

Fill 'er up


By SANDY BAUERS - The Philadelphia Inquirer

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OK, so you've been conscientious and you've got your refillable water bottle. Maybe it's a fancy, colorful, bisphenol A-free wonder that you paid plenty for. Or maybe it's more like the one I saw a guy using not long ago: an empty food jar. (Yes, it was clean.)

So now what? When you're on the go, where do you fill it? Do you try to wrestle it into place at a water fountain? Or, yech, fill it from the tap in a public restroom?

Immaculata University in Pennsylvania has a great answer for students coming back to school this fall: Hydration stations.

 **LINK:** <http://www.philly.com/>
 **LINK:** <http://go.philly.com/greenspace>

Over the summer, the university replaced 20 standard drinking fountains with new versions that have an additional outflow at the top, with a button you push just underneath to start the water flowing.

And it's good old tap water.

Supplied by Elkay, an Illinois company that makes water coolers and drinking fountains, each hydration station has an internal filter and a display showing the status of the filter.

They also have tickers that count the number of fills, displaying it as the number of water bottles that are NOT going into a landfill as a result.

That kind of nixes the recycling quotient, but what the hey. Although recycling rates are getting better, they're still not where they need to be.

Earlier this month, a report by the shareholder advocacy group, As You Sow, found that of the 224 beverage containers sold annually in the U.S., only 29 percent by weight are recycled.

Michael Gallagher, the president of the Immaculata environmental club, has already used them and is, dare I say it, gushing? "They're really cool," he said. "Really user-friendly."

Gallagher, a history for secondary education major in the class of 2014, said about half of Immaculata students were using refillable bottles last year. The club is going to try to up the number this year by holding events and giving away bottles.

So good news for Immaculata greenies, and cheers for the university.