

Sisters of Charity (Halifax) and Associates

Strategies for Lightening Our Carbon Footprint As Best We Can

Please consider what you already do — and what you now pledge to do.

Suggested Action	Understanding my actions and what my/our actions can accomplish
Lighting: I/We will replace traditional light bulbs with compact fluorescent (CFL) bulbs and Christmas lights with LED bulbs.	This could save 100lbs or more of carbon dioxide (CO ₂) per year per regular bulb; as much as 600lbs for Christmas lights.
I/We will turn off lights no longer in use.	This could save 300lbs of CO ₂ per year.
I/We will use power strips on electronics to reduce electricity “drip” and turn off when not using.	This could save 300lbs of CO ₂ per year.
Heating: I/We will lower the thermostat five or more degrees when away from home or asleep.	It is estimated that one could save 5-15% per year on energy used and money spent on that energy.
I/We will set the house air conditioning thermostat up two or more degrees.	This could save 500lbs of CO ₂ per year.
I/We will set the furnace thermostat down two or more degrees and dress warmer as needed.	This could save 400lbs of CO ₂ per year.

I/We will have an energy audit done of the house (or encourage the owner to do so) and implement energy- saving ideas from the audit.	
Water: I/We will wash clothes in cold water and only when there is a full load.	This could save 600lbs of CO ₂ per year.
I/We will run the dishwasher only when there is a full load.	Reduces footprint by 100lbs of CO ₂ per year
I/We will turn the water heater down to 120° F and completely off when away for several days.	This could save 100lbs or more of CO ₂ per year.
I/We will install a low-flow showerhead and reduce time in the shower.	Possible savings of 250-350lbs of CO ₂ per year.
I/We will check taps, toilets and water pipes regularly for drips / leaks.	
I/We will install low-flush toilets, or buy a toilet dam for each toilet in our house.	Dams reduce water use by about 40% every flush.
I/We will conserve water by turning off the faucet when doing dishes, brushing teeth, washing hands ...	One saves the energy used to treat and move the water to its destination, while also conserving potable water.
Transportation: I/We will combine trips, car-pool, walk/bike or use public transit.	One pound of CO ₂ is produced for every mile driven.
I/We will fly less and — as practical — will choose car, train or bus as alternatives with less climate impact. (see David Suzuki link below)	Aviation travel presently accounts for 4-9% of the total climate change impact of human activity; it has greater climate impact per passenger mile than other transportation.

I/We will lower car windows when possible rather than using air- conditioning.	Consumer reports say that the air conditioner reduces a car's fuel efficiency by up to 10%.
I/We will save 10% of fuel costs by maintaining tire pressure, staying close to the speed limit and avoiding quick starts and stops.	This could save 800lbs or more of CO ₂ per year.
Food: I/We will eat less meat and substitute with alternative protein like beans, eggs, cheese, quinoa, seeds, nuts, nut-butters, chickpeas ...	One full day a week without meat would save 350lbs of CO ₂ per year. Also, it takes 1800 gallons of water to produce one pound of beef.
I/We will fair trade and organically grown coffee, shade grown if possible.	Less water is used for shade- grown coffee.
I/We will buy locally grown foods when possible.	Ensures freshness and quality, and reduced food transport also reduces CO ₂ emissions.
I/We will buy organically- grown foods when possible.	Supports farming practices that eliminates chemical and fuel intensive agriculture.
Clothing/Bedding/Fabrics: I/We will buy clothing etc. made with natural fibers and less petroleum-derived nylon and polyesterfabrics.	Synthetic/polyester material is made from petroleum products and therefore more CO ₂ intensive in its production.
I will try to buy locally or Canada/US-made clothing, footwear, bedding, etc.	This reduces CO ₂ emissions coming from the transport of clothing from faraway places.
Household: I/We will reduce use of plastics and packaging, and place as many items as possible in recycling bins.	Reducing our use of plastics and recycling fosters a lower carbon footprint.

I/We will use natural fiber napkins (cotton, bamboo ...) and limit use of paper products in the kitchen.	Paper towels/napkins are energy-intensive in production creating more greenhouse gases than cloth napkins.
I/We will compost to help build-up the soil.	100lbs or more of CO ₂ is saved; organic compost replaces chemical fertilizers.
I/We will use eco-friendly household cleaners and laundry products.	This reduces the demand of and pollution from synthetic chemicals in the environment.
Investments: I/We will invest in ethically responsible choices that are both socially and ecologically responsible.	This is vital work within a growing global movement to mitigate our climate impact by investing in the solutions, not the causes of climate change.
Advocacy: I/We will contact elected representatives to support Earth-friendly legislation.	One letter is the equivalent to the power of 1,000 votes.
I/We will advocate that alternative energy (wind, solar) become the chief source of power rather than coal, oil or gas.	Renewable energy sources produce little to no carbon emissions and do not harm Earth's eco-systems.

Acknowledgements:

- School Sisters of Notre Dame, Survey and PledgeForm
- www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx
- www.davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/reduce-your-carbon-footprint/travel-sustainably
- The Footprint Files, Developed by the Environmental Commission, Anglican Diocese ofBC

A few resource links:

- 100 ways to save energy at home: <https://www.progress-energy.com/carolinas/home/save-energy-money/energy-saving-tips-calculators/100-tips.page?>
- benefits of L.E.D. lighting: <http://www.myledlight.com/benefitsofledlighting.aspx>
- reducing global warming through water use strategies: <https://www.nrdc.org/water/files/energywater.pdf>
- Australian Gov't tips for water conservation: <http://www.yourhome.gov.au/water/reducing-water-demand>
- why eat lower on food chain: <http://www.culinarymusings.com/2009/04/how-to-eat-lower-on-the-food-chain>
- how to compost kitchen scraps: <http://www.homecompostingmadeeasy.com/foodscraps.html>
- example of green-design clothing company philosophy: <http://www.jerico.ca/environmental-efforts.aspx>
- examples of non-toxic cleaners: http://eartheasy.com/live_nontoxic_solutions.htm#substitutions