

2017 Writing Contest winner

Green Up Vermont

By Isibéal Bohan, Grade 4, Bradford

Every year on the first Saturday in May, is a big deal to a big portion of Vermonters. This event has been going on since April 18, 1970. On the special day all Vermonters are gathered around to give our lovely state its spring cleaning. In our state people go on highways picking up trash that other people throw out their windows. Because trash on roads may seem like not a big deal but it can be really unsafe depending on the trash. People make fundraisers to encourage other people to clean up Vermont. Because we are good by ourselves but we are great together. People also wear t-shirts and wrist bands to show Green Up Day spirit. There are crowds of people all over Vermont participating in this event. Join us in our 47<sup>th</sup> Green Up Day. Because anybody can take part in making our beautiful state a better place and our nation an even better one.

**2016 Writing Contest Winner**

**Sirena Sawyer**

**Fletcher Elementary School, Grade 6**

**Teacher: Jasmine Tremblay**

I love Vermont! It is my home, it has always been my home. One of the things I cherish most about this state is its natural beauty. In order to preserve this beauty, the community gathers once a year on "Green Up Day," to clean up the environment and take care of all the animals that depend on it.

For me, Green Up Day is a day to get together with friends and family to celebrate the place we call home. I walk along the dirt roads with my neighbors, each of us with a green bag and a pair of rubber gloves. Every bag we fill with trash brings pride, for I know every piece of garbage we pick up makes a difference and ultimately brings our community closer together.

Vermont is a beautiful place, of green mountains and rolling hills. But trash dulls the sparkling silver waters and shades the lush green grasses. On Green Up Day, we gather to shine our rivers and lakes by removing cans and bottles from their shores. We return vibrancy to our acres by decreasing the number of shopping bags from their hilltops. With our help, little by little, the natural beauty rejuvenates.

Although Green Up Day is helpful to the environment, it also helps take care of all the creatures that depend on a healthy, clean habitat to survive. Every plastic bag you pick up means a turtle isn't going to strangle itself or a bird isn't going to die from suffocation, thinking it was food. Every piece of trash has an impact on more than just humans. For us, a piece of trash on the side of the road is gross. For some animals, it's death. Us picking up garbage could help turn the forests and mountains from death traps back into a peaceful, safe habitat for the animals.

In other words; to me, Green Up Vermont means a healthier, happier, more beautiful environment for all the animals and for us to share with our friends and family. A place where the flowers grow a little faster, the rivers run a little stronger, and the sun shines a little brighter. For me, Green Up Vermont is the stepping stone to an altogether more beautiful world.

2015 Writing Contest Winner  
Ayla Fidel, Grade 6, Waitsfield Elementary School

Every year on the first Saturday of May, many Vermonters join hands and help make our state a clean place. Green Up Day, hosted by Green Up Vermont, is an essential day for Vermont and the serene nature around us. It is a day every year when we get to give back to the earth, and thank Vermont for all it gives us. Our beautiful lakes, rivers, ponds, mountains, trees, and wildlife. Green Up Day is also a day to reflect on global warming, what it is doing to the earth and what we can do to help. Global warming is such a massive problem. We as individuals can do so much to help our planet; we just don't realize it in our day-to-day lives.

To me though, Green Up Day is especially about community. There is something really nice about getting your "green bags" from the same person each year. There is a certain feeling that you get in your heart when you see strangers, family, and friends coming together helping the planet one step at a time.

Green Up Day is that special tradition that is also a fantastic way to give back to our magnificent state. Sometimes it's the little things that help.

Writing Contest Winner 2014

Green Up Day

By: Kylie Dunshee, Grade 7, Hinesburg Community School, Teacher: Barb Spaulding

Green Up Day is an important day to everyone. Green Up Day helps our planet to be cleaner and helps our planet to go into a positive direction. If we just let clutter build up disease could start or animals could go extinct from eating the clutter. If we continue to have Green Up Day our world will begin to be less cluttered every year. Green Up Day gets everyone in a positive mood to make the world a cleaner place. In conclusion, Green Up Day is a great tradition to make the world cleaner, hopefully one day there will be no more littering and everyone can throw away their trash responsibly.

2013 Writing Contest Winner

Fin Richards  
Stowe Elementary, Grade 4  
Teacher: Tamara North

*Green Up Today!*

It is a fine and peaceful day in the Green Mountains,

Wind blowing, trees rustling, rivers flowing gently

Into water falls.

“What could possibly be wrong?” says the tree to the river.

“I am clogged with trash,” babbled the river to the tree.

But the tree bent and swayed,

Whispering, “It’s Green Up Day...

They’ll come right now.”

The river sighed and sparkled on.  
And once again in the Green Mountains the wind blew,  
The trees rustled, and the rivers flowed gently  
into the water falls.

2012 Writing Contest winner

Curtis Petitt, Grade 11, Mount Anthony Union High School

Vermont is a state of beauty and respect. It is also the state that I call home. I am a native Vermonter and I truly love all that it has to offer year round in its unique four seasons. From warm summers to picturesque falls, crisp white winters and the sometimes long awaited springs, it is a state that stands second to none.

Since this beautiful state is my home, I never miss an opportunity to participate in Green Up Vermont Day. This day's purpose is to restore Vermont's natural beauty lost through littering. It's more than just bending down to pick up a piece of garbage; it symbolically shows the beauty of Vermont and our pride of working together for the betterment of everyone living here as well as all of the tourists we attract. Green Up Day shows what characteristics true Vermonters possess. We are hardworking, dedicated and focused on the cleanliness of our community. Without Vermonters of all ages volunteering to keep the event organized, this day would not be possible or successful. Vermont comes together as a community so well that it truly is the best place to live.

The way I viewed Green Up Day ten years ago is completely different from the way I see it now. It used to just be a fun day to spend with my family and friends looking for rocks painted with a ladybug and picking up the occasional piece of trash if I had walked into it. Now however, it means so much more. It is a gift to be able to help my community in the simplest way possible and be able to participate in a statewide movement promoting a litter-free environment. Not only am I able to help out our community, Green Up Vermont has taught me much about the important value of teamwork. While picking up garbage for Green Up Vermont I have met a lot of new people ranging from children to adults, firemen to board members, and we all share one common goal, to maintain the natural beauty of the landscape we call Vermont.

2011 Writing Contest winner  
Corinne Lyndes, Grade 7, Fairlee

Green Up Day

Winter hides the dead of fall,  
It's a flawless heaven that covers all.  
But when the snow begins to melt,  
What we've done is uncovered.  
There's so much trash,  
The ground is smothered.  
Spring is a time for  
A cloudless day, flowers to bloom, and animals to play.  
The grass should be green,

So get up and keep the environment clean!  
Our state and our towns deserve so much more, so we should see the forest floor.  
This is where our children play, so help out!  
It's Green Up Day.

2010 Writing Contest winner  
Cassie Lee, Grade 9, Pittsfield

Ode to Preserving Nature

As I walk through the forest,  
littered with careless whims and thoughts  
thrown away,  
I begin to realize how unprotected  
Mother Nature is becoming.

The Green Mountains  
which hold our ancestry  
loom like a shadow,  
ashamed  
instead of gleaming  
in the sunlight,  
proud and strong.

When Nature is not celebrated  
the world loses its vibrancy.  
But as we come together  
to show Nature our appreciation  
and care for it  
my heart swells.

My soul awaits the day each year,  
when Vermonters unite  
to act on a single belief,  
so that Nature can become beautiful  
again.

The trees that sag sadly in the shadows  
become lively and bright.  
As the sun casts delicate patterns  
the forest floor  
illuminates  
as the oppressing material is lifted from the lives  
of the new plants  
that refresh the woods.

As I walk through the forest,  
I realize the difference  
that one small action can make.  
So I stoop  
and I gingerly pick up the plastic  
that suppresses Nature's beauty  
and I watch the forest shine again.

2009 Writing Contest winner

Elise Seyferth, Grade 11, Mt. Anthony Union High School

The River

The river flows over the land,  
Crosses mountains, valleys, passes through the towns of men  
And women, a wide, deep power  
That carves into the ground its stream of trash.

As man on his daily journeys passes signs of its flow,  
Passes the slightly rusted cans and the bottles filled

With sludge, passes Styrofoam and cardboard cartons-  
“I’m lov’ in it” trumpets from their soggy sides-  
Passes bags caught in trees, great white fluttering birds  
That on release will fly high over the river, the sea  
Without life; the man adds to its depths.

But the men and women begin to open their eyes,  
To see the seething river that grows to intolerable proportions,  
And as it flows they turn their eyes to the future.  
Their apathy becomes action as they try to fight the roiling current  
With one of their own.

For, as I watch, a new river forms from a mountain spring  
And streams forth, deep and clear and cool,  
To grow and carry along its swelling waters  
The hope of an entire people, a new generation, a single child.

2008 Writing Contest winner

Taylor Paone, grade 7, Browns River Middle School

Just Listen

Listen to me said  
the ant to the bee  
I have got something  
to say about what is happening today.  
Listen to me  
said the sky to the sea  
I am heating up now I just don’t understand how  
Listen to me  
said the car to the tree  
I feel this is all my fault,  
But I just can’t seem to come to a halt.  
My eyes drift over the field of green  
trying not to recognize  
the scattered bottles and plastic bags  
that could’ve been turned into useful cash.  
So...  
listen to me  
said the eagle to the duck

I've seen too many things  
flying out of trucks.  
If we work together  
we can make this right  
and save Mother Nature from this terrible fright.  
So listen to me  
said the ant to the bee  
what is happening in May  
is called  
Green Up Day.

2007 Writing Contest winner  
Chelle Beehler, Grade 12, Green Mountain Union High School

The Smell that comes with Spring

Abandoned bus stop bench  
Pelted by May's first rain  
witnesses winter disappear  
as the snow slowly drains,  
revealing hidden secrets from December  
of cigarettes, trash, crud,  
one lone pair of galoshes  
Stuck into the mud.  
A torn, plaid, corduroy couch  
stares blankly from its spot  
next to a broken dryer  
beside a crumbling parking lot.  
Man's vices ignored  
fester, piling up against a ledge,  
like an unkeepable secret  
stuck into a wedge.  
A small army emerges  
black garbage bags in hand  
Erasing the dirges  
that were written for the land.  
Earth's facial now complete  
Beauty blooms again,  
love everywhere beats  
from kindness shown by men.