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Eco-Friendly Party Planning

*Simple Tips
For An Earth Friendly Event*



If you are currently planning a graduation open house or family reunion, “save the earth” probably isn’t exactly on your party to-do list. However, with a little extra thought and planning, you can help do just that at the same time you are hosting a special event for family and friends.

According to Laura Fryberger, owner of **Flings Event Design** in Minneapolis specializing in socially and environmentally conscious event planning, there are definitely ways that you can create an eco-friendly party. “It’s the little things that matter and can make a difference,” says Fryberger. “And when people you love and respect see the small steps you’ve taken to host a more sustainable event, it will make a positive impression on them.”

One place to start is by purging the plastic. The colored utensils, plates, cups and tablecloths are easy to pick up at a store and even easier to toss away when you’re finished, but consider the fact that not only are you spending quite a bit of money for products you’ll only use for a couple of hours, you are also helping to contribute to the growing landfills in our country. Plastic is non-biodegradable and petroleum derived and according to the non-profit organization World Centric, based in California, some 40 billion plastic utensils are used every year in the United States alone, as are over 150 billion Styrofoam and plastic cups, plates, etc.

While there is a little more expense involved in renting plates, glassware and utensils from a local rental company, Fryberger believes it is a justifiable expense. “First of all, you’re really helping local vendors and many will deliver items right to your door,” she says. “Maybe the best part is that you don’t have to wash anything. You just put it all back in the crate and you can either return it yourself or have it picked up.”

The same is true for table linens. “I believe linen tablecloths add such a nice touch to an event, too,” Fryberger says. More thoughts on the table: use pretty potted plants for centerpieces instead of cut flowers. “You can give the plants away to guests or take them to a local nursing home after the party is over,” she adds.

Fryberger also suggests purchasing as much local sustainable food products for the party as possible which cuts down on preservative-laden selections and also supports nearby vendors. “You might want to consider creating little signs for the buffet table to highlight the local spots where you purchased the meat, cheese, produce or other items,” she says.

Pointing out the sustainability of the event should be part of your goal when it comes to hosting an eco-friendly party. “Through the use of signs or conversation, you are showing the value of the decisions made in the planning of your event,” says Fryberger. “The more people that start hosting parties in this way, the more quickly the idea will be brought into the mainstream.” ■■

More Tips from **Flings Event Design** on Hosting An Eco-Friendly Party

www.flingseventdesign.com

- Invite guests with an e-vite (www.evite.com), or if you do want to mail invitations, use tree free or recycled paper, aiming for more than 50% content.
- Use the invitation copy (words, ideas) for impact over flashy extra parts like confetti, etc.
- Skip the balloons or throwaway party items.
- If you are going to use cut flowers, go to the Farmers’ Market on the day of the event (you won’t be able to be picky!).
- Use candlelight (try soy candles) instead of electrical.
- Source organic and/or local fair trade wines, beer, spirits, coffee or tea.
- Take digital photos to record the party but be selective with the photos you print.
- Have well marked trash and recycling stations for guests to use.