



Plastic grocery bags made from polyethylene(a derivative of petroleum) proliferate our city and the world. These bags line our streets, trees, parks, and end up in our oceans, lining marine animal stomachs. According to the United Nations Environmental Programme report, Marine Litter: A Global Challenge, these bags are one of the top ten worst polluters our contemporary world has known.

The Bags for the People bag making workshops address the plastic bag problem in a fun, creative, and hands on way. We educate about the negative impact of plastic bags, but more importantly, the positive impact of making and using reusable bags out of repurposed materials such as old clothes and sheets. We will teach each student the valuable skill of sewing allowing them to sew their own bag during the workshop and showing them that they have the skills and “know-how” to make a difference.

Contact:

Glenn Robinson

714.906.1701

glenn@bagsforthepeople.org



1 Day K - 12 Program Structure

Bags for the People representatives travel to schools and community spaces to lead workshops with students ranging in age groups from grades K to 12. Bags for the People provides all materials and equipment necessary for a successful workshop; sewing machines, scissors, thread, and fabric. We encourage students to donate their old fabric or clothing as well, because of the intrinsic value this brings to re-purposing personal materials to construct the bags.

The workshop begins with an explanation of why we are doing what we are doing, discussing the environmental impact of plastic bags. We explore the solution of making reusable, cloth bags and how this is a positive reaction to the negative impact our “throw away” culture has had on the environment. We then show examples of bags we have already made and give a brief tutorial on the construction process, as well as an introduction to sewing on a machine.

After the introduction, we let the students dig through the fabric and clothing, helping them along the way to find suitable pieces and shapes for the particular bag they’d like to make. We then oversee the students on the sewing machines, guiding them further with sewing techniques, as well as how to thread the needle and bobbin. During the workshop, we work to facilitate a seamless flow between the cutting and sewing processes of bag making, from start to finish.

Ideally, we would like to follow up with at least one more workshop, providing another opportunity for the young people to practice what they previously learned.

Our goal with the workshops is to empower students with creative activism. We hope that we will inspire the students to continue to sew for themselves and others and to take an active role in life. We hope that we are able to connect the actions of each student to the community in which they live and the environment, and to show that they can have a positive impact on both.