



Hi, my name is Peter

TEAM EFFORT KEEPS WASTE TO A MINIMUM

Anyone who has been at UBC's Okanagan campus for any amount of time has met Peter.

With a big smile and a ready handshake, Peter has greeted thousands of people on campus over the years as he spends his days gathering recyclable materials that are then sent to area recycling plants. During his time at the university, Peter has helped divert tons of material from the landfill and is a key contributor to the campus-wide recycling program.

Peter works at UBC's Okanagan campus through the Kelowna and District Society for Community Living. The KDSCL is a not-for-profit advocacy organization, governed by a volunteer board of directors that provides services to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Al King, facilities manager, brought KDSCL to campus almost 20 years ago and the society members have been fastidiously collecting all manner of recyclables ever since.

"It's really neat. A lot of them have been here a long time," says King, who speaks with an obvious fondness for the workers who take great pride in their work, even taking the time to separate items like refundables, into appropriate containers.

"They are an extremely hard-working crew," says King. "They take their duties and tasks very seriously."

Charisse Daley, KDSCL executive director, says there is a definite bond between the KDSCL clients and the university staff and faculty.

"We've been involved for many, many years," says Daley. "The partnership we have has been wonderful."

The KDSCL has nine people working part-time at the Okanagan campus who look forward to coming to work.

Their job may be to collect the recyclable materials, but their daily routines also provide a bit of a social outlet for the workers and between emptying bins full of recyclable materials, they often take a few minutes to chat with their university co-workers.

"The UBC staff and professors have been great. It's been a wonderful experience," says Daley. "The staff have been so welcoming. They really are like co-workers."

Along with its commitment to being environmentally responsible, UBC's Okanagan campus is also mindful of its corporate social responsibility to contribute to the community.

Daley says she applauds the efforts of the university in recycling as much material as possible and in working with KDSCL to deliver its services.

King says the campus also actively recycles Styrofoam and is working with a local inventor to recycle the material rather than dump it in the landfill. In one year, 120 cubic yards of Styrofoam was sent to the inventor who compresses the material and turns it into a form of gravel that can be used for drainage applications.

Rather than see wood pallets thrown on the landfill pile, King has arranged to send them to a business in Armstrong where they are made into lawn furniture.

UBC has numerous recycling activities to preserve natural resources, save energy and reduce the amount of solid waste generated on campus and sent to the local landfill.

This year, the composting program went campus-wide with yellow bins set up in every building to collect waste. The composting program collects 2,000 pounds of kitchen organics each month, plus another 1,000 pounds of organic waste from the rest of the campus. Composting drop off containers can be found next to the recycling stations on the first floor of every building on campus.

Revenue generated by the cardboard recycling goes directly back into the composting program and King has plans to install a second composter this summer.

UBC's Okanagan campus has extended its recycling services to include all types of paper, plastics, aluminum and special items including batteries, fluorescent bulbs and ink cartridges.

There are approximately 9,000 people on campus on any given day which generates a significant amount of waste. The vision of UBC's Okanagan campus is to minimize the waste stream to become a near zero-waste campus, eliminating materials used that end up in the garbage, and diverting the "waste" stream into the recycling bin and into products that can be used again and again.

To help achieve this goal, offices and classrooms are equipped with blue bins for office paper, cardboard and other paper products. Additional recycling stations for refundable materials and other items can be found throughout the campus as well. ●