nature of the business to be transacted there at least one week before such Meeting. No Meeting shall be called with the intent to exclude any one Member or any portion of the Membership.

Article VI: Voting

Each Member shall have one (1) vote.

There shall be no absentee or proxy voting with respect to any matter.

All motions require an affirmative vote of a simple majority of the Membership to be effective.

Article VII: Miscellaneous

This Constitution may be amended or repealed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Members of the Organization.

Any amendment to this Constitution shall be attached hereto and made a part hereof for all purposes.

This Constitution and any amendments and changes hereto shall be filed by the club with the Office of Student Activities and shall be available to any Member of the Organization for inspection during office hours.

The Constitution on file in the Office of Student Activities shall be the official Constitution of the organization.

Facts About Plastic Waste

- Each year, an estimated 500 billion to 1 trillion plastic bags are consumed worldwide
- On average, there are 46,000 pieces of plastic floating in every square mile of the ocean
- It takes 1,500,000 barrels of oil to make the plastic water bottles used in the U.S. per year
- Only 9 percent of plastic used in the year 2017 was recycled
- 1 billion disposable plastic straws are used worldwide each day
- 1 million seabirds and 100,000 marine life are killed by plastic pollution each year
- The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is 1.6 million square kilometers (double the size of Texas) and growing every day
- Around 80% of marine animal - plastic interactions end in injury or death to the animal

Suggestions to Reduce Plastic Waste at Your School

Reducing plastic waste is made possible when it's addressed on multiple fronts. Here are some ways to impact change at your school.

Recycling Systems:

Ensuring a convenient method of recycling excess waste is vital to reducing waste in your school. Work with administrators to implement a recycling system, or to refine the one your school already has in place.

A step that can be taken past just implementing the system is working to ensure that your school operates on a two bin system in which recycling and trash cans are always grouped together, one next to the other. This system is shown to be more effective at increasing the diversion rate (the percent of recyclable waste that ends up in the recycling instead of the trash) by eliminating the possibility that students are throwing recyclable plastic or paper in the trash simply because they forget to look for the recycling bin or it is not convenient to do so.

Eliminate Single-Use Plastics:

Generally, the majority of school plastic waste and improper disposal occurs at lunchtime through the cleanup of lunches and products received through the cafeteria. Get in touch with your school's staff and administration to eliminate wasteful products from your cafeterias or vending machines on campus.

Speaking to cafeteria staff about cutting back or eliminating the distribution or sale of various wasteful products (such as packaging with excess styrofoam, straws, cardboard lunch trays, plastic water bottles, etc.) can greatly reduce the quantity of those products that end up in the trash at the end of lunch. In addition, eliminating the sale of plastic water bottles encourages students to bring a reusable water bottle and begin sustainable habits such as not requesting plastic straws.

Encourage and Teach Other Students:

All in all, the proper management of waste on your campus is the responsibility of the students. The best recycling services in the world could be in place but if students don't realize that it's their responsibility to properly dispose of their waste, plastic will still end up in the garbage. It is vital to teach students about which products go in which bin and encourage students to care about sorting their waste.

Putting posters that describe these sorting requirements on or near recycling and trash bins gives them a quick resource to consult while sorting their trash. Additionally, showing students fun videos regarding sorting, distributing information about the environmental impact of not sorting trash, or any other ideas your club can come up with to make students think twice when

they are sorting their trash can make a great impact on the effectiveness of waste management in schools.

Sell and Promote Reusable Water Bottles:

One quick way to decrease the plastic waste in your school is to ensure that all students have a reusable water bottle that they use instead of purchasing plastic water bottles. Whether you as a club want to work together to design water bottles to sell and promote, or if you'd like to hand out a piece of candy to anyone with a reusable water bottle a certain day, the less plastic water bottles on your school campus, the better.

Logos for Club Use

