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## Elon's 'Art in the Park' turns recyclables into art

By Jessica Williams

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ELON — On the heels of Earth Day, Elon Recreation and Parks dedicated its biweekly “Art in the Park” on Thursday, April 25, to recycling.

Using leftover Arbor Day fliers, miscellaneous paper and donated end rolls from the Times-News press, some kids made mosaics, crayon drawings and acorn art, while others sorted pinecones by size and touched prickly gumballs from a Sweet Gum Tree.

On a sunny 80-degree day, Beth Schmidt Park provided the perfect environment for celebrating Mother Earth.

“We wanted to bring awareness and make people think about things more,” Recreation and Parks specialist Jennifer Kamenides said. “We had an activity yesterday at the pop-up program where it was showing the kids the difference between items you can recycle and items you can’t. ... So we had a little game where they’d choose, ‘Does this go in trash, recycling or compost?’”

Educating children about recycling now may help save the recycling industry in the future. In January 2018, China stopped purchasing recycled materials from a number of nations, including the United States. Faced with the high cost of processing these materials elsewhere, many waste-management companies have been forced to throw recyclables in with the rest of the trash until a solution can be found.

In the meantime, even the smallest projects can help.

Turning a plastic water bottle into a bubble-maker or vase means there’s one less water bottle contributing to the problem. Many of these projects can be found

on popular website and smartphone app Pinterest.

“I don’t tend to throw things away too often unless I know I’m definitely not going to use it,” Kamenides said.

Recreation and Parks Director Phyllis Creech started the free Art in the Park program in August. Anyone interested can keep up with future Town of Elon events by following the Facebook page at [facebook.com/TownofElon/](https://www.facebook.com/TownofElon/).

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