



Celebrating Earth Day Everyday



PROVIDING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION TO
5,500 STUDENTS
EVERY YEAR

Empowering the Next Generation

As a kid, I didn't receive much of a formal environmental education. Instead, my environmental education came from experiences like hiking and skiing, gazing over miles of mountains, or kneeling on the ground, peering at rocks and bugs. From a young age, these experiences instilled in me a deep love for the natural world. When I went to college, it seemed natural to focus on environmental studies.

Within one semester, I was experiencing profound despair that weighed on me so heavily, that I almost changed my course of study. After reading David Wallace-Wells' *The Uninhabitable Earth*, I went to my faculty advisor angrily, asking how he could assign such a bleak reading to young adults. How were we supposed to face the future, hoping we could make a difference when it seemed there was nothing we could do? My advisor's response transformed my perspective on education and change. Now, as someone deeply dedicated to empowering future generations, I wish to share insight into helping children navigate environmental change.

My advisor presented a spectrum, with hope on one side and fear on the other. Finding a balance between these extremes is essential: excessive hope can create complacency, while overwhelming fear can lead to paralysis. The media bombards us with negative climate news, leaving us feeling powerless against corporations who disregard their responsibility to future generations. Fear is not difficult to find in our current environmental landscape. So, how do we find hope? In Park City, it's all around us. Witnessing children learning about and advocating for composting and sustainable practices, identifying wildlife at camps, and dreaming up renewable energy solutions in the classroom fills me with hope every day.

At Recycle Utah, we confront the urgency of our environmental challenges transparently. We educate our students about issues such as decreasing landfill space, dwindling snowfall, and escalating air pollution. However, we always conclude our lessons with a message of hope and solutions. Empowering children to recognize environmental problems while providing them with the tools to address them is essential. Had I received such an education growing up, I wouldn't have experienced the shock and despair I experienced in college. I would have understood that our world is in crisis, but that there are solutions to turn the situation around.

As parents or educators, preparing children for a future in a changing world requires immersing them in nature, encouraging observation, and fostering critical thinking. It involves infusing their world with hope through positive stories of individuals effecting change and encouraging local action. Prepare them for the realities of the future. Prepare them to think creatively, act responsibly, and care for their home. When I think of the hope and fear spectrum, I find the biggest beacon of hope in children. If we prepare them for their future on a changing planet, then I truly believe that we can all create a world we are proud to call ours.

Chelsea Hafer
Education Coordinator, Recycle Utah

Join Us for Our
Earth Day Celebration

in support of our Education Program

BUY TICKETS HERE:



recycleutah.org/event/earthday

Twisted Fern

Monday, April 22

5:00 to 8:00 PM

2023 MATERIALS PROCESSED



3.4 MILLION POUNDS FROM 45 DIFFERENT MATERIALS were collected, sorted, and diverted from the landfill.



2,253 RESIDENTS BROUGHT 57,190 POUNDS of hazardous waste to two collection events to be properly disposed of.



68,825 POUNDS OF NON-RECYCLABLE MATERIAL REUSED through our Warehouse Thrift Store.



“Another successful year in the books, and I’m excited for 2024 alongside my dedicated team as we continue recycling and reusing almost four million pounds annually of our community’s natural

resources. I look forward to a new home for Recycle Utah that accommodates our growth, allowing us to expand our collection capabilities, accept even more materials, and gather as a community.”

Troy Holding
Operations Director, Recycle Utah



A Tribute to the Nelsons

I started as the Executive Director of Recycle Utah in 1999. At that time, Recycle Utah was a sleepy organization with limited resources. The highlight of our day was seeing a car pull up, whereas now Recycle Utah has 400 recyclers at the Center daily.

In 1999, we occupied two of the four bus garages we have today; Park City and the Police Department occupied the others. The first day I started, I was told we needed to relocate. The Police Department said they’d never leave, but eventually, we managed to expand into those spaces. Over time, we began accepting all sorts of recyclables, such as all colors of glass, plastics, and metals. In the background, there was always the accountant guiding the growth of Recycle Utah.

Norm Nelson, our first accountant, was here even before I joined. We operated with one desktop and one opinionated printer. You’d often find Norm and me on pay day in front of the printer begging, pleading for it to print the paychecks. Norm’s patience, solid and stoic demeanor, and unique sense of humor—only understandable after spending a lot of time with him—was instrumental in shaping Recycle Utah into the organization it is today. He was unwaveringly present by my side and ensured that vital steps to the organization’s success were seen through. Norm provided invaluable lessons on running an organization effectively and served as a guiding force, keeping us on the right path.

Then along came Amber Nelson, Norm’s daughter, who was tech-savvy, had her accounting degree, and took over her father’s accounting firm with her partner Chris Hanson, making it Nelson & Hanson Accounting. We were growing and she brought fresh perspectives and creative ideas that were essential. Amber helped us buy a new computer, printer, and even a punch-in system. She helped us develop the first iteration of Recycle Utah’s website. I was not technologically adept and was always afraid the computer was going to scream at me; she was patient and taught me how to use it. With her help, we got better at handling all the paperwork that came with being the best nonprofit organization we could be. As Nelson & Hanson Accounting grew with Amber’s expertise and intellect, so did Recycle Utah.

A nonprofit’s success is often the result of hard-working individuals who play pivotal roles in the background, and this holds true for Recycle Utah. Because of our accountants, Norm and Amber Nelson, Recycle Utah evolved into the organization it is today. Norm has since retired, and Amber is transitioning to support another organization in it’s success. We will always be grateful to the Nelsons for their invaluable support in Recycle Utah’s success, all from our small back office at the Center.

Insa Riepen
Executive Director 1999-2017, Recycle Utah

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Thank You

TO OUR 2023 SUPPORTERS

It is only through your continued support that we are able to provide these invaluable services to Park City and Summit County residents.



recycleutah.org/donate/2023supporters



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