

## Broomfield Lions Club Pancake Breakfast a Zero Waste Success!

Hours before the floats started down Midway Blvd. for Broomfield Days, the Broomfield Lions Club kicked off their first ever Zero Waste Pancake Breakfast. While the pancake batter was being mixed and the coffee percolating, trash cans were removed and Zero Waste stations were rolled into place. By the time the last pancake was off the griddle, 97% of the material from the breakfast was recycled or composted!

The Lions Club Pancake Breakfast was the most successful Zero Waste event to ever take place in Broomfield County! While the percentage of material recycled and composted is impressive, it could never have happened without the work put in before the event ever took place.

Event planners worked with Eco-Cycle to ensure everything distributed during the pancake breakfast was recyclable or compostable. Instead of plastic-coated plates, the event planners purchased paper plates; they had potato starch cutlery as an alternative to plastic cutlery; and biodegradable hot cups (lined with a vegetable-based coating) replaced foam cups. With this forethought, these materials were able to be composted along with the food waste at a commercial composting facility. Rather than taking up landfill space, creating methane and ground water pollution, these materials will break down into a valuable soil amendment.

Since Zero Waste events are fairly new to Broomfield, Eco-Cycle volunteers were on hand to help the pancake diners determine whether materials should go into the recycling or composting bin at the Zero Waste station. After serving about 600 breakfasts, only a tiny amount of non-recyclable material was left to be landfilled.

This and all Zero Waste events are small scale models of a Zero Waste world. But what is Zero Waste and how did this happen in Broomfield? Zero Waste is a revolutionary strategy and change in thinking that starts by designing waste and resource destruction out of the system. It's an alternative to our current one-way system of extracting virgin resources to make packaging and products that will later be buried or burned and destroyed for future generations. Instead of seeing used materials as garbage in need of disposal, discards are seen as valuable resources. A pile of "trash" represents jobs, financial opportunity, and raw material for new products.

Zero Waste consists of three key components, all of which were demonstrated in this event. First, we must "change the rules" for how our events and society function. Event planners for the Lions Club Pancake Breakfast changed the rules for how their event would operate – they set the Zero Waste bar. Next, we move to "producer responsibility," wherein manufacturers design their products to be non-toxic, efficiently produced and to be reused, recycled or composted at the end of its useful life. In the case of the pancake breakfast, the vendors distributed only recyclable or compostable items. Lastly, we must create "recovery infrastructure." Visitors to the Lions Club Pancake Breakfast found Eco-Cycle's Zero Waste stations, each consisting of a recycling bin and a compost bin. Thus, the Pancake Breakfast was a perfect model for how a Zero Waste society can function.

Already looking ahead to future years of Broomfield Days, the planning committee is strategizing how to create the infrastructure for the entire Broomfield Days—from start to finish—to be Zero Waste. As the Lions Club’s successful mini Zero Waste world has shown us, with a little planning and dedication to the Zero Waste components, the Zero Waste concept can be extremely successful in our community. Thank you and congratulations, Lions Club, for being a model for our community.

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