

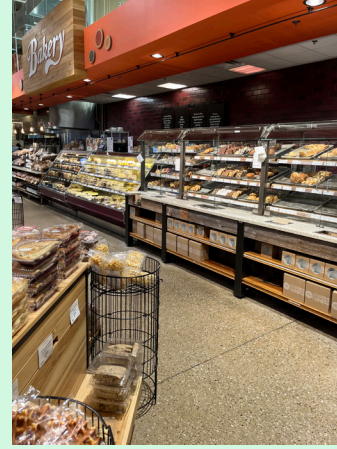
The Collective



Whole Foods



Fresh Thyme



Simple Changes, Big Impact

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The average person produces about 1,600 pounds of waste per year. That is about 4.9 pounds per day, as the United States Environmental Protection Agency reports. With this said, there are many ways to cut down on waste in everyday life, even throughout suburban Iowa.

Keeping on top of the latest trends, the online shopping platform Shein has produced about 6.3 million tons of carbon dioxide per year according to Time Magazine. Carbon dioxide emissions are one of the main causes of climate change and a driving cause of extreme weather. Shein, along with other growing fast-fashion companies, is motivating the rise of carbon dioxide emissions, which are at an all-time high.

As a helpful alternative, there are many second-hand stores in the Des Moines area. Goodwill and Salvation Army are such second-hand stores, supplying practically anything. There are also consignment stores like Worn, Rumors Vintage, and Platos Closet that have higher-end and gently used clothing. These stores allow customers to find great items while reducing their carbon

footprint by reusing and recycling.

“In general trying to buy new clothing you will wear at least 30 times is a good rule of thumb for sustainable fashion,” said Sara Howe, sponsor of the JHS Science and Sustainability Club.

By shopping at thrift stores and buying clothing you know you will get good use of, you save money and reduce the amount of clothing that ends up in landfills.

Apart from thrift stores, consignment stores, and overall conscious spending, sustainable supply shops are sprinkled throughout the state. At The Collective, self-care products with less plastic packaging ensures customers can directly reduce their personal waste. The small business opened in 2019 by Jamie Nicolino and specializes in zero and minimal waste products. By stocking products in bulk, customers can bring their own container, then pay for the product by the ounce.

One place that is more popular but also prefers to use more sustainable and ethically sourced ingredients is Lush, a private-owned franchise throughout North America. Similarly, Lush

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supplies many products for different self-care needs. They have products for children and adults alike. The products are better for the environment than the typical beauty product and make your skin look and smell amazing. With a few small changes in the daily products you use, you can significantly reduce the amount of waste you produce.

Often alongside the sustainability label, businesses proclaim themselves ethically manufactured, animal cruelty-free, and vegan. Such labels stem from the proven impact of efforts to combat global warming. At Loma Linda University, researchers found vegans have the smallest carbon footprint, with 41.7% less generations of greenhouse gasses than meat-eaters.

On an individual scale, eating less meat can help reduce personal carbon emissions. Meatless Monday is a campaign that encourages people to not eat meat on Mondays for the health of our planet and their own personal health. Specifically, eating meat less helps stop deforestation and reduces the amount of carbon dioxide emissions associated with meat production, according to The National Library of Medicine.

Reducing meat consumption might not be for everyone, but there are other ways to help the environment through diet. Some grocery stores like Fresh Thyme Market have refilling stations where you can bring your own container and fill it with different types of grains and rice, they also have many snack and nut

options. Through this practice, Fresh Thyme Market promotes energy-efficient diets and reduces waste with less packaging.

When reducing is not possible, the all too familiar slogan “reduce, reuse, recycle” states the next best alternatives are reusing items and recycling items. Disposing of certain recyclable items was once hard to do at JHS, but the Science and Sustainability club has worked hard to make disposing of these items much easier.

“The club works to limit the school’s and students’ environmental impact through different programs and events such as bottle recycling, clothing drives, and general environmental awareness,” David Zhang ‘25 said.

While the club works hard to limit the school’s waste, they also do fun events like March Mammal Madness, a tournament that focuses on combat between different mammals.

“The best thing about this club is definitely the people in it. It’s a great way for people to make a positive impact on the environment and have fun at the same time,” said Zhang ‘25.

Even if your contribution to help reduce waste is small, it is very important to help save our planet. If every person tried to reduce their waste just a little bit we could have a great impact on the environment and make sure we don’t suffer from extreme climate change.