Let’s face it, we have a lot of fun buying or making gifts and giving them to family, friends and co-workers. But the day after Christmas trash cans are bursting with wrapping, boxes and bags. Holiday dinners or parties have their impact on our trash cans, too — cans and packaging, paper plates, plastic cups and plasticware.

We could do something a little bit different. We could try to use less packaging or recycle wrap. Put out all your silverware first and follow up with plasticware when you run out. We could also recycle as much of the debris as we can.

There are several recycling options available in Fairbanks — the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the Fairbanks Rescue Mission, K&K Recycling, Safeway, Fred Meyer and Wal-Mart to name a few. You can download a comprehensive Fairbanks recycling list from www.iagreenstar.org.

Recycling takes a little more planning, thought and effort. The bottom line is that it really does some good, so it’s worth it. Most centers ask that the recyclables be separated and cleaned or rinsed. Look below to see how you can reduce the impact on the landfill this holiday season.

UAF has numerous dumpsters for paper, plastic, glass, aluminum, tin and clothing in the Taku parking lot. Reusable clothing can be placed in the “Closet Collections” bin. They are now located at the north end of the parking lot and they do fill up fast so you may have to save your recyclables for another day. UAF has the same conditions as K&K Recycling, check it out below. For more information, look at www.uaf.edu/sustainability/getinvolved/recycle/.

K&K Recycling Inc. accepts recyclable goods Monday to Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call 488-1409. They accept cardboard, paper, plastic, glass bottles, jars, aluminum and tin. All bottles, cans and plastic containers should be rinsed and labels removed from tin cans. Please remove all lids from plastic and glass containers.
Do not include containers from products that are poisonous, such as weed or bug killer, containers from products that would cause a chemical burn, or containers from products with an oil base, such as lamp oil or motor oil. Do not recycle cans under pressure such as aerosol, solvent, propane fuel canisters or spray paint; medical waste or needles; oil filters or used oil; batteries; tires; or oil-based products such as cooking oil.

The Alaska Rag Company receives clothing that is no longer wearable and recycles them into rugs. Call 451-4401 for information.

The Fairbanks Resource Agency collects clothing that can be reused.

The Recycling Center at 723 27th Ave. is part of the Fairbanks Rescue Mission. It is open to the general public and recyclables can be dropped off anytime in designated bins. A public drive-through is available Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Some of the mission residents are available to help you unload.

Local businesses may arrange a special drop-off (Tuesday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) or can arrange for special pickups. Contact Stacy Strubinger, operations manager, at 452-5343, ext. 110, to schedule.

The mission accepts the following recyclables that have been sorted: aluminum beverage containers, flattened cardboard boxes, and newspapers and newspaper inserts. It also accepts clean and dry mixed paper, including white or colored paper, books, magazines, phone books, junk mail, egg cartons, shiny, waxy cardboard and cereal boxes, beverage boxes and pizza boxes.

The mission also accepts empty and clean plastic PETE containers (with the number 1 on the bottom), such as salad dressing, soda, juice and water bottles. Take the lids off and dispose of them. Other recyclables include rinsed plastic HDPE containers without the lids or tops, like milk jugs, cat litter containers and laundry detergent jugs or anything with the number 2 on the bottom.

Safeway, Wal-Mart and Fred Meyer accept plastic grocery bags. Think about reusing the bags you have accumulated or use reusable bags for shopping.

There are many benefits to reducing and recycling. Recycling can create new jobs and manufacturing materials. It definitely helps reduce the amount of space required for our landfill. Think about how you can help by taking the steps necessary to put a plan in place. Make reducing and recycling a part of your New Year’s resolutions.

Marsha Munsell is a health, home and family development program assistant for the Cooperative Extension Service, a part of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, working in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Contact her at 907-474-2429 or mkmunsell@alaska.edu.