

# Green is the New Black

You already recycle, take your reusable bags to the grocery store, and turn down the thermostat a bit in the winter. You are well on your way to living a more sustainable lifestyle, however there are choices to make every day which you may not have considered. Being conscious of your actions, and the impacts they have either directly or indirectly on the environment, is the next step towards living “green”. The impacts of some choices are obvious, such as cutting down a tree, but others require more thought or information. “Going Green” is about being conscious of your daily actions. Do you need to drive to your destination? Can you turn down the thermostat? Do you have lots of appliances plugged in which are not in use? What decisions can you make today to change your environmental impact?

- **Change your light bulbs:** Changing to compact florescent lights (CFL) can reduce your energy usage by more than 75%.
- **Reduce your hot water usage:** A family of four can save 2200 lbs of CO<sub>2</sub> AND \$170 annually just by cutting their shower time by 2 min.
- **Consider your diet:** Meat production is a resource-intensive business that uses up to eight times as much fuel energy as fruit and vegetable farming. It also generates a lot of environmental pollution, including -- in the case of cattle -- the greenhouse gas methane. In fact, every burger represents at least 10.5 lbs of CO<sub>2</sub>.
- **Buy locally grown food:** Food transport, especially internationally, requires natural resources and emits CO<sub>2</sub>. When at the market, be conscious of the origin of your food and consider the cost of travel due to the importation of food from other countries. Consider planting a garden or buying from local farmers to “eat locally”.
- **Think before you buy:** Production, packaging, transportation, and disposal of “stuff” is highly impactful on our natural resources. For a very informational video check out the “Story of Stuff” at [www.storyofstuff.com](http://www.storyofstuff.com). To reduce the amount of “stuff” you buy - borrow books from the library or a friend, buy used instead of new, share a lawn mower or power tools with your neighbors, and simply ask yourself if you really need that item.
- **Carry a reusable water bottle:** In the U.S. alone, 60 million water bottles are thrown away each day. Worldwide 1,500 water bottles end up as garbage EVERY SECOND!
- **Travel Responsibly:** Air travel accounts for roughly 3.5% of the human contribution to global warming. Direct flights have less impact, because the majority of CO<sub>2</sub> is emitted during take-off.
- **Encourage others to think about their actions:** Study abroad has a measurable impact on the environment. Encourage students to consider their actions abroad. They can use mass transport; join the Green Passport program [www.greenpassport.us](http://www.greenpassport.us); choose “green” accommodations when traveling; carry a reusable mug, water bottle, and bag; and offset their airline travel through the new Study Abroad Carbon Offset Package from the Colorado Carbon Fund at [www.coloradocarbonfund.org](http://www.coloradocarbonfund.org), a part of the Colorado State Governor’s Energy Office.



# GlobaLinks' Green Initiative

## **Volunteer Program**

Since 2003, more than 1,600 AustraLearn students from the United States and Canada have provided 6,276 volunteer days and more than \$1 million (AUD) in volunteer labor on behalf of the 25-year old conservation program Conservation Volunteers Australia. These efforts serve to offset some of our students travel and consumption impacts while abroad, which means that our volunteers are more sustainable travelers.

## **MyLearn Paperless Application and Enrollment System**

The AustraLearn, AsiaLearn, and EuroLearn websites all feature the MyLearn account which allows students to manage every step of the study abroad processes online, without compromising our renowned student services. We have save approximately 5,160 pounds of paper annually by not sending paper participant forms/guides. That's a savings of 62 trees per year!

## **We Encourage Students to Get Involved**

As a part of our pre-departure process, students are encouraged to take a step towards responsible travel by offsetting their airline travel and making a positive impact as they experience the world. Study abroad students can purchase the \$40 "Study Abroad Carbon Offset Package" through the Colorado Carbon Fund, and 100% of the money is used to support renewable energy projects. [www.coloradocarbonfund.org](http://www.coloradocarbonfund.org).

We also encourage students to sign up for the "Green Passport" program at [www.greenpassport.us](http://www.greenpassport.us). Here, students who are committed to sustainable study abroad can sign up for the program, vowing to "respect the interconnectedness of the world's people and environment and take actions to reduce their ecological and socio-cultural footprint when they study and travel abroad."

## **"Travel Light" Departure Package**

Prior to departure, students are provided with a departure package and receive their final briefing via a paperless online webinar. In addition to the travel wallets we provide our affiliated students, our departure packages now include a reusable, recyclable shopping bag made from recycled plastic. We want our students to be prepared for cultural differences and to be environmentally conscious at the same time.

## **Reduce - Reuse - Recycle in all offices**

Our Colorado office, as well as our overseas and regionally based staff, are taking steps to create as little waste as possible in our daily tasks and have designated recycling bins throughout our office for paper, glass, and plastics.

## **We Support the Colorado Carbon Fund**

For every student evaluation form we receive, we donate \$1 to the Colorado Carbon Fund in efforts to offset our environmental impact while also encouraging students to provide feedback on our programs. Since January 2009, we have donated \$684 - that's \$1 for each student evaluation form we received. The Colorado Carbon Fund provides high quality carbon offsets to consumers as a way to support new energy efficiency and renewable energy projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in our state.

## **Contribute to the Local Environment**

The GlobaLinks staff adopted a track of open space near the office in January 2009. As an on-going contribution to the local environment, staff members donate their lunch hour to pick up trash and keep the area clean.

