

# 10.10.10 > BOSTON UNCOMMON

> FIRST PERSON

## Reduce, Reuse, Upcycle

*Kristina Greene, 41,  
helps Westford residents  
convert trash into treasure.*



**How does Upcycle It! work?** We take technically non-recyclable items and send them to TerraCycle, which pays 2 cents for every item we send in. The money goes to Westford schools; the items are made into other things.

**> What kind of things does Upcycle It! accept?** Drink pouches, energy bar wrappers, cookie wrappers, chip bags, Elmer's glue containers, candy wrappers, coffee

bags, wine corks, oral care products, and writing instruments.

**> What made you decide to start saving things like that?** I was trying to go green. I had converted my light bulbs to CFLs, I had started composting, and I recycle everything I can, whether it's curbside or taking it someplace.

**> What kinds of things can be made out of potato chip bags and other wrappers?**

[TerraCycle makes] several items where the original item is very evident: backpacks, messenger bags, tote bags, lunch bags, purses, coolers, pencil cases, even speakers – all proudly displaying the fact that this item used to be a chip bag, energy bar wrapper, or drink pouch. Others are not so obvious; for example, fences made out of drink pouches or garbage cans made out of chip bags.

The chip bags get melted down into plastic pellets, which can be injected into molds to make different things.

**> How much money have you raised so far?** We've raised almost \$370 since May 1st. That's in 2-cent increments. We've sent over 18,000 pieces to TerraCycle.

**> Any plans to expand the program?** I'd love to see more Westford residents,

businesses, and groups involved. I have been approached by people in nearby towns who want to start their own program.

**> Can people who don't live in Westford participate?** They can come to the Westford Farmers Market [see [westfordfarmersmarket.com/upcycle.html](http://westfordfarmersmarket.com/upcycle.html) for details], and they can drop off items in Westford at the library or at Starbucks.

– Lylah M. Alphonse