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Earth Day events pick up in popularity

Stores, pharmacies and school celebrate

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Erin Cargile

AUSTIN (KXAN) - On the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, students in the [Green Club](#) at [McNeil High School](#) celebrated by showing parents and staff members what they had been doing to reduce the school's carbon footprint.

Adriana Guadarrama, 18, and others adopted a portable building in 2009 owned by the district. Using a \$95,568 grant from the [State Farm Youth Advisory Board](#), they painted the outside green, added weather stripping, solar shades and an energy efficient thermostat.

"We had planned to put solar panels above the portable but it wasn't strong enough to hold them," said Guadarrama.

So now the plans are drawn up to put 36 panels, 4 rows wide on the roof of the high school, making it the largest installation on a school in Central Texas.

"We are trying to show the district by having solar panels and updating things and making it more energy efficient in the long run will save them lots of money," said Guadarrama.

In downtown Austin, [Live Oak Pharmacy](#) spent the eco-holiday rolling out a new medication recycling program.

"Anyone can bring in their non-controlled substance medications, over the counter products, supplements, vitamins, anything they want," said Live Oak Pharmacy Co-Owner and Pharmacist Nathan Pope.

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The bottles and unused pills are thrown into an envelope and mailed to an earth-friendly drug disposal facility in Carthage, Texas.

"They incinerate it so it doesn't get into anyone's hands," said Pope. "Even the fumes are filtered so no bad fumes get into the atmosphere."

It is the new pharmacy's answer to reports that pharmaceuticals are contaminating the drinking water supply as a result of people flushing and tossing unwanted meds.

For customers at HEB, Earth Day provided a chance to save money and the environment. Prices were slashed on dozens of organic products and energy efficient light bulbs. The grocery store also gave away free reusable shopping bags to customers who walked in with plastic bags to recycle.

"We're definitely using less plastic bags because of the reusable bags and we're also seeing a great increase and over 40-percent of customers recycling their plastic bags," said HEB Spokesperson Leslie Lockett.

The eco-friendly options do not end Thursday. The [Austin Green Living Expo](#) kicks off Friday at the Austin Convention Center.

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@maldonadowalton · 5 days ago

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