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Eco-Cycle Announces *I Choose to Reuse* May Contest Winners; Awards Prizes at Bands on the Bricks

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Boulder County, CO (June 11, 2013) – Congratulations to the winners of our May *I Choose to Reuse* contests! Winners will be announced and prizes will be awarded at tomorrow's Bands on the Bricks event in downtown Boulder, just prior to the performance of Funkiphino.

Congratulations to Rosane Pires, the winner of a brand new specialized hybrid bicycle from University Bicycles! By taking Eco-Cycle's *I Choose to Reuse* 30-Day Challenge and getting a record 40 friends to do the same, Rosane is now pedaling off on her new bike. It's all part of Eco-Cycle's *I Choose to Reuse* campaign, aimed at getting residents and businesses to change the default in Boulder County from single-use disposables to reusables.

"I truly believe we can make a difference by making every day simple choices," said Pires. "I reuse my water bottle, grocery bag and Tupperware for take-out. I knew I could have a bigger impact by getting my friends to join the challenge."

Jamie Harkins won a two-night stay and brunch for two at the St. Julien Hotel & Spa for using the the #ichoosetoreuse hashtag and tweeting the most reuse messages at grocery stores and coffee shops. Pat Cantwell, Rosellen Sell and Misti Norefleet were each selected randomly after signing up for the *I Choose to Reuse* 30-Day Challenge. They each will receive either a \$290 Ocean First Diver's Class/Pool Gift Card, a \$50 gift card from Door to Door Organics or a SparkFun Inventor's Kit.

The *I Choose to Reuse* 30-Day Challenge at www.ecocycle.org/ichoosetoreuse ask participants to avoid these four "Despicable Disposables" for 30 days: (1) paper and polystyrene coffee cups; (2) bottled water; (3) plastic and paper checkout bags; and (4) polystyrene take-out containers. See below for more about the environmental impacts of these products.

BY THE NUMBERS: THE IMPACT OF THE DESPICABLE DISPOSABLES

Eco-Cycle is targeting single-use disposable items because the material "stuff" we manufacture and consume – from the products we buy to the food systems we support—accounts for 42% of our greenhouse gas emissions (EPA).

Single-use paper coffee cups: Boulder County uses on average **1.3 million paper coffee cups per month**, which require **370 trees** to be cut down each month. Nearly all of these single-use cups are not recyclable or compostable. When they break down in the landfill, they release methane, a greenhouse gas that, in the short term, has 72 times the heat-trapping power of carbon dioxide.



Single-use bottled water: Americans buy more than **half a billion bottles** of water every week. Each bottle requires **one-fourth of a bottle of oil** to produce. In one year, it takes **17 million barrels of oil** to make those bottles, more than three times as much oil as was dumped in the Gulf of Mexico during the BP oil spill. The production, transportation and disposal of these bottles contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. Despite the fact that they're recyclable, every year Boulder County buries **2 million pounds of plastic water bottles** and soda bottles in our landfills.

Single-use checkout bags: Boulder County throws away nearly **350,000 single-use plastic and paper bags** every day. The production of both plastic and paper bags contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and air and water pollution.

Single-use foam take-out containers: Americans trash more than **350,000 tons of polystyrene** every year. The plastic foam releases toxins as it breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces. Those pieces never going away. Polystyrene is made from hazardous chemicals and is among the nation's top 25 toxic air pollutants and ozone destroying compounds. Some of these toxic chemicals can leach into our food and drink.

"These items such as paper coffee cups from virgin trees and polystyrene take-out containers don't have to be made in the first place," said Eric Lombardi, Executive Director of Eco-Cycle. "We can continue to eat, buy clothes and have fun *and* reduce global warming, but it is ultimately the choices we make as individuals, businesses and government that will have a tremendous impact on the future quality of life for our children."

Eco-Cycle has calculated that if all Boulder County residents were to avoid single-use paper coffee cups for 30 days, we would collectively save enough paper to make a trail from Denver to Salt Lake City. Similarly, if all of Boulder County were to say "no" to bottled water for 30 days, we would save close to 3,000 barrels of oil, enough to drive a car around the world 44 times. If all Boulder County residents were to skip single-use plastic and paper bags for 30 days, we would save enough energy to heat 74 homes for a year. If, after 30 days of the challenge, Boulder County residents committed to making reuse a permanent part of their lifestyle, we could collectively save more than 4,500 trees, 32,000 barrels of oil and enough energy to heat nearly 900 homes a year.

In addition to the personal challenge to choose to reuse for 30 days, Eco-Cycle will be reaching out to businesses and government agencies to take their own reuse challenge. They will ask retail businesses like coffee shops, restaurants, and stores to offer reusable cups and containers first, to reward those bringing their own mugs, containers or bags, and to ask customers first before offering single-use items such as napkins, straws, cutlery and chopsticks. They will also work with local government offices to strengthen their reuse policies.

To learn more about Eco-Cycle's *I Choose to Reuse* campaign and the 30-Day Challenge, please visit <http://www.ecocycle.org/ichoosetoreuse>.

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