

Aguilars practice, preach 3Rs

The other day, as my son helped me wheel our recycling, yard waste and garbage carts to the curb for the weekly pickup, I stopped for a moment and wondered: How do other families share 3R responsibilities (reduce, reuse and recycling)? Who's in charge of what? And do they have fun together, as they're each pitching in to protect our environment?

We decided to ask. One of my team members, Estela Gutierrez, visited the Aguilar family at their home in King City and interviewed them about their 3R habits. Here is what Gustavo and Francisca Aguilar and their kids Jasmine, 12; Ismael, 9; and Breana, 7, told us.

ESTELA: I see that your three carts are already at the curb, ready for pick-up. Who sets them out every week?

GUSTAVO: That's usually my job, the last thing I do on the evening before our weekly pick-up.

ESTELA: Your recycling cart is really full! What do you put in there?

FRANCISCA: All kinds of containers, like tin cans from tomato sauce, or jalapeños, shampoo bottles, yogurt cups, milk and juice jugs. We also put in lots of paper, like paper from the kids' school work, Gustavo's Auto Shopper magazines, old mail and all our newspapers.

JASMINE: Cardboard goes in, too. But only the small pieces. If it's a big box, my dad breaks it down and puts it next to the cart on our pick-up day.

ESTELA: Do you walk outside to the recycling cart for each recyclable piece?

FRANCISCA: Oh, no! We have a small plastic bin right by the kitchen. I rinse the cans and bottles, put them in the kitchen bin and ...

ISMAEL: ... and then I'm in charge. I'm the recycling coordinator. When the kitchen container is full, I take everything out to the big recycling cart. Except some things my



RECYCLING
Alan Styles

dad and I sell at the C&C Recycling Center here in King City. Those I put in bags.

ESTELA: What kinds of things do you sell?

ISMAEL: Glass bottles, soda cans, water bottles. ... I look on the label to

clothes off of eBay. Much cheaper than new!

BREANA: I get a lot of clothes from my cousin Andrea when they don't fit her anymore.

JASMINE: Yeah, and I just gave Andrea a jacket that I hardly used. Sometimes we also donate clothes and other things to the Salvation Army.

ESTELA: Ismael, what's that toy in your hands?

ISMAEL: That's a Game-Boy. We also have a Sony PlayStation. They both

item is recyclable and what to do with it?

ISMAEL: Oh, I know! If it's a container, I look on the bottom to see if it has a recycling symbol and a number. If it does, it can go in our recycling cart.

FRANCISCA: We also call our garbage company with questions or look at the recycling guide in the (new AT&T) Yellow Pages. Or sometimes we call you guys at the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority.



PROVIDED PHOTO

Rain or shine, the Aguilars in King City reduce, reuse and recycle. Pictured, from left, are: Gustavo, Jasmine, Ismael, Francisca and Breana Aguilar.

see if it says "CRV." That means you get money back.

BREANA: At school we recycle, too. We have large green bins for mixed recycling. But I put mostly paper in there. I have a Hello Kitty reusable lunch box I bring home every day to avoid throw-away containers.

ESTELA: That's great, Breana. You're avoiding making waste in the first place. Are there other things you guys do to reduce waste — like maybe reuse?

FRANCISCA: We buy a lot of things used, like furniture or tools. When I was pregnant with Breana, I got some of my maternity

need a lot of batteries, but we use rechargeables so we don't have to buy so many new ones.

GUSTAVO: But even the rechargeables don't last forever.

ESTELA: What do you do with the used batteries?

GUSTAVO: We know household batteries are toxic, so they can't go in the trash. The kids collect the spent ones in a small bucket. When it's full we take the regular batteries to the household hazardous waste facility in Gonzales. The rechargeable ones we can drop off at Radio Shack.

ESTELA: That's great. How do you find whether an

ESTELA: Great! We love to hear from you. Thanks so much for telling me about all the great recycling you're doing, and please keep up the good work.

If your family has any questions about the 3Rs — reduce, reuse and recycle — please call us at 775-3000 or visit our Web site at.

ALAN STYLES is the recycling coordinator for the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority. His "Recycle News" column appears monthly in the Central Coast Living Section of the Salinas Californian. Contact him at alanst@svswa.org.

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