

Recycling

The Blue box: 25 Years Old and still going strong...

An entire generation has grown up with the blue box as part of the family. For millions of people in Ontario, recycling has become as routine as brushing teeth and shoveling the driveway.

The blue box is about diverting from landfill the natural resources we use to make consumer products and packaging so they can be recycled into new products. Recycling decreases demand for landfill space, saves energy, and reduces greenhouse gases.

Did you know?

- The blue box is a made-in-Ontario concept.
- It was started in 1981 by a coalition comprised of environmental, beverage and industry innovators
- It began as a Pilot Project in Kitchener, Ontario. A container was needed for householders to put recyclables at curbsides.
- Delegations from around the globe converged in Ontario to see how it worked.
- In 1989, Ontario's blue box system won the first ever United Nations Environmental Award for its unique contribution to fighting pollution.
- Today almost all of Ontario's 4.6 million household have access to recycling systems.
- Between 1996 and 2003, the amount of recyclables recovered in Ontario increased by 47% (Population growth was 27%).
- In 2004, we recycled nearly 824, 000 tonnes of material, representing about 55% of the 1.5 million tonnes of printed paper and packaging estimated to be generated within Ontario households.
- By 2008, Ontario's environmental ministry has a target of 60%.
- A cost-sharing arrangement has been made between municipalities and industry
- Annual fees from companies go to Stewardship Ontario. They distribute money (\$81 M. so far) directly to municipalities and organizations that operate blue box programmes.

It is safe to say that at 25 years of age, Ontario's blue box programme is here to stay. And while it has accomplished a great deal, it's also fair to say there is more work to do.