



# Green People

**N**obody's perfect. We all see the effects of our choices on the environment and yet we still toss a bottle in the trash instead of taking it down to the recycling center. We know that the consumption of meat is taking the largest toll on our environment, yet we still think we need it for at least one meal a day, seven days a week. We know we could walk down a couple of blocks for our bagel, yet we drive. Getting better means recognizing that changes can be made. Reflecting on what we have done and making a plan to change makes all the difference in the world, so to speak. Take a second, think about it and in honor of the earth, make a pledge to make a better choice.

Earth Day is April 22. In celebration of this day that was created in 1970, we want to talk about those people on the forefront of the movement, those who take the time to make the changes and teach the next generation about the importance of responsibility. They do things like turn

off their cars in the carpool line. They call before running down to the grocery for multigrain bread that may or may not be freshly baked in the bakery. They park their cars and pedal their way around on the weekends. They don't buy things that they don't need, and they turn off the lights before they leave for work. Simple. Easy. Good for the environment.

## Use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without

**Nancy Fitzer**, her husband, **Matt**, and their three children have embraced their jobs as protectors and nurturers of the world around them. At the root of their plan is the concept that reducing trash is just as important as recycling it. They have all learned to clean with older cloths, eliminating the need for paper towels. They avoid single-serving packages and use their own containers for storage. They use cloth napkins for dinner and have eliminated paper napkins for daily use and for special

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ABOVE: Nothing says "green" like an organic garden. This one is maintained by Greenville Organic Foods Organization at Crescent Studios in downtown Greenville.



**ABOVE: Meet Nancy Fitzer. She believes if you don't need it, you don't buy it, and you won't waste it.**

**ABOVE RIGHT: As the Owner of O'Leary Cole Inc., a design and construction company, Trey Cole preserves the beauty of the past whenever possible.**

occasions. There will be no pretty paper napkins at the birthday parties there. Fitzer says she's recently made peace with the Ziploc baggies and begun purchasing them with the mindset of reusing them time and time again. So one baggy may become the chip bag and another may be designated for dry fruit.

Fitzer says that working at Upstate Forever has helped her learn how to better protect the environment. She and her husband have been working for several years to make their older home more energy efficient. By replacing windows, a hot water heater and re-insulating their attic, they have added warmth to their home and decreased the energy needed to keep it comfortable. The Fitzers live comfortably in their home, but they keep the heat set at 68 and the air conditioner at 78 and keep their fingers off the systems. Fitzer says, "We try to keep in mind the thoughts of those that came before us. We use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without!"

Surely you can relate to that phrase and make it applicable to life. In January, during the week-long shut-in due to 8 inches of snow, I decided to clean out the refrigerator. I could not believe the amount of wasted, outdated condiments in there. I was embarrassed by the amount of food flushed down the disposal and bottles tossed into the bin. I threw out more than 10 outdated containers from our refrigerator. A little time and energy and a firm belief in making a change could make a difference in the amount of waste in our homes.



### Keep it simple

**Trey Cole**, founder and owner of O'Leary Cole Inc., is a designer and builder who recognizes the need to protect the beauty of the past and preserve it. Cole has been building structures as long as he can remember. Knowing that construction was his calling, he opened his own design and construction company in the '80s right here in the Upstate. He is committed to artistry and believes that the best way to protect the environment is to not waste energy and materials that can be used and cared for.

Crescent Studios, on West Washington Street, is Cole's latest project. Rediscovering the department store space that has sat vacant in downtown for several decades, Cole designed and created office space that provides an incredible view of the historic Greenville Railroad Station on Washington Street. This modern update in a charming space provides office accessibility for several companies including Greenville Organic Foods Organization.

The front windows of the hardware store still stand, as do the more than 15-foot tin ceilings, the concrete floors and brick façade, which still exudes charm. "Why forget all of the energy that went into this space, tear it down and waste

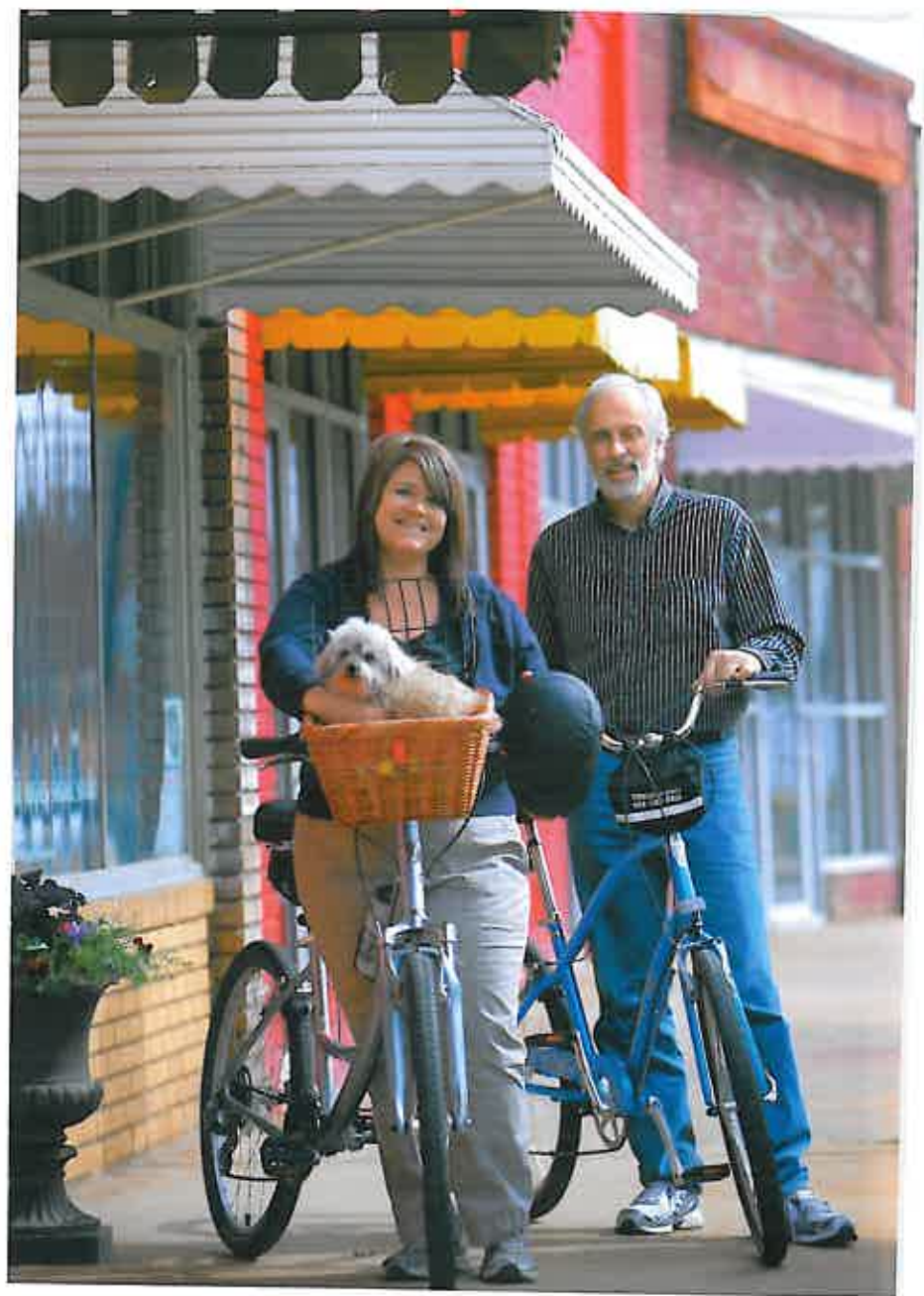
the materials that are here to start over?" asks Cole. It's hard to disagree when you catch a glimpse of what can be done with the recycled lumber used to make up the community kitchen and the metal pipes reused to create an open loft for storage.

What strikes me most about Cole is his recognition that his building sits in an area where people live and love their land, their homes and their railroad. He sees that as a member of the community, it's our job to take care of the people around us. He knows that investing in the past is an investment in the future that really means something.

### Coast to a clean finish

Recently I was looking through old photos and found several from a wedding that I attended on my and my husband's first anniversary. After remembering how sad I was that he was working and I was in Charlotte on our first anniversary, I got really excited about how well-toned my arms were. That made me remember how the year before, he and I had lived in Boston without a car. We walked to work. We walked to dinner. We walked to church. We walked to the grocery and carried everything home, from the laundry detergent and the milk to the Christmas tree. I could see what that lifestyle did for me, and of course it reminded me that driving less isn't just good for the air, it's good for the body. Drive less, decrease your carbon footprint and tone your arms.

The **Shabkies** — **Don**, a pianist, and **Julie**, a local artist — have decided to park their car and take advantage of the opportunities that the city of Greenville has created for us in trails and public transportation. Following the BP oil disaster in the Gulf, Don decided he needed to make a change to make peace. He made the commitment to reduce oil consumption in their family. Already an owner of a hybrid vehicle, which uses two or more electric motors to move the vehicle, Don felt he could do more. He now cycles his way downtown, where you will find him playing piano at multiple events. Several days a week, he provides entertainment in the beautiful lobby of the historic Westin Poinsett Hotel. I figure if he can pedal his way to perform, we can consider it for getting to work downtown, playing at the park or a serious workout before a warm cup of soup in Travelers Rest.



Join the Shabkies' efforts and participate in The League of American Bicyclists Bike-to-Work Week 2011 next month from May 16-20. If you can't do the whole week, pedal in for Bike-to-Work Day on May 20. Encourage the whole office to participate, and if you can't bike, then park a little closer to home and walk it. Every minute of clean air counts.

### Get a little dirty

What can you do with soil, a few red worms, a couple of large plastic containers, newspaper shreds and last night's leftovers? Compost and create rich soil for your spring gardens. It sounds like such a messy and technical process, but the Kremenliev family says composting is anything but.

**ABOVE:** Julie and Don Shabkie enjoy pedaling with their pooch (who is perfectly comfortable thanks to a precious pet basket from Pedal Chic) as often as possible.

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**RIGHT: The kids love to get dirty – in the compost that is! Barbara Kremenliev and her daughter sort scraps, stir them in and later will spread their compost to bring beautiful greens to the table all summer long.**

"You have to have special worms," **Barbara Kremenliev** notes, "but otherwise it's very easy." Kremenliev ordered her family's worms from a website, dumped them into the containers and has watched them multiply over the last year. The containers are neatly tucked away outside her home and have survived harsh weather conditions with ease. Composting is a great way to get the whole family involved in making good use of waste. A small compost bucket that the kids manage can be placed in the kitchen for scraps, and when it's full, it can be dumped in the big bins with the worms.

Compost can be used as fertilizer for indoor plants, flower gardens and vegetable gardens. This is a healthy way to replace manufactured fertilizers, save the landfills and make good use of your own waste.

On your mark, get set and dig, pedal or save your way to a greener world this Earth Day and many more to come. 🌱



## THE ROAD TO SOMEWHERE

The majority of people that Miracle Hill Ministries helps come to us on a journey. They are on a road they are currently traveling because of **abuse**, addiction, homelessness and even **deeper** psychological, physical, mental, emotional **issues**. **The one** thing that ties them all **together** is they are looking for a **DESTINATION**. **Miracle Hill** gives them the tools to take "the road to somewhere" to a better destination. It might be sobriety, a home, a job, understanding their self worth and value. **Miracle Hill** is a vital stop on "the road to somewhere."

**To get involved please visit [www.miraclehill.org](http://www.miraclehill.org)**

**HOPE** →



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