

Gather & Grow

SUSTAINABLE PROGRAMMING: REPAIR CAFE, SEED LIBRARY, DIY CRAFTS, & ECO-FRIENDLY SWAPS

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Join us in person:

- How it all began
- Clothing and Equipment Swaps
- Partnerships
- Staff buy-in
- Financing the Sustainable Program
- Pitfalls
- Know your patrons
- Research, research, research (Climate Change research)
- Be skeptical about “green” labels
- Avoid pitfalls
- Avoid climate guilt
- Know your local experts
- Organize Swaps
- Be open to Triple Bottom Line and Degrowth



Yonkers Public Library System

Yonkers Public Library

3-branch system serving Yonkers and the Bronx

Our Mission is to be an essential and dynamic institution whose dedicated staff provide outstanding service, meaningful collections, and impactful programs in welcoming and inspiring spaces.

In 2024, YPL enjoyed:

- 704,000 library visits
- 66,000 registered library card holders
- 5,000+ total programs offered to Ages 0-99
- 124,000+ total program attendance
- 156,000+ total reference transactions
- 900,000+ wifi usage

Crestwood Library

- Our branch is a cozy, 100-year-old building that looks a house and the smallest of the three branches
- Almost all of our programming is intergenerational
- We offer innovative services to all patrons
 - comprehensive sustainable programming
 - dog biscuit bar & “stick library”



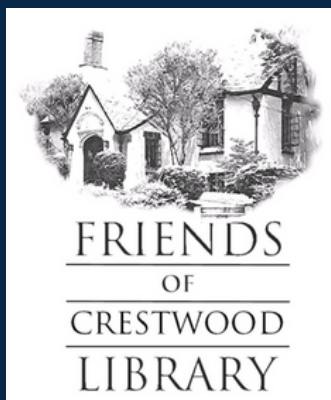
Z Baird
Branch Administrator,
Crestwood Library



Jackie Leone
Librarian 1,
Crestwood Library

How it All Began

- Born from the COVID-19 pandemic
- People social distancing & spending more time outdoors
- The New Sustainable You! was born
 - Buy Less: Enjoy More for the Holidays!
- Partners: NNORC, Friends of Crestwood Library
- Experiences rather than swag
- ConEd Grant
- Westchester County Board of Legislators
- Allocating a portion of our budget to sustainable initiatives



Marketing Approach

We developed a comprehensive marketing strategy for our Repair Cafe and Clothing Swap programs that included a digital approach (social media) and word-of-mouth promotion through library staff when interacting with patrons.

We created branded flyers and social posts to promote our repair cafe, reached out to local businesses and handymen to solicit volunteers, and requested donations for coffee from a nearby coffee shop.

Seeking: REPAIR CAFÉ VOLUNTEERS

We're hosting a Repair Café at Crestwood library on **April 27th** and *we need your expertise!* Support the environment, the library, and the community by becoming a Repair Café coach!

Crestwood Library is seeking coaches & craftspeople who are skilled in fixing:

- small appliances
- bikes
- clothing
- technology
- jewelry/watches
- electrical
- anything else!

May 17
10:00 am - 3:00 pm

To **volunteer**, reach out to Jackie at jleone@ypl.org or call (914) 779-3774

Crestwood Library REPAIR CAFÉ

April 27
10 AM - 2 PM

Have an item that needs fixing?
Want to help prevent throwaway culture?

Fix it at...
Crestwood Library's first Repair Café!



Part-time junior clerk, Nora-Grayce Orosz, approached Z and Jackie with the idea for another sustainable program: a Clothing Swap.

The Clothing Swap was a huge hit and was the result of a collaborative effort from all staff. Nora and fellow staff sourced clothing, accessories, and shoe donations from community members and friends, as well as solicited coffee and treats from local businesses and the Friends of Crestwood Library.

All remaining items that weren't swapped were donated to local thrift stores and charity shops.



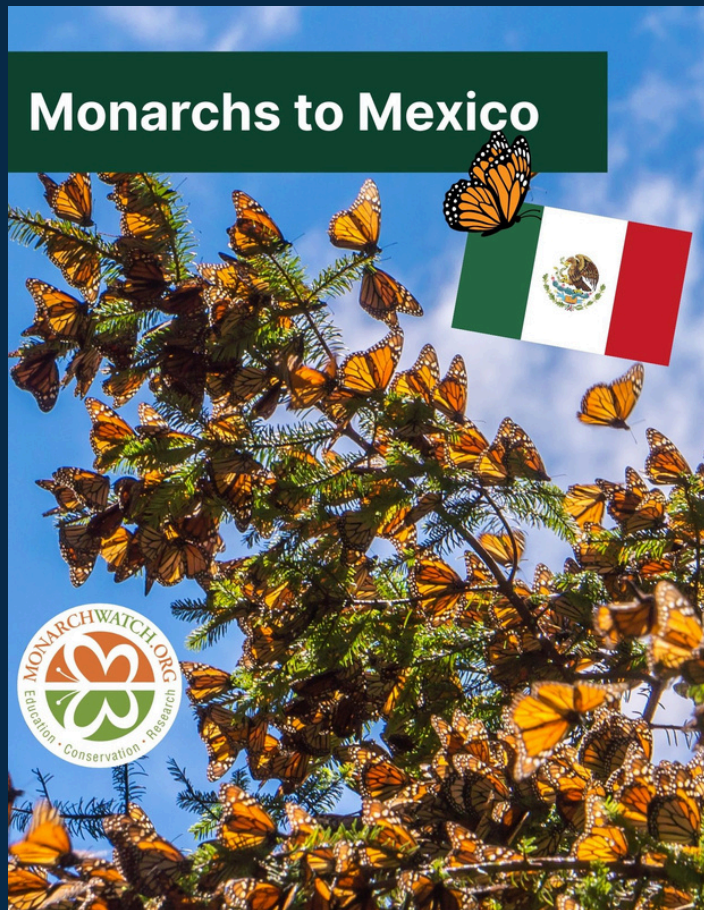


More Sustainable Programming

Celebrating Bat Week



Monarchs

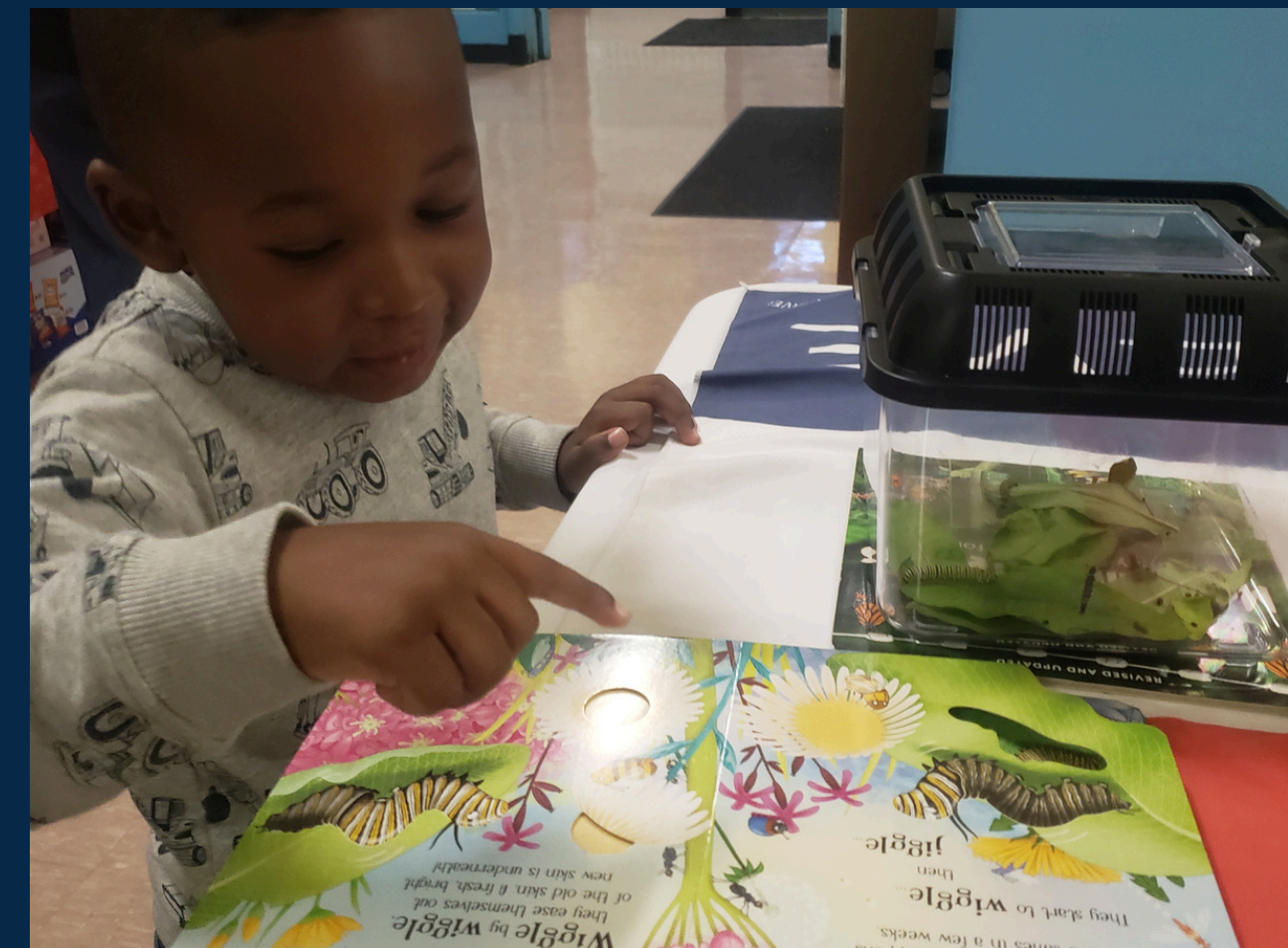


Monarchs to Mexico



2021

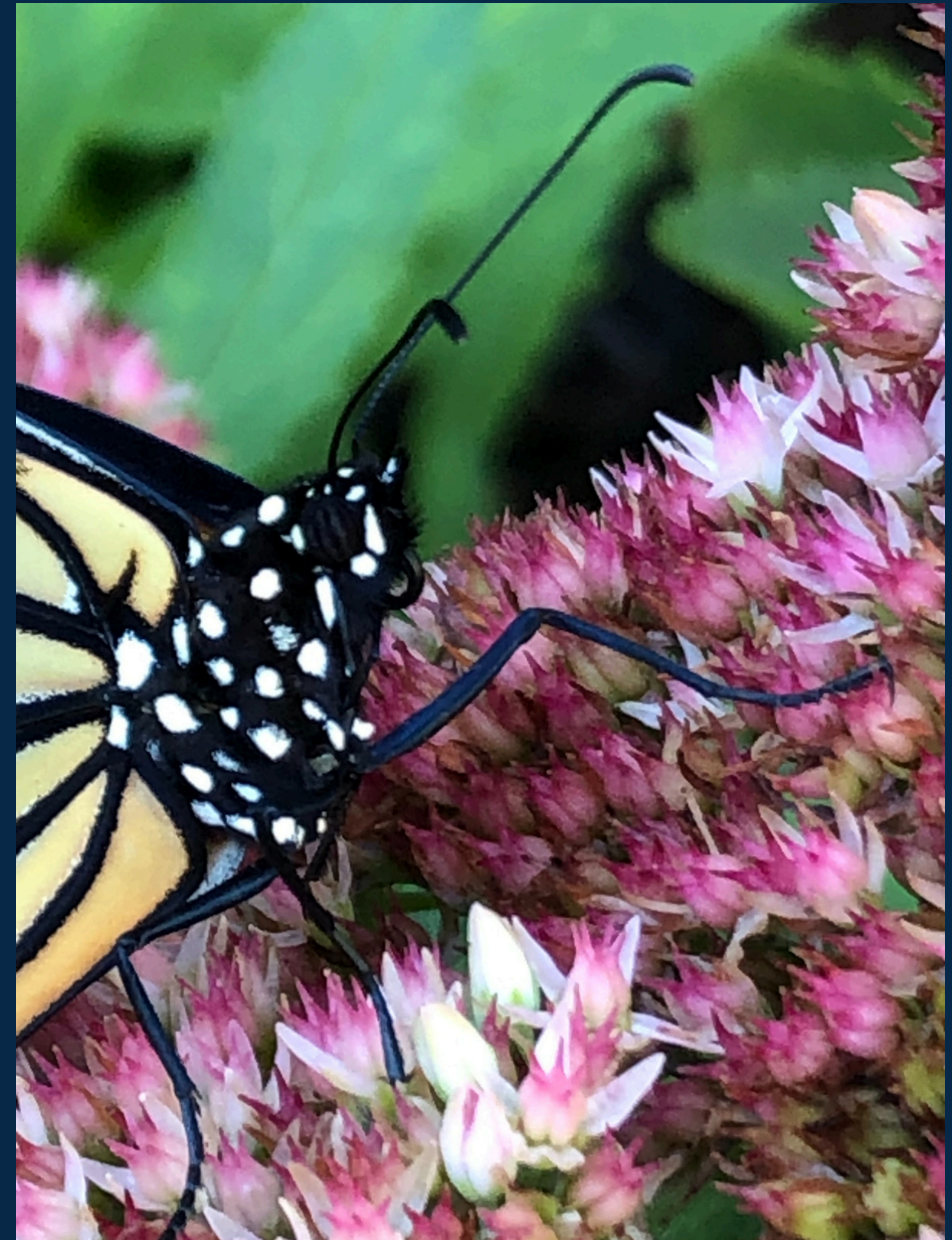
2025





Pollinator Garden: Partnership with City of Yonkers

Pollinator Garden: City of Yonkers Landscapers



What does sustainability really mean?

Sustainability: of, relating to, or being a method of harvesting or using a resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged. (Merriam Webster, App)

“Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future UN, p. 16)

**“The Sustainable Library Certification Program and the SLI community of practice focuses your leadership to enable your library, and ultimately your community, to become more environmentally sound, socially equitable and economically feasible.”
(Sustainable Libraries Initiative, <https://www.sustainablelibrariesinitiative.org/>)**

Fires from Canadian Forests

June 7, 2023



The AQI went above safe limits: 484

We cannot possibly sustain ourselves like this



But what does it mean to us?

Ecology

Green solutions

Ecofriendly solutions

OR

THE NEW FAVORITE MANTRA

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repair, Renew, Repurpose, Refuse, Rethink, Regift, Recover

Triple Bottom Line - Financial, Social, Environmental performance measures

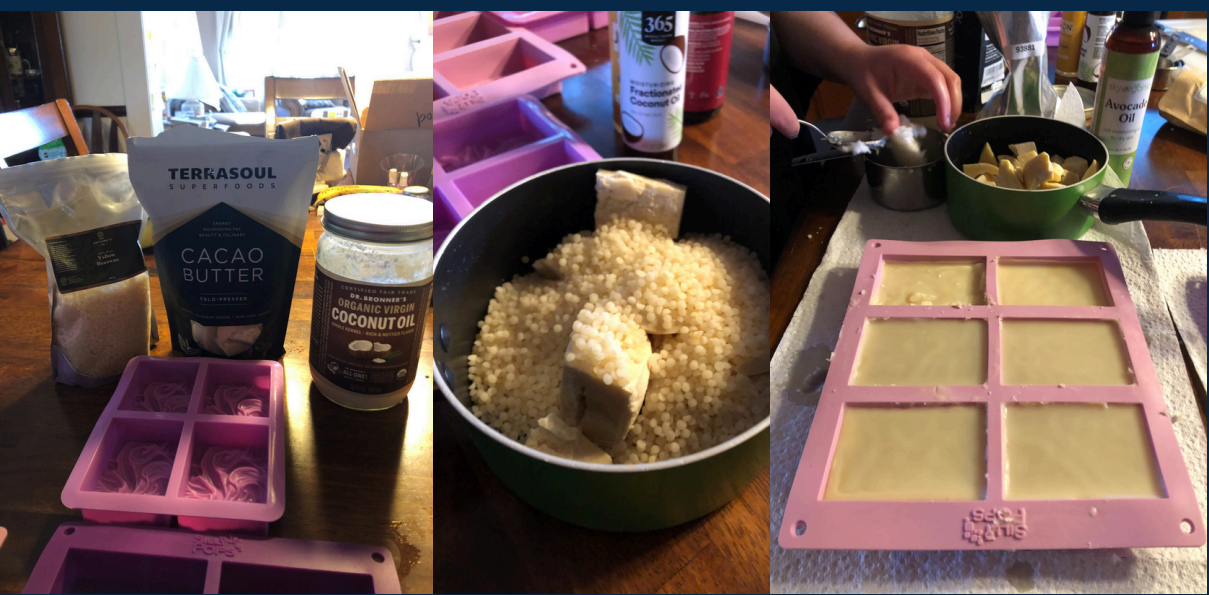
Degrowth - Social Equity, Circular Economy, Indigenous Knowledges

Triple Bottom Line and Degrowth need not be mutually exclusive. They can be included in all programming!

Sustainable Programs & Practices

- “The New Sustainable You!!” Zoom program created during COVID
- Seed Library & Crestwood Raised Bed Gardens
- Planting Programs
- Keyhole gardening
- Grab n Gos that are ecofriendly or biodegradable
- Melt n Pour shampoos, conditioners, lip balm, handsoaps, crocheted dish cloths
- Earth Day Clean-up
- Composting, Dirt Block Making, planting seedlings
- Water conservation themes, solar power themes, including intersectional programs
- Avoidance of Oriental Trading, plastic packaging, separating of garbage
- Offsite programming: Materials Recovery Facility trip
- Less Swag
- More biodegradable swag
- Revamping leftover art supplies
- Little Library and Public Schools receiving deleted books
- Yonkers Animal Shelter - sustainable adjacent

DIYs & Activities



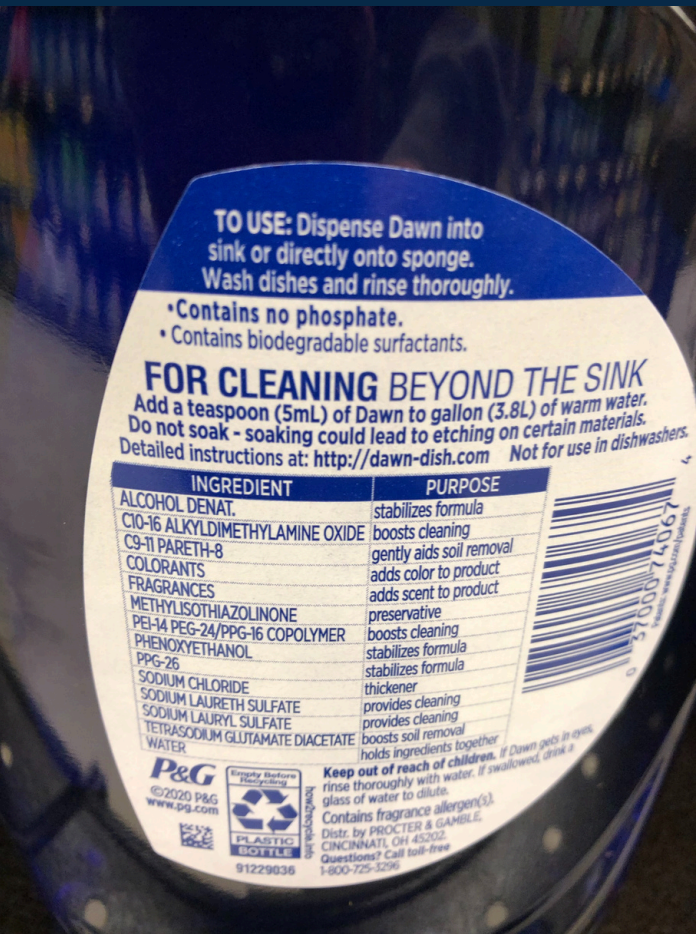
Lotion Bars



Stitch Soap



Solid Bug Repellant



Beeswax Wraps



Earth Day Clean Up



Earth Day Chalk



Pride Cereal Bracelets



Weaving with Wool



Birdfeeder Craft

Lunar New Year DIY Soup Mix



Earth Day Display



Hygge & Repair Cafe Intro.



Pancakes



Crocheted Dishcloth

Seed Library





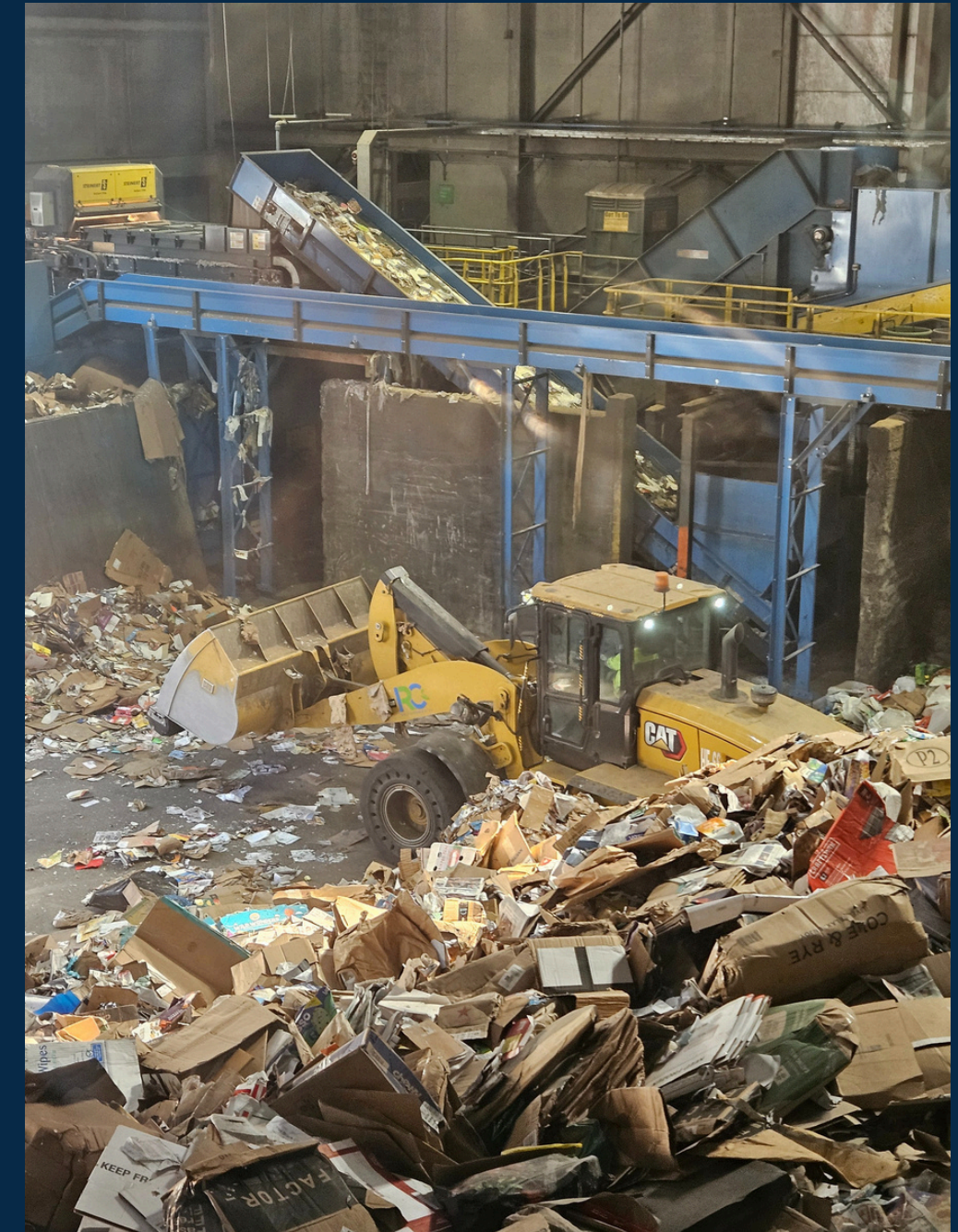
Second Raised Bed 2025



Raised Bed Frame 2022



Westchester Material Recovery Facility



Offsite trip with patrons



Prepare Yourself

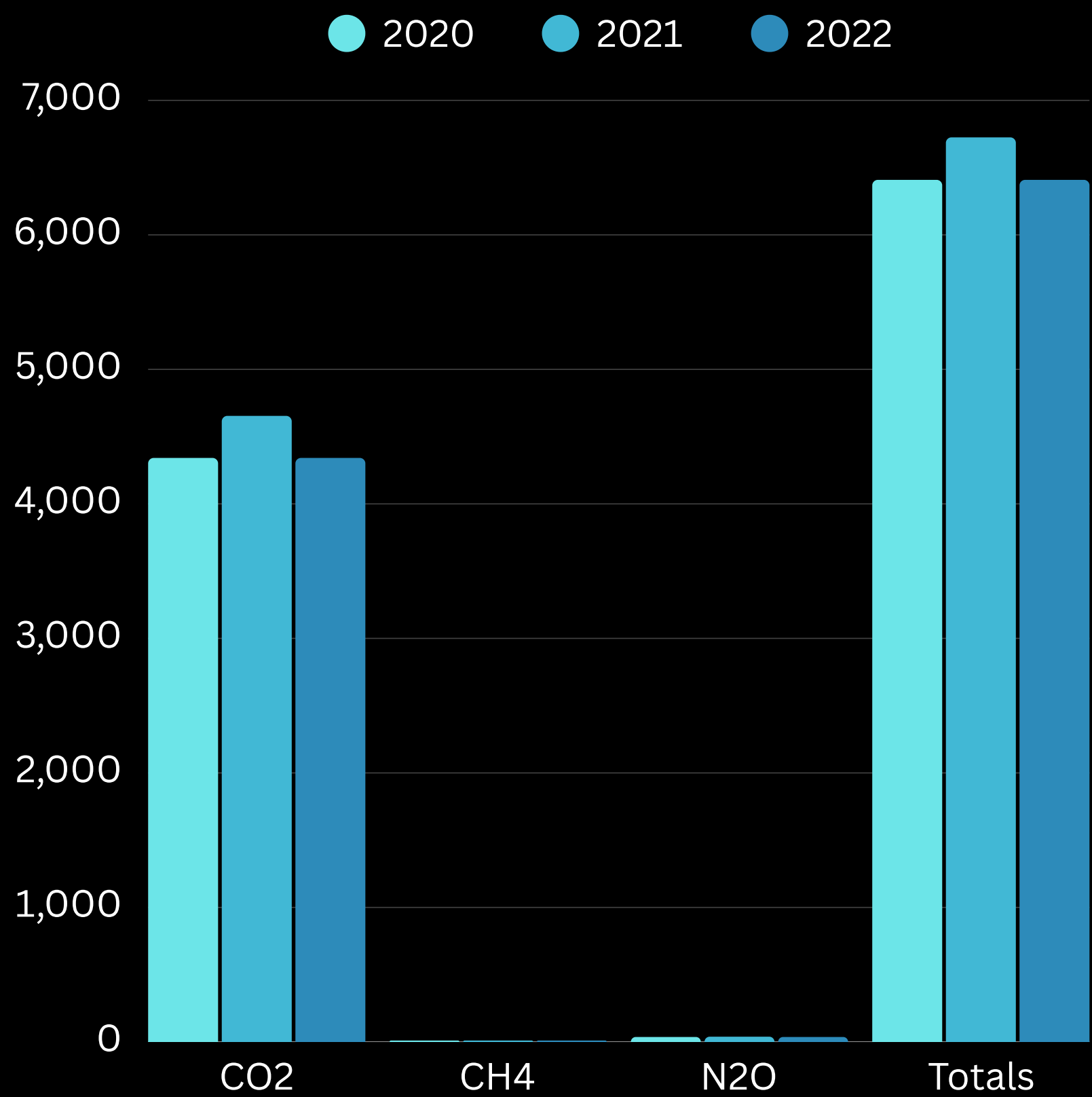
In 2021, the Cornell Chronicle reported:
“more than 99.9% of the peer-reviewed
scientific papers agree that climate
change is mainly caused by
humans, according to a new survey of
88,125 climate-related studies.”

*430.51ppm as of May 2025

Number found on NOAA and Statista websites



Gas Emissions CO2, CH4, N2O from 2020-2022 *

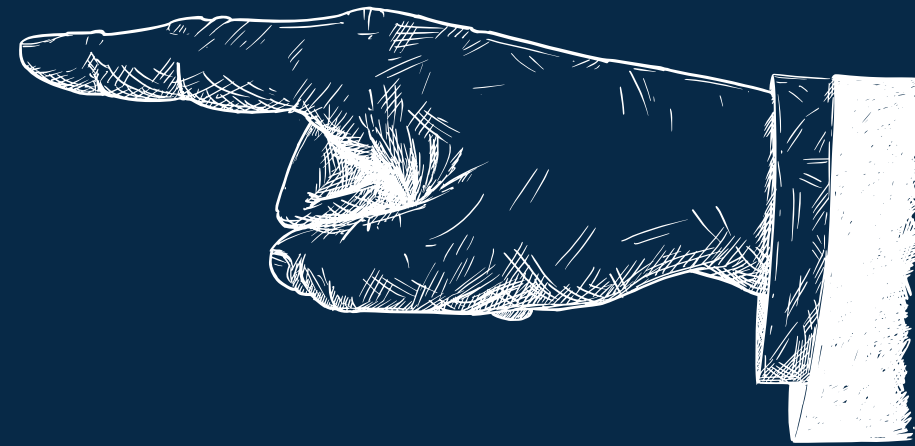


Figures in Million Metric Tons

*EPA Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2022

What happens when our stuff breaks?

We pay to have it fixed **OR**



It ends up here.

Planned obsolescence describes a business practice by manufacturers to design products to break quickly or become obsolete in the short to mid-term.

This tactic ensures that manufacturers will keep making more money and contributes to the excess of waste that ends up in landfills when an item becomes unusable.

****Part of sustainable information that relates to Repair Cafe as well.**



The Phoebus Cartel & The Lightbulb Conspiracy



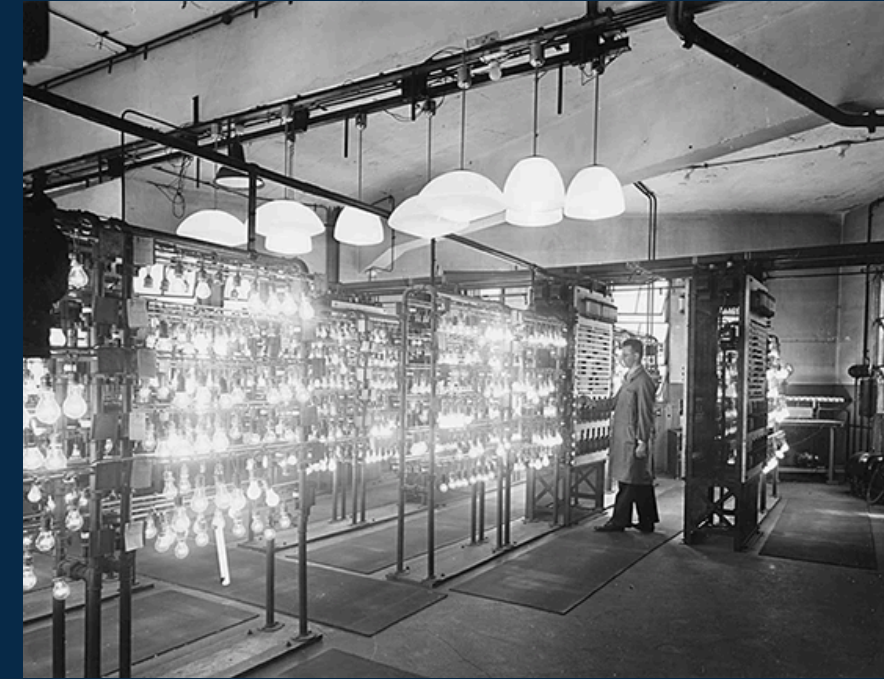
WILLIAM MEINHARDT/
OSRAM



ANTON PHILIPS/PHILIPS

These men conspired to manufacture lightbulbs to last only 1000 hours after years of lightbulbs that lasted 2500 hours.

- TUNGSRAM (*Hungary*)
- ASSOCIATED ELECTRICAL INDUSTRIES (*UK*)
- INTERNATIONAL GENERAL ELECTRIC
- COMPAGNIE DES LAMPES (*France*)
- OVERSEAS GROUP:****
- TOKYO ELECTRIC (*Japan*)



In a secret meeting on December 23, 1924, a group of international businessmen gathered in Geneva to halve the lifespan of the lightbulb in order to increase member profits. An American real estate broker stated the need for a “planned obsolescence” in order to bring about economic recovery after the 1929 stock market crash. All this took place before the cartel’s conduct was discovered.

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-from “Lighbulbs to #Sheinhails: Consideration for a Planned Obsolescence Regulation in the Modern Era” by Nicole Cullen

Death Dating...

Death dating involves choosing materials and designs that lead to an foreshortened lifespan. Manufacturers set an end date to the products we purchase.

“We make good products, we induce people to buy them, and then next year we deliberately introduce something that will make those products old fashioned, out of date, obsolete. We do that for the soundest reason: to make money.” Karl Prentiss 1958

Some Disturbing Research

“While originally hardware itself was manufactured with a predetermined material *Sollbruchstelle* (or circuit breaker), **planned obsolescence** is now routinely programmed into the software of electronic devices and **REMOTELY ACTIVATED.**” (Bisscop, 2022)

“New products would constantly be pouring forth from the factories and marketplaces, to take the place of the obsolete, and the wheels of industry would be kept going and employment regularized and assured for the masses.” (from “Ending the Depression Through Planned Obsolescence” by Bernard London, 1932)

Planned Obsolescence: New and Shiny Syndrome

The earliest phase of product obsolescence, then, is called **technological obsolescence**, or obsolescence due to technological innovation.

It ties in with **psychological obsolescence** that involves the “the desire to own something a little newer, a little better, a little sooner than is necessary.” (*from* Brook Stevens Associates Untitled Brochure, 1953)

That is the first step in planned obsolescence. Have a brand then “get it out there”!



Repair Revolution: What a “Repair Café” Can Do for the Community

Repair Cafe

Repair Café brings a community together for mutual benefit. Technicians and experts help to fix items and products that were made to break!

“Neighbors helping neighbors”



Repair Cafe

How does it work?

- Bring your broken items to the library
- Check-in at the Welcome Table
- Be paired with an expert or technician
- Observe the simple repair process
- Go home and feel empowered!
- Wait for the next Repair Cafe!!!!

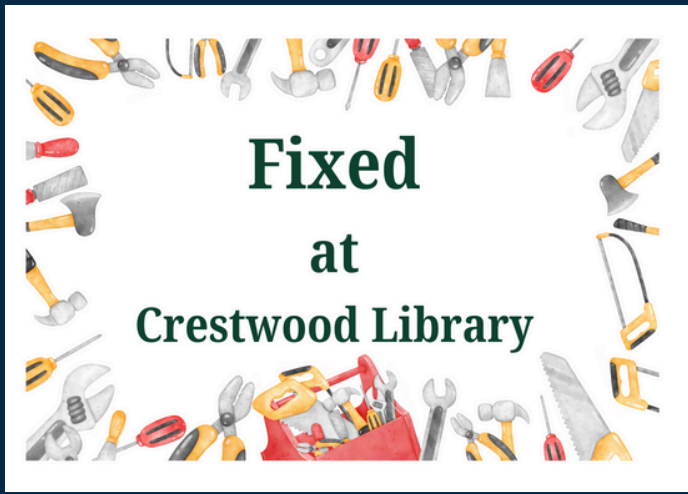
Organizing Your Repair Cafe

- Make a list of repair stations to serve patrons
- Reach out to store owners, patrons, Boy Scout leaders, Girl Scout leaders, part-timers, or any neighbor who is handy
- Create a spreadsheet to keep track of coaches
- Get commitments from Coaches
- Buy snacks and get free coffee from local cafe
- Secure the location
- Get tables and chairs
- Outside or In??
- Decide whether you will provide tools or coaches bring their own
- Write a press release

Some Repair Ideas

Appliance repair
Clothes mending
Knit Mending eg. sweaters
Guitar restringing
Book Repair
Bike Tech
Key Fob battery replacement
Switch controller repair





Clothing and Textile Repair



Jewelry Repair



Key Fob Battery Replacement





Follow-up Programs

Clothing Swap

Mini-Bike Repair Cafe

Mini-Clothing Mending

Dance Studio Clothing Swap

Tool Library

Kids Take-It-Apart Table

Recycling Drive

The Ways Your Ideas Could Be Received by Colleagues

- Generally well
- With curiosity
- With support
- With helpful feedback
- Negativity
- Frustration
- Non-acceptance
- Closed-mindedness

Suggestion: get support from the administration and the supervisors.

Most importantly, keep the dialogue and communication relevant, respectful, and focused.

Resources

SLI: Sustainable Library Initiatives

HVRC: Hudson Valley Repair Cafe

ALA Sustainability Courses - Rebekka Smith-Aldrich

ENSULIB Webinar: Degrowth forms of assessing sustainability in libraries

Bronx River Alliance

Monarch Watch

New York Botanical Gardens

Wavehill

Audubon Society

New York Bat Conservation International

Gotham Bat Conservancy

Linnean Society

EWG - Environmental Working Group

References

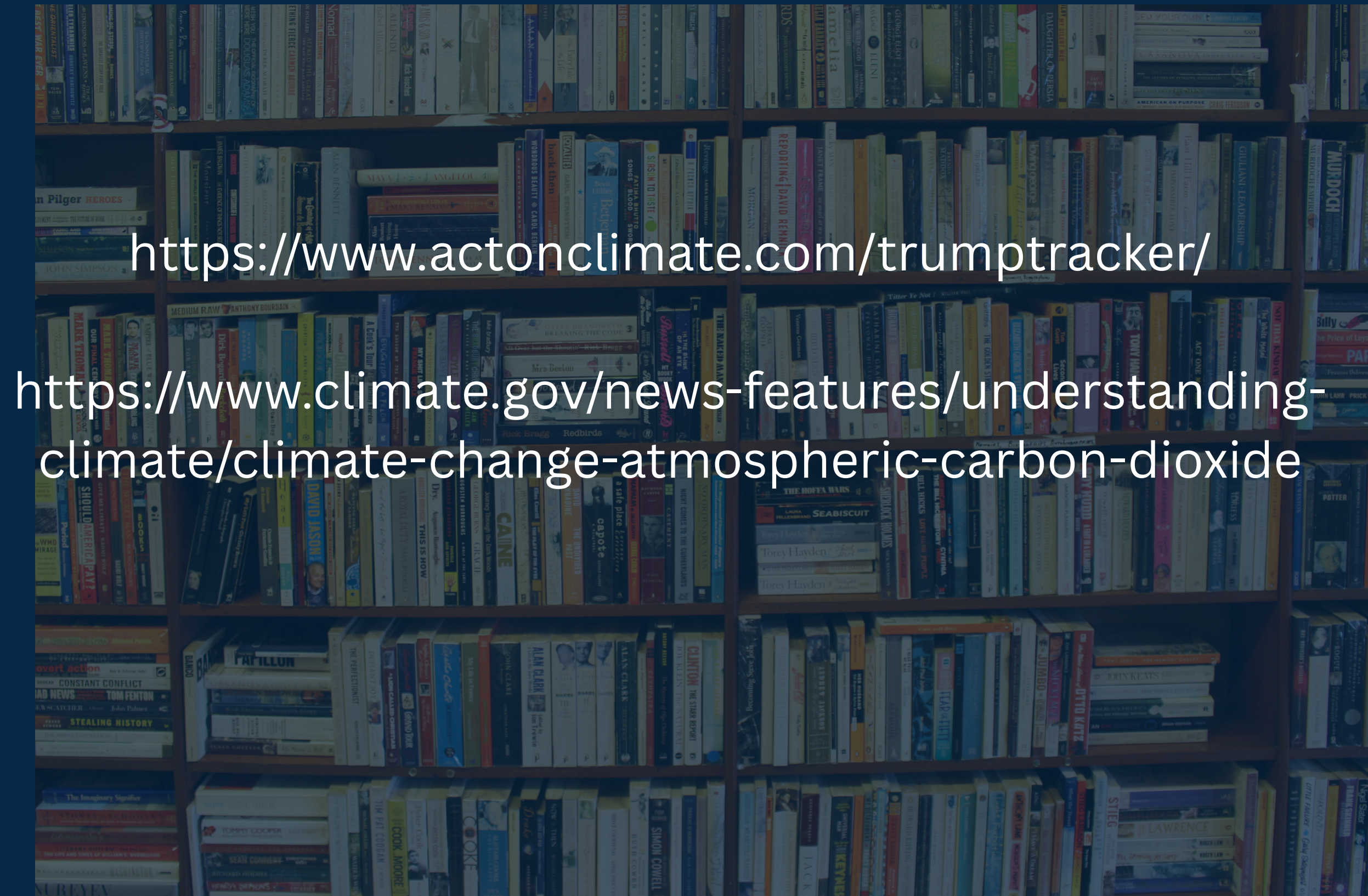
Bisschop, L., Hendlin, Y., and Jaspers, J. (2022) Designed to break: planned obsolescence as corporate environmental crime. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 78:271-293.

Gonen, R. *The Waste Free World* (2021) Portfolio/Penguin.

Stardust, M. (2023) *Safe and Sound: A Renter-Friendly Guide to Home Repair*. Penguin Random House.

Wackman, J. & Knight, E. (2020) *Repair Revolution*. New World Library.
<https://www.sustainablelibrariesinitiative.org/>
<http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>

References



<https://www.actonclimate.com/trumptracker/>

<https://www.climate.gov/news-features/understanding-climate/climate-change-atmospheric-carbon-dioxide>

Relevant Books on the Topic

- The Rise of the American Conservation Movement - By Dorceta E. Taylor
- What If We Get It Right: Visions of Climate Futures - By Ayana Elizabeth Johnson
- Silent Spring - by Rachel Carson
- From What Is to What If: Unleashing the Power of Imagination to Create the Future We Want - by Rob Hopkins
- Becoming Earth: A Journey Through the Hidden Wonders That Bring Our Planet to Life By Ferris Jabr
- Gathering Moss, Braiding Sweetgrass for Adults and the edition for YA By Robin Wall Kimmerer
- The Hidden Life of Trees, and any other books By Peter Wohlleben
- Simply Living Well: A Guide to Creating a Natural, Low Waste Home By Julia Watkins
- The Healing Garden By Juliet Blankespoor
- An Almost Zero Waste Life: Learning How to Embrace Less to Live More By Megean Weldon
- 101 Ways to Go Zero Waste By Kathryn Kellogg