

Untrash Arizona

By Maya Honig

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I would love to say that I don't produce trash, but I do. A lot of it! Every time I finish a bottle of water, open up a candy bar, or finish a box of Oreos, I'm generating trash. The most important part of my daily life is how I dispose of that trash. I care where my trash goes and I make sure it ends up in a trashcan whether it's in my house or out in public. I don't want an animal to accidentally choke on my trash or humans to trip on my trash. Also, I don't want to make Arizona a disgusting place to live or visit.

It's really sad when you witness someone throwing his or her trash on the ground and acting like it's not going to cause damage. However, there are many people who don't know or care about the effect littering has on animals, humans, and the state of Arizona. When you put together all the people who don't care, all you end up with is a bunch of trash building up on sidewalks, streets, and in our beautiful deserts. Although Arizona hasn't fully come to that, it's our chance to prevent it.

So what is the affect trash has on animals? Animals sometimes confuse trash with their food, which causes them to choke or become sick. Animals can choke on any litter, including plastic, gum, rubber or wrappers. My favorite animal is the tortoise. Sometimes plastic wrappers get stuck around their neck, causing injury, or even death. I'm devastated knowing that tortoises get injured because someone can't take care of their garbage. Also, animals can cut themselves on broken glass or plastic. Would you really want your litter to cause harm to animals?

Human beings wouldn't think that people get injured by trash. Well, they actually do. People get in accidents everyday trying to avoid trash, such as giant boxes, parts of trees, and even tires on our streets and highways, causing them to get injured or even killed. Even my parents have had situations where they almost got into car accidents trying to avoid trash on Arizona streets and highways. Children and toddlers also find old, nasty food on the ground and try to eat it, which is gross and unhealthy. When I was little, it sure was fascinating finding out what happens when you eat a half-eaten, moldy burrito on the ground.

Arizona is a beautiful place to live and visit. Keeping garbage in its proper place will help to maintain our gorgeous desert landscape. A cleaner environment will attract even more people to visit and live in Arizona. When you accidentally step on or see a piece of trash lying around, pick it up. Leaving it on the ground is just as bad as you throwing it there in the first place.

I can't take something that I care about so much like Arizona and not do something about the trash laying around our environment. Why do people litter? It could simply be that they are too lazy to find a trashcan or that there are not enough trashcans around. This is the problem I want to tackle!

My solution to littering is to have more accessible public trashcans. It sometimes can be a real pain having to walk around trying to find a trashcan, but that still doesn't give you the right to litter. If you're too lazy to find a trashcan, having more trashcans around will solve your problem because you can easily throw your garbage away without having to litter.

How are we going to get enough money to buy all these trashcans? I would start a foundation that I would name "Untrash Arizona." My foundation would raise money to provide more accessible trashcans and service for those trashcans. We could bring groups from Arizona Boys & Girls Clubs to help us pick up trash around Arizona. My foundation would seek donations from the public and do fundraisers like bake sales and car washes to earn money to fund "Untrash Arizona."

Of course, you can also do your part. When you see a piece of trash on the ground, dispose of it. It will guarantee to put a smile on your face knowing that you are helping make Arizona a better, cleaner, and more beautiful place, one step at a time.