

# Aggie Eco-Reps: Engaging students in sustainability initiatives

Kristianna Bowles

Graduate Assistant Sustainability Coordinator  
Texas A&M University



# History

- 2010 - Aggie Green Fund grant to create a position for students to take out recycling
- 2011 - 1st Round of recruitment and outreach
- 2012 - Received training from Office of Sustainability and Utility & Energy Services
- 2013 - Became a recognized, independent student organization
- 2014 - Residential Housing Association (RHA) mandated each hall elect an Eco-Rep
- Today - 80 members representing 25 residence halls and off-campus students



# What is an Eco-Rep and the AER?

- Selection process of Hall Eco-Reps
  - Elected through hall community councils
    - Engage with their residence hall and community council
    - Required to attend AER weekly meetings
    - Serve on 1 of 3 committees
- 3 Committees
  - Campus Events
    - Designs, creates, and facilitates on-campus events that promote sustainability
  - Education
    - Knowledge bringers to students (bulletins, programs), manages volunteers and advertising for events
  - Membership/Fundraising
    - Plans parties, creates meeting activities, take meeting notes



# Sustainability Retreat and Weekly Meetings

- Retreat
  - Day-long retreat for members and exec board
  - Knowledge on offered programs
  - How to educate peers
  - Explains how the AER works/rep duties
- Meetings
  - Every Sunday at 9pm
  - Guest speakers
  - Committee brainstorming sessions
  - Interactive sessions
  - Documentaries and videos



# Connection with Residence Life

- Dr. Carol Binzer
  - 1 of 7 department sponsored organizations
  - Works closely with the Res Life GASC
    - Planning events
    - Liaison between Residence Life and AER
    - Helping implement and tracks grants
      - Light switch stickers, water bottle filling stations, power strips
- Brandon Carlson
  - Advisor and Coordinator of Residence Life II
- Prepares bulletin boards and programs for Resident Advisors





# Programs

- Requested by RAs and other student organizations and presented by AER members
- Life of a Water Bottle
  - discussing the different phases of constructing, filling, distributing, using, and recycling plastic water bottles
- Carbon Footprint Investigators
  - Interactive media presentation on the carbon footprint that each student has on their surrounding environment



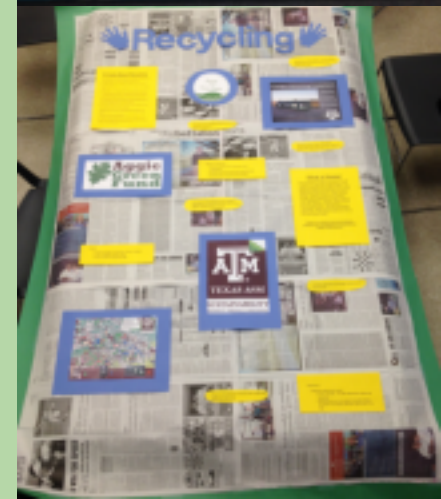
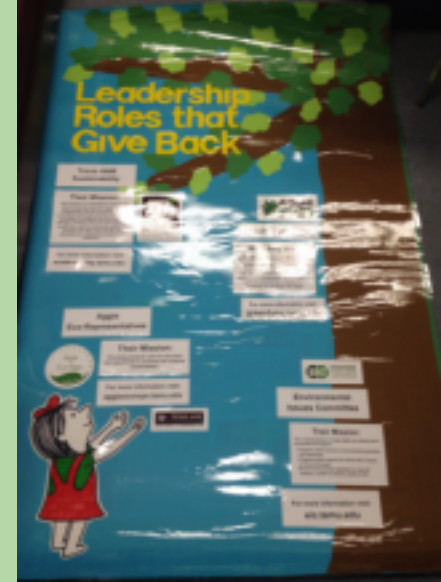
# Programs

- **Time for a CHANGE**
  - discussing financial sustainability, and how college students can better budget their expenses
- **Enough is Enough (2 separate parts)**
  - **Part I** - analyzing food waste on a college campus, and how college students can utilize dining centers more effectively to ensure that excess food is not thrown away
  - **Part II** - food ethics/insecurity, campus organizations that work to diminish these issues



# Bulletin Boards

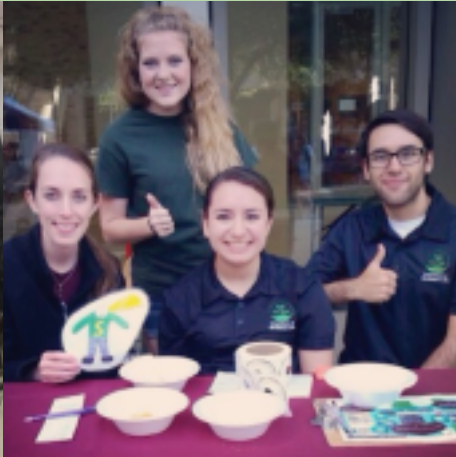
- Resident Advisors are able to “check out” these
- Topics
  - Recycling
    - Brief overview of recyclable materials (different locations on campus for materials and BVR)
  - Leadership Roles that Give Back
    - On campus organizations that promote sustainability and give back to the community
  - Financial Sustainability
    - Budgeting, understanding credit and debt, etc.





# Social Media

- Sustainable Stanley!
  - AER Mascot
  - Based off the children's book character Flat Stanley
  - Each week a new member carries Stanley with them
  - Photos of Stanley doing sustainability-related things are uploaded to AER Instagram



# Service

- Project Clean Plate
  - 3 day event hosted with Chartwells to measure food waste in all-you-can-eat dining facilities
- Stream Clean
  - Fall semester event where students sign up to clean streams on campus
- Big Event
  - Whole day, student-run service project where Aggies give back to the Bryan-College Station community
- Aggie Replant Day
  - Environmental service event where students plant hundreds of trees



# Student Engagement

- Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) Conference
- Tours of the Central Utility Plant
- Campus Resource tables
  - Sustainability Day
  - Texas Recycles Day
  - Earth Day
- Kyle Field Clean-up
- Aggie Green Fund grants



# Student Engagement (cont'd)

- Sustainability Month (October)
  - Planting Maroon Bluebonnets
- Sustainability themed holiday parties
  - Halloween - costumes made from recycled/thrifted materials
  - Christmas - sustainable gifts with explanation of how they're sustainable
- AER Rewards (min. 7 meetings)
  - AER T-shirt → 1st semester
  - AER Polo → 2nd semester
  - Tumbler w/ AER decal → 3rd semester



## Aggie Eco-Reps (AER)

- Facebook: Aggie Eco-Reps
- Instagram: @aggieecoreps
- Twitter: @AggieEcoReps
- Website: <http://www.aggieecoreps.com/>
- Email: [AggieEcoReps@gmail.com](mailto:AggieEcoReps@gmail.com)



## Res Life Sustainability

- Facebook: Aggies Going Green
- Instagram: @tamureslife
- Twitter: @TAMUResLife
- Website: <http://reslife.tamu.edu/living/sustainability/>
- Email: [sustainability@housing.tamu.edu](mailto:sustainability@housing.tamu.edu)

