

<b>Get Organized and Go Green!</b>	<b>Vali G. Heist, Author and Certified Professional Organizer®</b>
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Kermit the Frog, amphibian actor of Sesame Street fame said, “It’s not easy being green.” In honor of Earth Day on April 22, I’m sharing the information I gave at the Philadelphia Home Show in February entitled “Get Organized and Go Green”. The goal of my short talk was to encourage the audience to believe that ‘Green Organizing’ can help you live your best life, even when it’s not so easy. Green organizing emphasizes the environmentally-friendly principles of Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Remix, Rejuvenate, Repair and Recycle.



- **Reduce:** Reduce means letting go of CRAP (Clutter that Robs Anyone of Pleasure). When your home starts to look like a gift shop and becomes more about stuff than about you and your family, it’s time to reduce and unclutter. After you let go of the things that you no longer need or use, you’ll notice that you bring less through the front door. When you take stock of what you have before you buy and practice the ‘one in-one out’ rule, you can begin to reclaim your spaces. Keep a box or bag on each floor of your home to drop in items you no longer use such as clothing, décor, tchotchkes, or books.

- **Reuse, Repurpose and Remix:** When I work with clients in their homes, we start the process with a tour of the whole house. The purpose is to see what we may want to reuse, repurpose or remix when we organize instead of buying something new. Most of my clients have everything they need to organize; their spaces just need to be maximized and their items can be repurposed in a whole new way. For example: use a favorite piece of pottery, an antique basket, or a vintage tray to store items on your counter tops, dressers, or desks. If you have an antique buffet or dresser, use the piece for something other than its original use, for example, use it as a TV stand, a mail sorting station or a liquor cabinet. If you have an old stool, end table, or chair, give it new life by repainting or recovering the piece.

- **Repair and Rejuvenate:** We can no longer afford to be a ‘throw-away society’. We already export our trash to other countries to make room for more stuff so whatever we can repair or rejuvenate instead of adding to the landfills is a plus. Just because something didn’t cost a lot, and probably won’t cost a lot to replace, doesn’t mean you should throw it away. Can it be fixed? Glued? Rewired? Altered? Repaired? Painted? Think outside the box and get crafty!

- **Recycling:** Most of us already recycle newspaper, magazines, plastic and glass, but make sure it’s convenient and easy to maintain. Don’t let recycling be an annoyance; give it the place of honor it deserves in your home. Find out when your county/township has a hazardous waste collection and mark it on your calendar. Many regions also have pharmaceuticals recycling and paper shredding.

Finally, if you want to know how long some of our trash will be around if we don’t recycle, here’s a short list:

Aluminum Cans & tabs	500 years
Glass Bottles	1,000 years
Plastic Bags	10-20 years
Tin Cans	50 years
Plastic Six-Pack Holders	100 years
Plastic Bottles & Styrofoam	Indefinitely