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# Journal

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## ChicoBag Creates Reusable Bag Habit

by Kayla Cook



After visiting the Chico landfill, Andy Keller found himself disgusted by not just the mounds of trash, but the overwhelming amount of plastic bags within the debris. From this moment he decided to rid his life of plastic bags and help others kick the addiction as well with his new product—ChicoBag.

"If everyone in the United States tied their annual consumption of plastic bags together in a chain it would go around the world 760 times," Keller said.

Reusable bags are the solution, but many people have a hard time integrating them into their lifestyle. Keller acknowledged this by designing a bag that is so compact you can fold it up and put it in your pocket.

He started the business in 2004 and began selling the

bags on Earth Day of 2005.

To raise awareness about the environmental damage single-use bags can cause, ChicoBag travels to festivals and shows throughout the year handing out literature with mind-blowing facts. Their mascot, the bag monster, joins them representing the 500 bags an American uses yearly.

ChicoBag strives to teach people how easy it is to live without waste and how much of an impact each person can make by substituting even one reusable bag for their usual plastic bag.

"When you go to the grocery store your plastic bag usually has a life of an hour, a week or maybe even months if you keep using it," Keller said. "But the reality

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Thriving in the Government Information Arena PAGE 11



Hegan Lane Business Park PAGE 6



## Annie B's Raises Success

by Kayla Cook

The Annie B's Community Drive has been around for the last two years and has already made over \$2 million for local nonprofits.

This achievement is more than the North Valley Community Foundation ever imagined when they created the fundraising event. In 2007, 127 organizations raised money for charitable purposes and \$869,908 was distributed throughout the nonprofit

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is it actually lasts for over 1,000 years." Plastic bags never actually biodegrade, they just degrade, he said. Once a piece of plastic is created it never goes away, which means it usually piles up in a landfill or floats around in the ocean harming fish that mistake it for food.

ChicoBag has also found a way to incorporate their product into the education system by creating school fundraisers that are instructive and much healthier than selling sweets.

"We work really hard to help schools realize that they don't have to sell cookie

dough to make enough money," Keller said.

To educate students they created lesson plans that can be integrated into the curriculum, so that the fundraiser becomes a learning experience rather than a distraction from studies, he said.

The goal at ChicoBag is to eliminate landfill contribution, so the employees are actively working to reduce waste.

"We recycle all scraps from the manufacturing of the bags, and in the office environment we have no landfill service," Keller said.

Their Zero-Waste Program also invites people to send them any reusable bags that aren't being used, so that they can distribute them to people in need or recycle them into useful products.

ChicoBags have become so popular they have been featured in magazines such as Time, InStyle and Fortune.

Keller attributes this success to the design of the bag. Not only are they mobile, ChicoBags come in an array of colors and are very affordable, starting at \$5 a bag.

ChicoBag plans on creating more products that will reduce waste and are

currently moving into a bigger building at the Hegan Lane Business Park that to accommodate their growth.

ChicoBags are a small way to take a step towards living a sustainable lifestyle.

"There are a lot of skeptics out there who are paralyzed and don't know what to do," Keller said. "My advice is to just do what you can. You don't have to be perfect and you can't have to do it all."

To learn more about ChicoBag and the environmental impact of single-use bags visit [ChicoBag.com](http://ChicoBag.com).