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Montgomery County Solid Waste Station: What We Need to Change

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Saturday, April 2, 2016

Montgomery County Solid Waste Station: What We Need To Change

Meg Maloney, 2018 Cohort

As we stepped out into the parking lot, I couldn't help but notice all the environmentally friendly engineering that starkly contrasted my idea of what a Solid Waste Station would look like. The parking lot was composed of a permeable substance allowing water to be restored to the aquifer. Furthermore, the waste station had a green roof and enormous windows allowing ample sunlight into the building. It is an extremely ecocentric setting for a waste station, and I was excited to learn about the renewable solutions that Montgomery county had crafted in regards to waste.

As the 2018 cohort went through the waste station, our eyes were open to the real issues regarding waste. The waste station has put in tremendous effort to teach the community about the detrimental implications of waste, and the importance of implementing sustainable solutions in the future. The building was remodeled using recycled materials and they were conscious about using sustainable products throughout their building. The goal of these tours is to teach groups about the importance of reducing waste and recycling more. The emphasis that the waste station placed on sustainability was fantastic, however it could not mask the biggest problem that Montgomery County and the rest of the United States faces: our enormous consumption problem.

In just 4 hours the entire storage area was filled with garbage (Fig 1). Most of the waste that came in could have been recycled or composted, sadly it was all taken by trucks to a landfill. On average, a landfill takes about 20 years to fill up...and the largest landfill in Ohio is 3 feet from becoming the tallest point in the state. Most of society is completely oblivious to our consumption and waste problem, not even thinking twice about where their garbage goes. It sadden me to look out the window at the station and see a large pile of garbage building up across the river. In about 15 years, that landfill would be completely full, and another natural area would be bought and used for waste that society and I thoughtlessly contributed.



Fig 1: It took about 4 hours for this room to be filled with waste that would be shortly taken to a landfill.

This experience was extremely eye-opening for our Cohort, and I was empowered that the waste station understood the importance of educating the community about this problem. While the future may seem bleak, the solution is rather simple: stop wasting so much. It is incredibly important that we refocus how we look at waste. If everyone recycled and composted more, consumed less disposable goods and educated themselves on the importance of reducing waste consumption, we would not have an extreme waste problems.

We do not have infinite space for waste. We cannot continue living as everything is at our disposal. Instead, we must implement more sustainable practices in regards to waste before the largest point in the United State is just a pile of trash.