SPOTLIGHT on Sustainablility

Mattress Recycling by The Mustard Seed

"Rebuilding the lives of families and individuals while being environmentally responsible to our community"

What is The Mustard Seed?

The Mustard Seed has been a social service agency for over 25 years, dedicated to rebuilding the lives of families and individuals who have suffered disaster or personal tragedy. The Mustard Seed Furniture and Clothing Bank is the only furniture and clothing bank in Central Florida, providing household furnishings and clothing to those in need in an environmentally responsible way. Through its innovative recycling enterprise, the Mustard Seed reclaims materials including mattresses, appliances and clothes from the waste stream, recycling them for use or sale. The organization provides jobs and training for people who typically are hard to employ. After 26 years of service, the Mustard Seed continues to grow and evolve into a nonprofit that can be self-sustaining and able to adapt to the growing community's needs and fluctuating philanthropic climate.

Why is mattress recycling beneficial?

With over 150,000 hotel rooms in Orange County, mattress recycling provides a green, sustainable solution for safe and secure disposal of mattresses. Mattresses are bulky, which is a nuisance to solid waste handlers and do not compact well in landfills. Since its inception, the Mustard Seed mattress recycling program has successfully recycled over 30,000 mattresses, saving 180,000 square feet of landfill space—equivalent to over two football fields. Reusing these mattresses helps fund the purchase of items for needy families while increasing our sustainable footprint at the same time—a win-win for the community and the environment.

How are mattresses recycled?

The recycling process involves stripping a mattress down to its individual components; the quilted topper, polyurethane foam, steel springs, wood frames and the interior pad. Those components are baled and sold for use as carpet pads, mulch and shredded steel. About 85 to 90 percent of the contents of mattresses and box springs are recyclable.

Get involved! The Mustard Seed offers a variety of different opportunities for groups or individuals to make a difference. The Mustard Seed also accepts furniture and clothing donations at its warehouse. For more information, visit **www.mustardseedfla.org**.

Our HOME for Life

*For more information on Orange County's Sustainability Initiative, visit **www.ochomeforlife.net***