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Category: Waste Reduction

Promotion Type: Other

Tap In 2016

The State University of New York at Oswego launched the **Tap in! 2016** campaign at the start of Recyclemania this year. **Tap In! 2016** aims to reduce plastic waste through the use of analytics, education and infrastructure on campus. Partnering with the company Cupanion, SUNY Oswego's Sustainability Office distributed over 2,500 reusable water bottles and over 1,500 reuse-tracking stickers in a program aimed to give students the opportunity avoid disposable single-use water bottles and track their impact.

Participants, including students, faculty and staff members, were given a plastic reusable bottle – or, in the case of those who already owned one, a tracking sticker – and encouraged to download the Cupanion Rewards smart phone app, as well as sign off on our campus challenge to avoid disposable plastic water bottles for the eight weeks of Recyclemania. The Cupanion app allowed the participant to then scan the bottle or sticker whenever they refilled the bottle, tracking the number of single-use bottles kept from the waste stream. Participants were then entered to win prizes from the Sustainability Office, Auxiliary Services on campus and even through Cupanion itself. These prizes included hooded sweatshirts, glass water bottles, free beverages and gift cards to retail businesses.

In addition to allowing students to track the impact of their own efforts, the Cupanion app also showed the participants the overall campus-wide impact by keeping track of the number of water bottles refilled on campus from the onset of the campaign. Everyone who downloaded the app has had the opportunity to watch our campus-wide numbers grow daily and seen how many disposable water bottles they have, as a group, kept from the waste stream.

Throughout the program, the main goal has remained the same: to reduce plastic waste and empower students with their own measurable actions. However, as the campaign has developed, the means has shifted. At first, the office focused on distributing water bottles so students had an alternative to single-use plastic. The bottles were being used, but the trackable numbers were not reflecting the distribution or the number of signed commitments. After a few weeks, the office shifted focus to communicating the benefits of downloading the app, as well as increasing the frequency and value of incentives in order to better track waste reduction and encourage continued involvement.

Steps to prepare for Promotion

- The Office of Sustainability designed an overall look for the program. This included a branding design for the **Tap In! 2016** campaign .
- Stickers and water bottles were obtained from the Cupanion company. These stickers included barcodes and the **Tap In! 2016** campaign's logo, as well as access to and use of the Cupanion app.
- Marketing material including informational posters, digital signage, social media templates, online and tactile educational materials, creation of our **Tap In! 2016** banner, design of the pledge and the **Tap In! 2016** pledge stamp.
- Design, creation and procurement of Incentives, gifts and prizes including Sustainability office hoodies, Oswego notebooks made of renewable bamboo and recycled paper, glass water bottles (provided by Cupanion)
- Creation of the **Tap In! 2016** pledge. The pledge papers featured a hand-stamped Tap In graphic that, once it was signed by participants, were hung outside the Office of Sustainability, demonstrating campus involvement.



- The Office of Sustainability scheduled tabling in the campus center for each day the first week of recyclemania. Following, tabling was scheduled once a week for 6 weeks. In the 7th and 8th weeks of Recyclemania, tables were reserved twice a week to increase water bottle distribution and awareness of the program.
- In that first week, volunteers were enlisted to help the office interns table throughout the week. After that initial week, the office interns were scheduled to promote the campaign alone.

Resources and people involved

Our major resource for carrying out this campaign was our partnership with Cupanion. By partnering with this company we were able to provide students with designed water bottles, as well as stickers, gift card giveaways, and glass water bottles for the participants. The

partnership also allowed for the innovative tracking mechanism and incentives program (incentives were delivered via push-notification).

We also partnered with the campus Auxiliary Services provider to offer free hot and cold beverages as incentives for re-use and to promote the purchase of SUNY Oswego themed water bottles from their retail locations.

Another important resource was the recycled library paper. Paper from the recycling bins near the library printers was reclaimed and torn into individual pledge sheets that were hand stamped by our office interns using a handmade **Tap-in 2016** campaign stamp.

Our office made significant use of social media, celebrating with students who shared their **Tap In! 2016** stories on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. These students were tagged and congratulated by our office members and affiliates. In addition, these social media platforms were also used to share the ever-expanding success of the program, congratulating SUNY Oswego as a campus as our number of pledges, app downloads and re-filled water bottles continued to grow.

The student-run newspaper on campus, The Oswegonian, saw the success of the campaign and contacted us directly to write a story as well as shoot a short interview regarding the program. The story ran in the February 19th, 2016 edition of the newspaper, and both the story as well as the interview are listed on the online newspaper webpage.

Throughout the campaign, our office staff of dedicated interns has had volunteers from the Go Green Team, a campus sustainability club and members of Alpha Phi Omega, a community service fraternity on hand weekly to help with the promotion and events for **Tap In! 2016**. At the onset of Reyclemania, Cupanion representatives came to the campus to promote the app and the campaign. They gave out glass water bottles and encouraged downloads and usage of the app.

In addition to our partnership with Cupanion, SUNY Oswego has also taken part in the Fill It Forward campaign, sponsored by Cupanion. For every water bottle we purchased, the equal amount of fresh water (as contained by the bottle) was donated to one of the 780 million people worldwide in need of fresh drinking water.

Results of the Promotion

As an office we have seen student participation in the program increase through the 8 weeks of Reyclemania. This is visible through increased social media interactions, app downloads and the staggering number of scans, or refills, the campus community has accumulated.

The overall program has resulted in the following numbers:

Dates	Pledges Made	App Downloads	Refills	Weight
As of 2-8-16	0	0	0	0
As of 2-17-16	~1,250	?	6,938	90.194kg
As of 2-24-16	1,335	?	12,316	160.108kg
As of 3-2-16	1,399	?	15,416	200.408kg
As of 3-10-16	1,421	704	18,380	238.940kg
As of 3-17-16	1,470	726	20,077	261.001kg

*due to unforeseen technical difficulties, we were unable to track the number of app downloads in the first three weeks of the campaign.

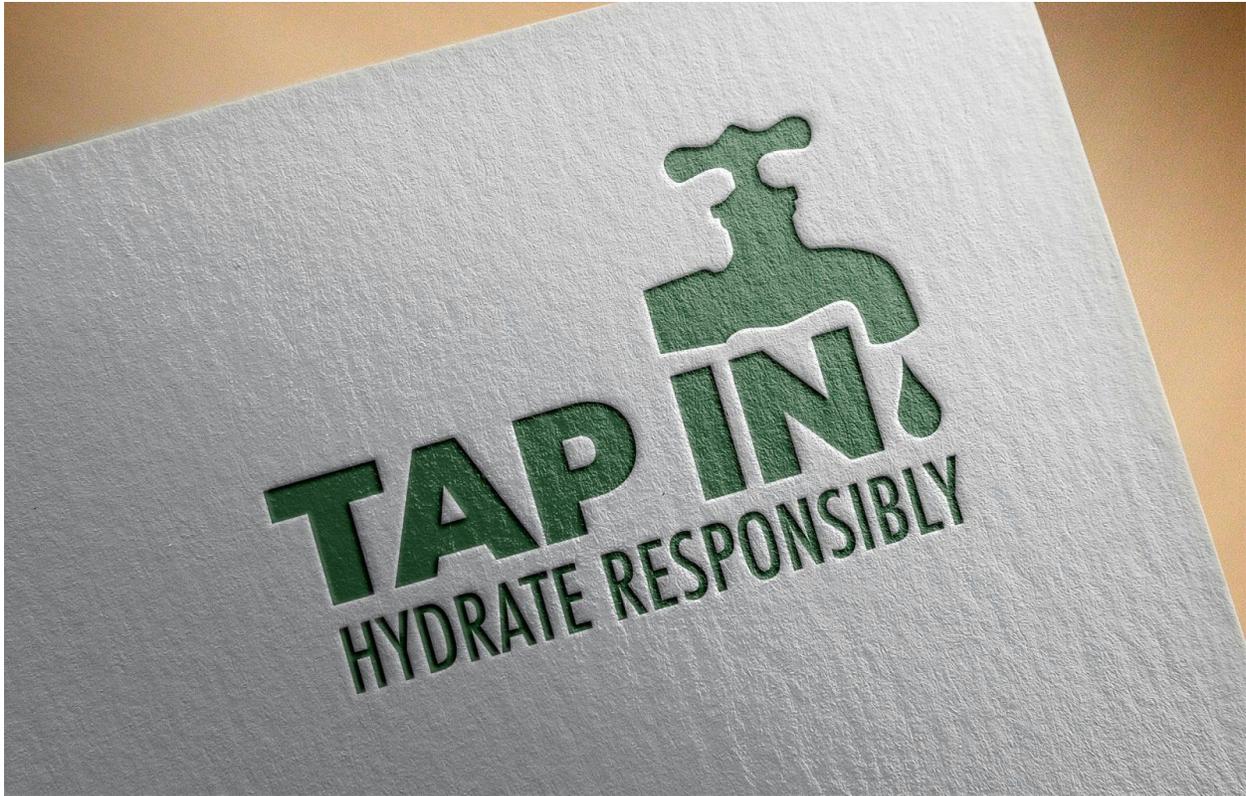
The week of April 21st through April is Spring Break on our campus and will not be tallied into our final numbers. However, if our numbers continue to grow in the manner that they have in our most recent weeks, we expect to finish our Recyclemania campaign in the low average of 22,00-23,000 plastic water bottles diverted from the waste stream.

What we would do differently in the future

The undisputed success of this campaign has allowed the Office of Sustainability to commit to running the tracking, promotion and incentivisation of this program, managed through Cupanion, throughout the coming academic year. Our intent is to make re-usable water bottles a part of the SUNY Oswego campus culture, and continually celebrate the re-user through prizes and social media accolades.

The primary focus of the program as we move forward through the remained of the Spring ‘16 semester will be to increase app downloads and usage among the participants. Our surveys have shown that of the students who have and use either our water bottles or their own, only about half of them are actively tracking their use through the app. While this is positive news in the sense that there are far more single-use water bottles being diverted from the waste stream than what we have measured thus far, we would like to be able to educate and encourage more usage through push notifications and rewards.

Additionally, we would like, in the future, to expand the educational component of this campaign to other forms of non-disposable packaging, such as re-usable hot-drink cups, food packaging and other avoidable waste sources.



I pledge to avoid purchasing disposable bottles and cups for the 8 weeks of **Recyclemania.**

I pledge to help #SustainOz February 8th to April 1st.





32 ounces of water is used in the production of one 12 ounce disposable plastic bottle

Take the pledge to reduce plastic waste



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CUPANION[®]
your eco drinking buddy

Sustainability
SUNY OSWEGO

FILL


SCAN

WIN





Why Pay More?



\$0.00



\$1.30

Did you know:

- The FDA regulations for purchased water and tap water are exactly the same.
- In most large scale bottle companies at least 25% of the water comes right from the tap.