

Meet Our Contestants!



When Carrie and Glenn Gesell and their three children started the competition, Carrie was interested in how many pounds of waste they could lose by recycling food scraps. On average, the family lost 11.25 pounds of garbage weight every week! They accomplished their waste reduction goal by putting food scraps and food-soiled paper in their yard waste bin. They also discovered more items they can include in recycling—paper wrapping paper, for instance—and what they can't include—lids from water bottles and from baby food containers. In addition to recycling at home, the family has started looking outside their home for opportunities to recycle, even when the weight doesn't apply to the competition!

Bonnie and Rob Nichols started out the competition as a dedicated recycling family who composted and recycled everything they could. Even so, they were excited for the competition, seeing it as a personal challenge to find other ways to improve and to get [their] kids into it too! They were able to take their recycling to the next level averaging a weekly loss of 17.75 pounds. Bonnie says, "I never realized how much could go into the yard waste cart."





Rebecca and James Gallagher already recycled before the competition began, but they still wanted to learn more about how to reduce their waste. The family said it helped to have King County experts educate them about what can and cannot go into recycling bins. One big factor in their overall waste reduction was being able to start recycling food scraps and food soiled paper. In fact, this family of four averaged a 28.7 percent weekly reduction in waste. Rebecca said, "It took some getting used to, but we're making progress!"

Baiba and Joe Rubino were the rookies in this friendly competition. At the first weigh-in, their garbage totaled a whopping 62 pounds! Since becoming a stay-at-home mother, Baiba has seen first-hand how much waste a family can generate. The family made small changes including, making juice from concentrate instead of drinking juice boxes, buying in bulk and recycling their food. Baiba also stepped up to be the designated household "recycler." Baiba says, "I have been doing what I call 'pre-cycling.' I started emptying things like fruit snacks, granola, and pasta into glass canisters when unloading the groceries to ensure the boxes are recycled." To date, they have cut their garbage waste in half!



Like the Nichols, the Kawamoto family—Karen, Stan and their son— were already conscientious recyclers and waste-reducers long-before the challenge. They started the competition at the lowest weight – a mere 7.4 pounds of garbage. "Recycling is simple and can keep so much extra garbage out of our landfills," Karen says. Since the start of the competition the Kawamotos have put all their food scraps in their yard waste bins. Now Karen says, "Pretty much all that goes in our garbage is plastic wrapping and a few other odd things."

Glad to be giving their garbage disposal a break, the Collons Family has also welcomed the food scrap and food soiled paper recycling program into their homes.

The competition has become such a part of the Collons' family lifestyle that it is a topic at the dinner table and in the community as a whole. "Long after the competition, the Collons family will continue to keep up on the recycling challenge for our community" says Brenda, "We were at one of the competitors' (neighbors') for dinner and we made sure to get approval for anything we put in their garbage."

