

ATLANTIC COUNTY RECYCLES



Fall/Winter 2024

FROM WASTE TO WONDER

*Atlantic County residents put creativity on display for
10th Annual ACUA Recycled Art Contest*

ACUA recently announced the winners of its 10th Annual Recycled Art Contest that invites the community to create artwork from trash or recycling. This year's contest brought in more than 125 pieces that ranged from cardboard unicorns to a purse made solely with soda can tabs.

"The art contest is a great opportunity to engage the community and start conversations about waste," said ACUA President Matthew DeNafo. "It's amazing to see the creativity, especially by the younger generations."

Judges for this year's contest were Michael Cagno, Executive Director of the Noyes Museum of Art of Stockton University, Sarah Lacy, Liaison of Event Planning and Promotion for Noyes, and Eduardo Jiménez, local artist and past winner who specializes in creating artwork from beach litter.

"The recycled art is not just a testament to talent, but a celebration of the beauty that can emerge from what once was discarded," said Cagno. "Each piece made me smile, knowing that people still care about the environment."

"It was a pleasure to see the breadth of mixed-media work by local children, adults, and groups in this year's contest," said Lacy. "There was a lot of imagination exhibited in the interpretive use of recycled materials, and I left inspired by the connection between art and sustainability."

The contest required all works be created using at least 75% recycled or trash materials. The pieces were first submitted and displayed



Sea-Cycle by Kathy Nichols - 3rd Place 18+



Cardboard Portrait by Washington Ave. Student - 2nd Place Group

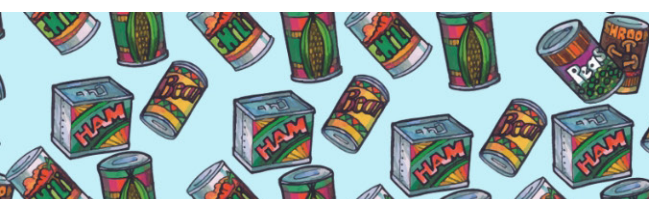
at local libraries throughout the county, and later moved to the ACUA Recycling Center.

The winners were honored during ACUA's America Recycles Day Celebration on Saturday, November 16.

"It was fun for me to see the extensive art exhibition for the 2024 Recycled Art Contest. I was honored to be a judge this year, and I am so proud to be a part of a community that works to combat plastic pollution while emphasizing sustainability and creativity," said Jiménez.

ACUA would like to thank all artists, contest judges, and the following libraries for their support and participation in the contest: Atlantic County Library System, Atlantic Cape Community College Libraries, Linwood Public Library, Otto Bruyns Public Library of Northfield, and Stockton University Richard E. Bjork Library.

A full list of contest winners is listed inside on page 2.



FOOD DRIVE
December 2-13

WINNERS OF THE 10TH ANNUAL ACUA RECYCLED ART CONTEST

AGES 8 & UNDER

- 1st Place - The Fish Jump by Ethan Stoffel
- 2nd Place - Ref Recycles Bot by Luca Adams
- 3rd Place - Baby Mylo Gourdon Hatching by McKenna Wramage
- Honorable Mention - Girl Empowerment by Aubrey Moore
- Honorable Mention- Coco the Chicken by Alejandro Ruiz

AGES 9 - 13

- 1st Place - Butterfly Garden by Olivia Smith
- 2nd Place - Fabulous Flowers by Amalia Monclus
- 3rd Place - Trees Planted by the Waters by Omuwa Izah
- Honorable Mention - Lemon the Horse by Maddie Hauger

AGES 14 - 17

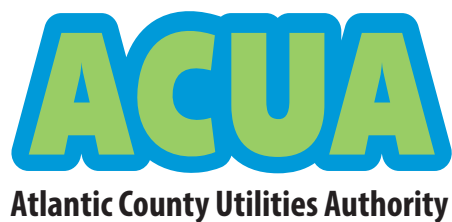
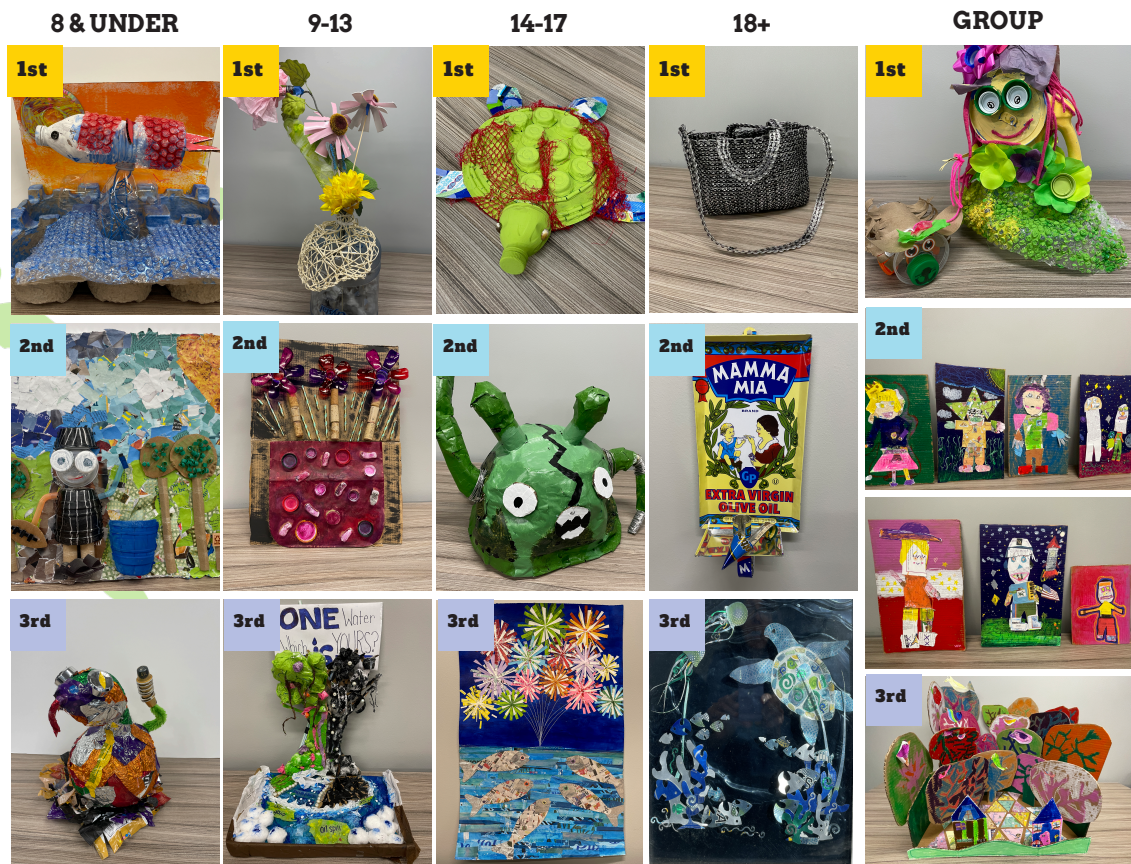
- 1st Place - Sea the Negligence by Madeline Torchia
- 2nd Place - The Trash Man by Connor Bald
- 3rd Place - Fish and Fireworks by Kayla Achamizo
- Honorable Mention - Jellyfish by Mia Germana

AGES 18 & OLDER

- 1st Place - Soda Can Purse by Maria Orengo
- 2nd Place - Candle Sconce with Snuffer by Mike Hitman
- 3rd Place - Sea-Cycle by Kathy Nichols
- Honorable Mention - "Beyond Ineffable" Diorama Art by Christina Matos-Hightower

GROUP

- 1st Place - Lola and Lollie Dog by Katie, Coral, Sequoia, and Phil Hodak
- 2nd Place - Cardboard Portrait Collages by Washington Avenue School Students in Pleasantville
- 3rd Place - Trees by Washington Avenue School Students in Pleasantville
- Honorable Mention - Seagull Mobile by Washington Avenue School Students in Pleasantville



The Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA) is responsible for enhancing the quality of life through the protection of waters and lands from pollution by providing responsible waste management services. The Authority is an environmental leader and will continue to use new technologies, innovations and employee ideas to provide the highest quality and most cost effective environmental services.

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Vice President of Administration and Finance/CFO
- GARY CONOVER
Vice President of Solid Waste
- TOM GANARD
Chief Engineer
- JOSEPH PANTALONE
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- JAMES ROCCO
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609.272.6950 | www.acua.com

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HOLIDAY COLLECTION NOTICE



ACUA will not perform collections on Thanksgiving, Christmas or New Year's Day.

ACUA's Environmental Park, including the transfer station, recycling center, and composting area will be closed on these holidays. See acua.com for details.



DID YOU KNOW?

American households produce 25 percent more waste between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day!



FOOD DRIVE

December 2-13



Scan for details

You put it out, we deliver!

Place a clearly marked bag of canned goods out on your recycling day between December 2 and 13, and ACUA crews will deliver your donations to the Community FoodBank of NJ in Egg Harbor Township.



MOST NEEDED ITEMS: Canned tuna, salmon, chicken, ham, soups, fruit, and vegetables, shelf-stable milk, peanut butter, pasta, boxed potatoes, rice, cereal, macaroni and cheese, diapers, and feminine hygiene products.

No glass, frozen items, cellophane, bottled water, or baby food!

ABSECON	December 9-13 (same day as recycling)
BRIGANTINE	December 9-13 (same day as recycling)
BUENA BOROUGH	Friday, December 6
BUENA VISTA TWP.	December 3-6 (same day as recycling)
CORBIN CITY	Thursday, December 5
EGG HARBOR CITY	Wednesday, December 11
EGG HARBOR TWP.	December 2-6 (same day as recycling)
ESTELL MANOR	Tuesday, December 10
FOLSOM	Monday, December 9
HAMILTON TOWNSHIP	December 9-13 (same day as recycling)
HAMMONTON	December 9-13 (same day as recycling)
LINWOOD	December 9-13 (same day as recycling)
LONGPORT	Monday, December 2
MARGATE	December 9-12 (same day as recycling)
MULLICA TOWNSHIP	December 9-12 (same day as recycling)
NORTHFIELD	December 2-6 (same day as recycling)
PLEASANTVILLE	December 2-6 (same day as recycling)
SOMERS POINT	Friday, December 13
VENTNOR	December 9-13 (same day as recycling)
WEYMOUTH TWP	Thursday, December 12

Atlantic City, Galloway and Port Republic can drop off donations at ACUA.



REDUCE METHANE BY COMPOSTING

*Food waste is a large contributor to methane gas production.
Composting is one simple way to make a positive impact.*

THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF FOOD WASTE

Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas because of its unique ability to trap heat in the atmosphere. Because of this, preventing methane emissions has been a top priority for environmental regulators and industries across the world, including the solid waste industry.

One major driver of methane production in landfills is food waste. When landfilled, food waste decomposes under anaerobic conditions, or without oxygen, which contributes to increased methane production.

Locally, food waste makes up 25% of Atlantic County's waste stream (by weight). ACUA's recent waste categorization study found it is the most prevalent material in both residential and commercial waste loads.

HOW ACUA CAPTURES METHANE

Methane makes up approximately 50% of the gases created from decomposing trash in the landfill. ACUA currently captures gases through an extensive pipeline and more than 120 collection wells. The gas is then sent to a flare that converts methane into less harmful carbon dioxide (CO₂). Required monitoring ensures methane emissions at the landfill meet state and federal regulations.

ACUA's Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) project -- the first at a landfill in NJ -- with South Jersey Gas and OPAL Fuels will build upon this system and capture even more methane gas. Once the project is operable in 2025, it will capture up to 95% of all methane emissions that would normally be handled by the flare and turn it into natural gas that can be used in area businesses and homes.

ACUA is also using data from its waste categorization study to explore other alternative waste technologies that could convert food waste, and other waste streams, into a renewable energy source. The Authority went through a request for qualification process and will be releasing a request for proposal to qualified vendors soon.

"There are many challenges, but also opportunities, for tackling food waste," said ACUA President Matthew DeNafo. "The RNG project, combined with our commitment to implementing a waste diversion technology and composting education will make a major dent in curbing methane emissions."

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Separating food waste at the source and composting at your home, school or business can greatly help reduce methane emissions. When food waste is composted, it decomposes with oxygen, or aerobically, and produces mainly carbon dioxide (CO₂), a less potent greenhouse gas.

Composting can be done using an open backyard pile, in a confined bin, or with worms indoors. ACUA can provide presentations on composting basics to interested residents, schools and businesses. The Authority will also offer its annual Master Composter course in February 2025.

We encourage interested individuals to visit our website, acua.com/homecompost, or contact us for assistance.

DO COMPOST THESE ITEMS :

- Vegetable and fruit scraps
- Breads, grains and pasta
- Coffee grounds and filters

- Tea bags
- Eggshells
- Grass clippings (untreated)

- Leaves
- Small branches, twigs, sticks
- Paper towels, shredded paper

BECOME A CERTIFIED MASTER COMPOSTER

Classes Begin February 2025



Master Composter Training Program is offered in partnership with the Rutgers Cooperative Extension at ACUA. Participants get in-depth instruction over seven courses, including a hands-on field trip. No prior experience is needed! Classes begin February 5, 2025. Participation fee is \$60.

To register, visit acua.com/compost.

WIN A COMPOSTER!

Two lucky residents can win a 128-gallon ACUA composter! Just fill out the form at acua.com/compostcontest by December 7, 2024. Only Atlantic County residents over 18 will be eligible.

TIPS TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE

MEAL PREP

Planning out your meals is a great way to reduce waste by only purchasing the food you need. Chopping and preparing veggies or fruit ahead of time makes them readily available and more likely to be eaten.

RECONSIDER USE-BY DATES

With the exception of some products, best-by and sell-by dates are created by manufacturers to provide an idea for when items will taste best, not when they will go bad.

PERFORM A WASTE AUDIT

Monitoring your waste stream is a great way to get a sense of how much food is being wasted in your home, school or business. Contact us for help!

EAT LESS DAIRY OR MEAT

Reducing your consumption of dairy and meat has an impact on methane production. Scraps from fruits, vegetables and grains can be composted, meat cannot.



COMPOST WITH WORMS



Composting with worms is a low-maintenance way to compost when you're short on space. All you'll need is a plastic tote with a lid, red wiggler worms (you can order online), torn strips of newspaper, and some food waste. Worm castings can be removed and used for garden fertilizer. This is a great project to start with kids!

Visit acua.com/worms for full instructions.

Reduce Waste:

COMPOST AT HOME

ACUA now sells home composters

\$60

Purchase at our GEO Admin Building at
6700 Delilah Rd. in Egg Harbor Township
M-F 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM



acua.com/homecompost



Microplastics Removal Project Opens at ACUA Wastewater Treatment Facility

ACUA recently celebrated the opening of its microplastics removal pilot project with PolyGone systems at its Wastewater Treatment Facility in Atlantic City. The pilot project is the first of its kind and aims to capture microplastics from treated effluent before it is released into the ocean.

PolyGone is a company founded by Princeton University graduates who developed a filter to tackle microplastic pollution. As they noted at the event, the team ap-

\$250,000 from the Pilot Clean Tech Demonstration Grant Program from the New Jersey Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology. This grant funding helped bring the project to life.

ACUA employees were instrumental in ensuring the system was installed and working properly.

The system is installed in the equalization basin where treated effluent passes through before heading out to the ocean. Microplastics that may be present in the basin can attach to the filters. The filters are then cleaned of the microplastics. The microplastics are collected and sent to a lab where they will be upcycled.

An accompanying educational pavilion is accessible to tour groups to help showcase the technology and provide information about microplastic pollution.

proached more than 100 sites, and ACUA was the only plant to welcome them. The team approached ACUA several years ago and have been working to refine their system ever since.

PolyGone received \$1.9 million in grant funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Sea Grant Program Marine Debris Challenge Competition and

Hamilton Township Receives Grant for New Recycling Carts, Automates Service

The Township of Hamilton recently switched to fully automated recycling service with help from The Recycling Partnership and ACUA.



The Township and ACUA applied for and received a grant from The Recycling Partnership, an organization committed to building a better recycling system in U.S. communities and states. The Township was selected to receive grant support because of its dedication to advancing recycling in the community.

"We are excited to provide Hamilton Township residents with recycling carts," said Mayor Art Schenker. "The carts will streamline collection, hold more recycling material and keep our streets cleaner on recycling day. This is a big win for our community."

Because of the grant, the Township was able to provide nearly 9,000 new 96-gallon recycling carts to residents for curbside, single-stream recycling collection.

Atlantic County communities that have already switched to carts have seen an increase in recycling rates, which also leads to a decrease in trash costs.

"Carts increase recycling rates, keep communities cleaner, and are safer for ACUA employees," said ACUA President Matthew DeNafo. "We were happy to assist Township of Hamilton in obtaining this grant and we look forward to serving the community with improved recycling collection."

ACUA Receives National Safety Award

The Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA) recently received the 2024 Best Safety Innovation Award from the Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) for its recent Slow Down to Get Around campaign that brought attention to New Jersey's Move Over Law and safe driving practices.

This recognition highlights ACUA's efforts to improve public safety awareness and protect waste and recycling collection workers on the road.



Safety and Risk Manager Janette Kessler accepted the award on behalf of ACUA at the SWANA WASTECon Conference in October.



Scan to watch the award-winning campaign video

Landfill Project Updates

A major expansion to ACUA's landfill gas collection and control system in Egg Harbor Township was recently completed. This included:

- 32 gas collection wells
- 2,500 linear feet (LF) of 18" header pipe
- 2,800 LF of 12" header pipe
- 500 LF of 8" header pipe
- 6,600 LF of 6" header pipe
- 12,000 LF of 2-3" air line
- 2 dewatering sumps

The additional wells and pipeline increase gas collection capacity in areas that are starting to produce gas as well as in regions where gas production is anticipated. The dewatering sumps prevent liquids from accumulating and improve gas flow.

By the end of November, a contract will be awarded for the permanent cap that will cover 16 acres of the landfill. The cap, funded with \$7 million in assistance from Atlantic County Government, will begin installation ahead of schedule in early 2025. The cap improves gas collection efficiency and reduces leachate production.

In addition, construction is underway on a renewable natural gas (RNG) project – the first of its kind at a landfill in New Jersey – in collaboration with South Jersey Gas and OPAL Fuels. This initiative will convert landfill gas and feed it into the natural gas pipeline, reducing flare emissions by up to 95%. It will be operational in 2025.

These continued investments in ACUA's landfill gas control and collection system are significant and will help to reduce the chance of odors migrating off-site now and into the future.



A drill rig installs a landfill gas collection well.

New gas collection pipe before it was installed.



The landfill wall under construction.

Filling the Gaps

The third phase of construction on the mechanically stabilized earthen berm, or landfill wall, project is nearing completion. The wall creates a wedge next to the existing side slope to maximize all available landfill space.

2025 Household Hazardous Waste Drop-Off Dates

Hazardous waste can pollute our local waterways and the environment. These items can also endanger sanitation workers or cause truck fires if placed in the trash. ACUA's Household Hazardous Waste Drop-Offs provide a safe and convenient option to properly dispose of common hazardous waste hiding in your cabinet, basement or garage.

All events are held at the ACUA Environmental Park at 6700 Delilah Road in Egg Harbor Township from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Save these dates for 2025: **March 22, May 31, July 12, September 6 and November 8.**

Is my item hazardous? Download RecycleCoach on your phone or visit acua.com to determine if your item is considered hazardous. Accepted items include antifreeze, auto care products, CFL light bulbs, fertilizer, cleaning products, glues and adhesives, oil-based paint, insecticide, pool chemicals, rechargeable batteries, spray paint, stains and more. Details on how to prepare items are available at acua.com/hhw.

A WORD ON LATEX PAINT



Latex paint is non-hazardous and does not need to be taken to a household hazardous waste drop-off.

Latex paint cans can be dried out and placed in your regular trash can. This can be accomplished using paint hardener sold at local hardware stores or by mixing with kitty litter and leaving to dry with the lid off.

Wet paint should not be placed in curbside bins as it can cause spills on neighborhood roads.

ATLANTIC COUNTY CLEAN COMMUNITIES

Local community groups, organizations, families and schools adopt county roads, school yards and parks to help keep our community clean. Join the effort! You can safely remove litter from roadsides, parks or school yards with our assistance. Visit: acua.com/adoptaroad to learn more.



1. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. 2. Absecon VFW Post 9462 Auxiliary 3. TD Bank
4. Hammonton Democratic Committee 5. Able Acres Farm 6. Team Reustle, In Memory of Slim
7. ACORN Association 8. Atlantic County Ruff Ryders 9. Republican Club of Mullica Twp.
10. C and R Appliance of Galloway 11. Atlantic County Umpires Association 12. In Memory of Steve Rooney

Groups Remove 179 Bags of Litter During Annual Fall Challenge



Able Acres Farm took home First Place in this year's Fall Litter Challenge.

The Atlantic County Clean Communities Program, administered by the Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA), recently selected winners of its 2024 Fall Litter Challenge. The challenge, held over a two-week period in October, encouraged teams to collect as much litter as possible for a chance to win a mini-grant.

First Place was awarded to Able Acres Farm as well as Patricia Fottrell, Second Place to Our Lady Star of the Sea School, and Third Place to Creative Gardeners.

Participants collected an impressive 118 bags of trash and 61 bags of recycling, making a significant improvement to local roads and communities. The top three teams received mini-grants of \$500, \$300, and \$100, respectively, in recognition of their dedication and hard work.

"Litter is hazardous to the well-being of Atlantic County residents, visitors, and wildlife," said Rebecca Turygan, Atlantic County Clean Communities Coordinator. "With 105 volunteers participating in cleanups, the Fall Litter Challenge saw fantastic engagement this year. We want to thank everyone for their commitment to making a difference."

Teams uncovered unusual items during their cleanups, including tires, a mop, a Magic 8-Ball, and even box springs. A special \$100 award was presented for the "Strangest Find," which went to the U.S. Submarine Vets for discovering a crab trap.

Since ACUA took over administration of the program in 2005, community support has been strong, with 60 percent of Atlantic County roadways adopted. In 2023 alone, the program hosted 368 cleanups, resulting in the removal of 1,752 bags of litter and recyclables across 464 miles of roadway.



Students from Our Lady Star of the Sea contributed to a cleaner environment and took home Second Place.

Concerned About the Environment? Register for the Rutgers Environmental Stewards Program



Region 5 Stewards attending the annual RES Impact Summit

If you want to help protect the environment in your community, but you're not sure where to start, then now is the time to join the Rutgers Environmental Stewards Program.

Learn from leading scientists and experts about what you can do to help solve environmental issues affecting New Jersey. Whether you're interested in climate change, habitat

protection, environmental justice, water quality, food waste, recycling and solid waste, or how to volunteer in your community, this program offers the tools and knowledge to take action!

Environmental Stewards is a certificate program offered through Rutgers Cooperative Extension. Classes are held Tuesdays beginning January 21 through May 13 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Most classes are held online, with additional field trips and in-person opportunities. Class fee is \$325 with an early bird discount for registrations made by December 31st. To become a Certified Environmental Steward, class participants complete a project of their choosing to put what they've learned into practice addressing environmental issues in their communities.

ACUA is a coordinating partner in the program. To learn more or to register, visit acua.com/stewards

Local Schools Perform Informative and Hands-On Waste Audits

ACUA recently joined forces with students and staff from Hammonton Middle School and William Davies Middle School to perform comprehensive waste audits.

Waste audits can determine areas of improvement, help save on trash costs and provide a learning opportunity for students. The audit includes a walk-through inspection of containers to evaluate how waste and recycling is collected throughout the school as well as a physical examination of trash – a favorite exercise for students. Throughout the process, weaknesses and recommendations are recorded for the school to use moving forward.



Students of Hammonton Middle School empty trash from a recent lunch period to examine waste habits.

Schools play an important role in reducing waste because they are among the largest waste generators in the county. If your school or place of business is interested in performing a waste audit, contact the ACUA Authority Relations Department at ar@acua.com for assistance.

IN YOUR COMMUNITY



ACUA offers in-person and virtual tours for all ages!
Please visit www.acua.com/tours for information.

1. Margate Fall Fun Fest 2. EHT Pride Festival 3. Able Acres Farm Tour 4. Eighmay Family Tour 5. Pleasantville High School Tour
 6. Howell High School Tour 7. Cumberland Regional High School Tour 8. St. Augustine Prep School Tour

ACUA

RECYCLE THESE ITEMS

Please remove food or liquids. Place material loose in your bin.



PLASTICS

Recycle Plastics #1, 2, 5
 Bottles, Jugs and Containers



GLASS

Glass Bottles
 and Jars, All Colors



METALS

Aluminum, Tin
 or Steel Cans



PAPER CARDBOARD

