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IWU Students, Faculty and Staff to Participate in Dumpster Dive, America Recycles Day

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. --Illinois Wesleyan University students, faculty and staff will take a dive into campus dumpsters on Nov. 7 from 12 to 3 p.m. in contribution to the Nov. 15 America Recycles Day.

"We are holding a Dumpster Dive to obtain a measure of the amount of discarded material that could have been recycled," said Given Harper, IWU associate professor of biology and co-director of environmental studies. "We will use all of [the information collected from the Dumpster Dive and information collected since the expansion of the recycling program] to educate the IWU community about the importance of living in an environmentally sustainable manner."

IWU initiated an expanded recycling program at the beginning of this semester. "Without conducting a Dumpster Dive, we have no way to determine the success of the program," Harper said. "On Nov. 7 we will weigh the amount of garbage and the amount of recyclables collected during a single day, which we will use to gauge the success of the program."

"We will do this by determining the percentage of our waste stream which is now being diverted from landfills into recycling markets," said Abby Jahiel, IWU assistant professor of environmental and international studies. "We will be able to calculate this percentage by tallying up the total amount of garbage and the total amount of recyclables collected in pounds and adding the two together to calculate the total volume of our waste stream. Finally, we will calculate what percentage of our total waste stream the recyclables represent."

The Dumpster Divers will display one day's worth of garbage, recycled material and post-consumer food waste from the student dining hall on November 15 on IWU's Eckley Quadrangle.

"When we collected this during one day this past April, we were astounded to find that 513 pounds of food had been discarded," Harper said.

"It is our hope that the visual impact of the piles, along with the numbers from the dumpster dive and educational displays about 'why one should bother to recycle,' will serve to encourage our community to do even more," Jahiel said.

The premier sponsors of America Recycles Day include the Ford Motor Company, Home Depot and Waste Management. All 50 states plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands participated in America Recycles Day last year, "a great time to renew our commitment to recycling." America Recycles Day has grown from 750,000 participants in 1997 to 3.3 million participants last year.

For more information on IWU's Dumpster Dive contact Harper at 309/556-3056. For more information on America Recycles Day see www.americarecyclesday.org.