

# Pacific Northwest Green Friends

Looking at Nature and observing it's selfless way of giving, we can become aware of our own limitations. That will help to develop devotion and self-surrender to God.

Amma



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## December Greetings

My own litter pick up hours have decreased so much during the last part of this year. I hope to do more in 2013 or maybe even this month. My desire is there, but circumstances really curtailed that part of my life for a while. I have a feeling that may be true of many of our members as our hour totals are down and we haven't had new members in three months. Perhaps in 2013 satsangs will plan some work parties! Kick Butt Day is coming up again in March and that is a perfect opportunity for a work party.

Last month we presented Amma's new environmental project InDeed in the newsletter. We have been asked to commit to various aspects of protecting Mother Nature by clicking on a "Count Me In" button on the InDeed webpage <http://www.embracingtheworld.org/indeed/>.

When I went to the InDeed web page last week, I noticed that the number of commitments that have been made are very low, especially considering it is a worldwide project. **Perhaps the Pacific Northwest devotees could help move that project along by clicking on the segments that you already do.** For me that was vegetable gardening. Afterwards, look to see if there are any other areas you are willing to focus on.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter!

Karuna

Green Friends is a global grassroots environmental movement which promotes environmental awareness and local participation in conservation efforts throughout the world.

Green Friends is one of the projects of Embracing the World, a not-for-profit international collective of charities founded by internationally known spiritual and humanitarian leader, Mata Amritanandamayi (Amma)

For more information about Pacific Northwest Green Friends Projects write Maheswari at [PNWGreenFriends@gmail.com](mailto:PNWGreenFriends@gmail.com)

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# Pacific Northwest Litter Project

## Litter Project Membership

As of November 30, 2012, we had 272 members.  
0 new members joined in November.

("Members" are individuals who signed up for the project or who have participated in work parties.)

## Litter Project Hours

In November 2012, 37 members and their guests reported picking up 112.69 hours of litter.

(The statistics below relate to members who report having picked up litter. They do not include those who do not report or who reported 0.)

Members Average: 3.04 hours

Range 1 minute to 23 hours

Median: 1 hour

The group has picked up 2678.61 hours of litter since the project began in July 2011!



## Art Projects from Recycled Items

Submitted by Sri Lalita on Vashon

Katie Lewandowski works with students to create holiday ornament inspired by glass-blowing artist Dale Chihuly. Students utilize recycled materials to replicate a faux glass chandelier filled with magnificent colors and beautiful texture. This surprisingly easy project is made from plastic water bottles and paper towel/toilet paper tubes.

## Aluminum Can Art

Submitted by Ajayya Godsey in Olympia

[http://www.visualnews.com/2012/12/01/incredible-sculptures-made-from-aluminum-cans/?utm\\_source=VisualNews&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=19fa7b075b-RSS\\_EMAIL](http://www.visualnews.com/2012/12/01/incredible-sculptures-made-from-aluminum-cans/?utm_source=VisualNews&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=19fa7b075b-RSS_EMAIL)



# Stories and Reflections

## From Kalavathi in Seattle:

After Amma's programs in Detroit I went to New York to spend time with my family. My mom has been inspired by my picking up garbage and now she does it with me. We went to pick up my 6 year old niece Lina Louise from her school in Tribeca, and cleaned up the garbage strewn courtyard, making it nice in no time at all. One of the mothers came up and gave us the biggest heart-felt thanks- it was really wonderful! It's so rewarding, and one gets a good workout with all the squats and lunges too! :-)

## From Krista in Idaho:

I am very aghast at the amount of litter produced by this system. All that is in the stores today will one day be thrown out. Where I live in Northern Idaho people are allowed to throw out a truck load per day for free, as it is paid through taxes. People are not required to recycle. I think people will only lighten their load of garbage if there is a price per pound disposal fee. All I can do is help pick up a tiny fraction of the earth's trash, but I am glad to do what I can to make my street prettier. Thanks for helping too!

## From Anugha in India:

This year I have been one of the lead teachers of an after school program called Roots and Shoots (An environmental awareness youth group inspired by Jane Goodall check out [www.rootsandshoots.org](http://www.rootsandshoots.org)). The students in this group have been working to teach the school community about the importance of taking care of the environment and they have specifically been promoting paper recycling practices at our school. The students meet weekly and have made informative power point presentations, posters to put up around the school and they are now working on making a video to show the school community. One specific concern that the Roots and Shoots group has been working on is the use of paper cups at our school. Being a school in hot, hot India there are water dispensers all over campus. Each water dispenser is laden with tons of paper cups.

The problem with having paper cups is that they get used not only for single drinks of water but also as food sharing distributors and even as sand toys! Our school community is oblivious to the fact that the purchase of all of these paper cups is essentially taking money and throwing it in the garbage! A few years ago the members of Roots and Shoots collected data about the usage of paper cups at our school and found out that every year we go through about 1 million paper cups and spend over \$12,000 a year on them. It is our goal to eradicate the use of paper cups on campus by the end of the year and instead encourage all community members to bring a reusable water bottle!

## From Jeff in Seattle:

November's Mung Bean sprouting article was very practical, especially as we head into winter. Sprouting is an excellent way to have fresh homegrown greens throughout the winter.

When I was researching sprouting, I found [www.sproutpeople.org](http://www.sproutpeople.org). I bought a stackable tray set from them called the Sprout Master. I have three sprout trays that I can start at every other day intervals and then harvest at about the same interval. The trays have more growing area than your typical sprouting jar and can produce abundant sprout crops. Also in my research I discovered that sprouts can be more nutrient rich than full grown vegetables and that there is a group of raw vegans called Sproutarians that only eat sprouts. Maybe invest in a few extra trays for your Sprout Master if you go Sproutarian.

## From Karuna in Seattle:

When my basement started leaking badly during the last storm, I sopped up the mess, but realizing there was nothing I could do in the moment to stop it, decided to go to my normal Monday Pilates class. As I walked towards the studio in the pouring rain, I noticed that the street in front of the building was flooding. I realized that leaves had completely blocked a storm drain so I stooped down moved them away from the drain. Once the leaves were removed, water started pouring into the drain at an incredible rate. It reminded me of how a small action on our part can make a big difference.



# Sabarimala Clean up 2012

In 2010 Amma made a pledge to clean up India. The Amala Bharatam Campaign or ABC formed shortly thereafter.

In 2011, the Kerala State government asked Amma to clean up Sabarimala, the destination of a yearly pilgrimage by devotees of Sri Ayyappa. Each year 45 to 50 million people participate in the pilgrimage, making it the largest pilgrimage in the world. In the 2011 cleanup, 5000 of Amma's devotees from Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu participated. Participants varied from 18 years of age to more than 80 years. During a 72 hour period, the group picked up 50,000 bags of trash. The trash had been dumped by pilgrims over two decades.

In November 2012, the government again asked Amma if send volunteers to clean. This time 3,200 volunteers participated in a two-day work party. They included ashramites, devotees from southern India and Amrita University students & staff.

At the end of the second cleanup, attention was directed towards finding ways to get the pilgrims and the local Sabarimala residents to take care of the area themselves. Swami Jnanamritananda Puri, the swami from Amma's ashram who was in charge of the project, said that "Amma teaches us that cleaning the environment is worshiping the Lord. Sanatana Dharma sees all elements and aspects of nature as the manifestation of God. To pollute nature is literally spitting on God's face." He said the our mindset should change and lessons of environmental cleanliness should be imparted to the students from first standard onwards. He lamented cleaning for cleaning's sake is of no use and is in effect a futile attempt. He reminded that throwing and littering waste materials in and around Lord Ayyappa's holy garden is tantamount to throwing these waste matters directly on to the face of Lord Ayyappa and all concerned authorities should try to make an awareness among devotees regarding this.



You can see 4 videos of the 2012 Sabarimala clean up at: <http://e.amritapuri.org/abc/archives/869>