

Addressing the World's Biggest Challenge

Meet Anya Saunders, Wilberforce, one of the student founders of the Plastic Retakit project. The Islander community is addressing the worlds' biggest challenge, climate change. Anya's project is one of the initiatives adopted by the school to create a zero waste campus.

Anya: "Plastic Retakit aims to repurpose single use plastics into new items with a longer life."

"Here's the problem: 40% of all plastics produced are single use, meaning they are used just one time before being discarded. While this may be convenient, it's an unsustainable use of a material like plastic with such a long life and a potential to be reused. Hong Kong in particular has an issue with how plastics are disposed. Plastic should be treated as a valuable resource and used to its fullest extent, not wasted after 1 use. This idea is the guiding principle behind the Precious Plastics movement, a worldwide initiative for communities to band together to stop plastic waste."

"We [students] can all get involved in being the solution. Our Retaskit recycling hub is an innovative way to do this. Plastic Retaskit consists of 3 main project components: Collecting, Making, and

Selling. We are collecting plastic waste from around campus, preventing it from going to landfill or being incinerated. We use 4 key machines (that we're building ourselves) to shred, remodel, and reshape the plastic into new, longer life goods that we can sell to others or use in our school.

When my teacher mentioned this in class I immediately knew I had to get involved. My family had spent months, diligently sorting plastic separating it from the normal trash and taking it to the other bins to be recycled. I later discovered that most of what goes into those recycling bins ends up going to landfill anyways. I felt betrayed so when Mr. Parker told us about this way to actually physically participate in the recycling of my plastic waste - it seemed like the perfect solution. I could know for sure that my plastic waste was being sustainably recycled because I could do it myself.

With money from the John Ying Wah Gibson fund, we began work and built our first machine. The dedication of Mr. Parker and the other students working on it, plus the funding has made this project possible. These machines are what enables us to process the raw materials, so initially we directed most of our efforts into completing them.

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We've also begun collecting plastic from students, Now the team can make products. They can make anything made from plastic e.g. phone covers or lamps.

Below: The molding and shaping machines



In the future, we plan to involve student designers and artists as well as professional designers from the community in creating new and interesting products. These products could be anything from a massive variety of options. The learning from this project will spread across the school. To fund the hub's operations, we could sell smaller, large batch products like phone cases or table ware. Business students could use this as part of a valuable entrepreneurship experience. Art students could experiment with new techniques using the machines, creating jewelry, vases, and sculptures. We could even make large sheets of plastic to cut into planks to make furniture for our classrooms. Even 3D printing filaments could be made. There are endless possibilities for use, and therefore endless opportunities to get involved.

We have secured funding already for the parts required to build the 4 machines, but to take this project even further we need partnerships and support. I truly

believe this is an extremely important project. The issue of resource use can no longer be ignored.



Below: Anya and machines building machines. Right: Shredding machine.

