



DATE: June 13, 2024
TO: Recycling Board/Planning Committee
FROM: Michelle Fay, Program Manager
SUBJECT: 2024 StopWaste Environmental Leadership Awards

SUMMARY

At the June 13 Recycling Board meeting, StopWaste will present its [2024 Environmental Leadership Awards](#) to six Alameda County entities for their leadership and innovations in advancing environmental sustainability, waste prevention, and contributions to building healthy, climate resilient communities in Alameda County. The 2024 awards celebration marks the Agency's 22nd event where businesses, institutions, and nonprofits are recognized for their commitment to the environment.

DISCUSSION

A call for nominations went out in April to solicit submissions from member agency staff, hauler representatives, StopWaste staff, and our partners. Nominations were evaluated based on environmental and health benefits, innovation and leadership, and advancing equity.

The 2024 awardees are:

Vesta Foodservice, Hayward
Excellence in Food Recovery & Donation

Vesta Foodservice distributes food to restaurants, hotels, hospitals, and other foodservice providers throughout California and beyond. Their Northern California headquarters is in Hayward. Started in 2012, their Chefs to End Hunger (CTEH) program picks up surplus prepared foods from customers during their regularly scheduled deliveries and works with local partner organizations who take the donations from Vesta's distribution center to vulnerable communities. Free and convenient for their customers, Vesta provides the donation kits—a box, three sheet pans, and labeling—and facilitates all outreach and training for the program. By utilizing the trips drivers already make, no additional carbon emissions are generated. Food recovery organizations like Daily Bowl love the program—since they started collaborating with Vesta, they have received well over 300,000 pounds of high-quality foods.

Sparkl Reusables, Oakland & **Spectrum Community Services**, Hayward
Excellence in Reusable Foodware Partnership

Spectrum Community Services, a nonprofit in Hayward serving nutritious hot meals to seniors, and Sparkl Reusables in Oakland, a reusable foodware service provider, have formed an innovative partnership that prevents some 10,000 pieces of disposable foodware from being wasted each month. At 10 out of 12 distribution sites, seniors receive their meals in Sparkl's reusable containers, ready to be carried home in reusable bags. On their next visit, they return the empty, rinsed foodware in designated bins for washing and reuse. Sparkl staff picks up the used foodware and delivers freshly sanitized containers daily in a seamless, closed loop operation. Both Spectrum's and Sparkl's commitment to sustainability, willingness to experiment, flexibility, and excellent communication have made this successful collaboration possible.

oWOW, Oakland

Excellence in Construction Innovation

oWOW is an Oakland-based development, design, and construction company with multi-family housing projects in Oakland and San Francisco. oWOW's buildings use mass timber, a wood-based construction material that is stronger, lighter-weight, and less carbon intensive than other building materials. All of oWOW's mass timber is sourced from a zero-waste wood manufacturer in Oregon. Their prefabrication and industrialized construction methods allow oWOW to cut waste on-site while also reducing on-site labor costs and construction timelines. In addition, oWOW integrates development, design and construction—responsibilities typically fragmented—enabling workflow synergies and more creative solutions. Combined, oWOW's innovations allow them to build twice as fast and at a cost roughly 20% below traditional construction—a much needed answer to the Bay Area's housing crisis.

Drake's Brewing Company, San Leandro

Excellence in Waste Prevention and Reuse

Drake's Brewing Company in San Leandro has brewed craft beer since 1989 and operates three taprooms. At the San Leandro brewery, beer kegs used to be stacked on wooden pallets that break often and were secured with disposable plastic pallet wrap as they were moved between facilities for cleaning and refilling, or for shipment to off-site taprooms. In 2019, Drake's switched to reusable plastic pallets and replaced the plastic wrap with reusable wraps and rubber bands. In the first year alone, they eliminated 16,000 lbs of pallet wood waste and 290,000 square feet of plastic wrap. In addition to cost savings, the reusable solutions save time because they are easier to apply and have improved worker safety.

Mohr Elementary School, Pleasanton

Excellence in Sustainability at School

Mohr Elementary School in Pleasanton has been a StopWaste partner school and 4Rs—that stands for Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rot—champion for years, with a tireless and committed Green Team made up of students, their families, and school faculty. In 2020, they helped the Pleasanton Unified School District become the first district in the county to pass a

resolution that prioritizes food waste reduction and recovery districtwide. Mohr teaches environmental and climate literacy in meaningful and hands-on ways, guiding students to not only properly sort lunch waste in the cafeteria and manage the school's food share table, but also to develop and hone leadership skills. They teach younger students about the school's green initiatives, lead litter cleanups and assemblies on sustainability topics, and even created their own "skip the spork packet" school-wide marketing campaign. Practicing their advocacy skills, students are working with Nutritional Services on designing waste, such as disposable water bottles and condiment packets, out of the system.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information only.