

# Recycling? Think pink

New bins aim to raise money, awareness for breast cancer survivors



The Vancouver-based Pink Lemonade Project this week began selling pink recycle bins as its latest fundraiser. The bins, donated by Waste Connections, can be purchased with a minimum donation of \$200. All proceeds go to the Pink Lemonade Project.

By **Eric Florip**, Columbian Transportation & Environment Reporter

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More information about the Pink Lemonade Project is available [here](#).

Most people have seen the ubiquitous pink ribbons. The pink hats. Pink shirts or bracelets.

On Wednesday, a local nonprofit may have added a new entry to the list of items used to promote breast cancer awareness: Pink recycle bins.

More information about the Pink Lemonade Project is available [here](#).

The Vancouver-based Pink Lemonade Project began taking orders for the unusual bins Wednesday, kicking off a fundraiser that coincided with an event highlighting breast reconstruction rights for cancer survivors. BRAVE Day — Breast Reconstruction Advocacy Victory Event — drew a sometimes celebratory, sometimes somber gathering on the PeaceHealth Southwest Medical Center campus.

The event was organized by local physicians, breast cancer patients and residents. It marked a 1998 federal law requiring group health insurance plans that cover mastectomies to also cover breast reconstruction surgeries. Many described the procedure as a key step in a cancer survivor's physical — and emotional — recovery.

"We've been very slow to recognize what reconstruction has to offer," said Dr. Alden Roberts, chief medical officer for PeaceHealth. "This is incredibly critical work."

At Wednesday's gathering of least 50, a pink recycle bin sat adorned with white lights as attendees mingled in the plastic surgery office of Dr. Allen Gabriel — co-founder of the Pink Lemonade Project — and Dr. Brinda Thimmappa. The bins proved popular, with dozens of orders already placed by noon.

The bins, donated by Waste Connections, sell for a minimum donation of \$200. All of the proceeds go to the Pink Lemonade Project, which benefits breast cancer survivors through education and other resources.

The pink curb-side cans do more than raise money for a cause, said Rob Nielsen, Waste Connections' regional vice president. He hopes they'll also evoke a memory, an emotion for someone affected by breast cancer.

"The biggest goal," Nielsen said, "is to raise awareness."

Nielsen has seen cancer touch his own family. His wife's sister, Deedra, was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 29. She died in 2001, at age 36. She was never the same after the diagnosis, he said, and never had reconstruction surgery.

"She was never even given the option," Nielsen said.

Waste Connections may offer as many as 200 of the pink recycle bins at first, Nielsen said, depending on how many orders are placed this week. Customers will receive the same size as the blue bins they're replacing, either 65 gallons or 95 gallons.

The company doesn't plan to offer any other limited-edition cans besides the Pink Lemonade version, Nielsen said. Waste Connections doesn't want an "Easter egg effect" of multicolored bins lining Clark County's streets, he said.

Among Wednesday's presenters were three Northwest pageant winners who came to support the Pink Lemonade Cause. The last to speak was Desiree Quinn, Mrs. Clark County International.

Since earning her title last year, Quinn has made awareness of fibromyalgia her key focus. Quinn herself has the condition, characterized by long-term, bodywide pain and tenderness of joints, tendons and other tissues. But breast cancer has also touched her family, taking the life of her husband's aunt two years ago.

Quinn said she was happy to help promote a cause that means so much to so many women. And Wednesday's strong turnout only validates that importance, she said.

"There's a lot of people that believe in the program and want to help," Quinn said. "This is wonderful."

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