



**Idaho Nurses Association – Greener Idaho Topic
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Graduating Seniors Leading Recycling Project
Contributed by Chris and Lori Ilgenfritz

Chris and Lori Ilgenfritz, Boise State University, Bachelor of Science Nursing Senior Students, submitted the following abstract from their senior Leadership course project, supervised by faculty Sarah Ahten, RN, MS, and clinical preceptor Alyce Falcone, RN, BS. This project showcases how environmental health concepts can be integrated into nursing courses and clinical practice. Congratulations to Chris and Lori who graduated in May, 2009.

Abstract

The purpose of this project was to provide research-based justification and current best practices for implementing a recycling policy at St. Luke’s Boise Medical Center (SLBMC) in order to decrease the environmental impact of hospital waste and improve cost-effectiveness of waste disposal.

The purpose was addressed using a review of relevant literature and interviews with topic experts. Through this process a number of findings were notable. First, effective hospital recycling policies start with a focus on paper and cardboard. This is because these items make up a large majority of the recyclable waste stream. Two other key components of recycling policy formation were individual unit champions and employee education. These two components were credited with great success in encouraging rapid adoption and employee participation. Finally recycling posters and signage were an important aspect of supporting an effective recycling policy.

In conclusion it is recommended that SLBMC adopt a hospital wide recycling policy that focuses on paper and cardboard with room for expansion into other materials. This policy should include provisions for a staff champion for each individual unit and area of the hospital. New employee orientation and annual employee education on recycling policies should be implemented. Finally, signage and posters should be designed and carefully placed throughout the hospital to reinforce the new policy. Further research is needed to develop the necessary education programs and appropriate signage to support the program.