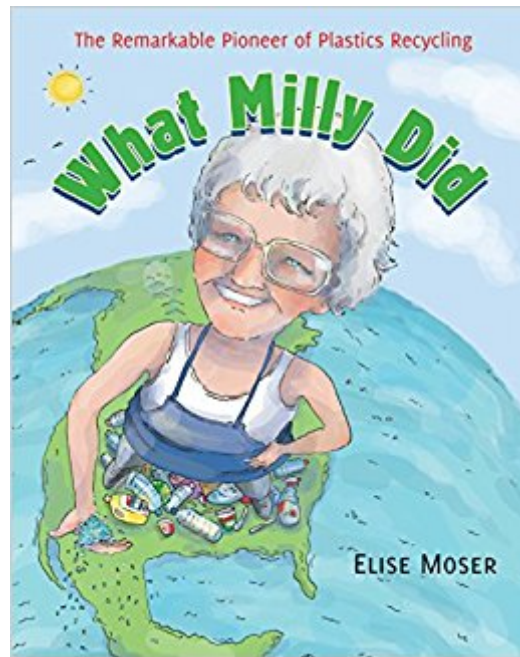




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# What Milly Did: The Remarkable Pioneer Of Plastics Recycling



## Synopsis

Milly Zantow wanted to solve the problem of her town's full landfill and ended up creating a global recycling standard; the system of numbers you see inside the little triangle on plastics. This is the inspiring story of how she mobilized her community, creating sweeping change to help the environment. On a trip to Japan in 1978, Milly noticed that people were putting little bundles out on the street each morning. They were recycling; something that hadn't taken hold in North America. When she returned to Sauk City, Wisconsin, she discovered that her town's landfill was nearing capacity, and that plastic made up a large part of the garbage. No one was recycling plastics. Milly decided to figure out how. She discovered that there are more than seven kinds of plastic, and they can't be combined for recycling, so she learned how to use various tests to identify them. Then she found a company willing to use recycled plastic, but the plastic would have to be ground up first. Milly and her friend bought a huge industrial grinder and established E-Z Recycling. They worked with local school children and their community, and they helped other communities start their own recycling programs. But Milly knew that the large-scale recycling of plastics would never work unless people could easily identify the seven types. She came up with the idea of placing an identifying number in the little recycling triangle, which has become the international standard. Milly's story is a glimpse into the early days of the recycling movement and shows how, thanks to her determination, hard work and community-building, huge changes took place, spreading rapidly across North America. Includes an introduction, black-and-white illustrations, sidebars, sources for further information and an index.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 11 years

Grade Level: 2 - 6

## Customer Reviews

Gr 2-6 • The inspiring story of Milly Zantow and her groundbreaking work in plastics recycling is well told in this slim volume. After learning her town's landfill was close to overflowing and poisonous materials were leaking into the water supply, Zantow began to brainstorm solutions. She was already inspired by her 1978 visit to Japan, where she observed the practice of separating waste and recycling. Worried about the long life span of plastic, Zantow went on to create a successful plastics recycling program in her town and motivated other communities to do the same. Perhaps most significant, she came up with the number and triangle system, which we still use to identify different types of plastics—an innovation that made large-scale recycling easier. Zantow's many years of hard work and experimentation are detailed in highly readable text divided into short, digestible sections. Sidebars on related topics, such as the first boat made of recyclable plastic and the infamous garbage barge debacle of 1987, are included throughout. Moser traces popular attitudes toward recycling with an emphasis on how rationing during World War II had left a bad impression on the United States in regard to recycling and reusing. VERDICT Add this volume on an overlooked pioneer of recycling to STEM biography collections. • Kristy Pasquariello, Wellesley Free Library, MA

"Required reading for young eco-activists." #151; Kirkus Reviews "The inspiring story of Milly Zantow and her groundbreaking work in plastics recycling is well told in this slim volume." • School Library Journal

In the description of this book it says it is for 8 - 11 years.. While the reading level is just fine for children of these ages, I would not say at all that the book is just for kids. I'm retired and I found it very interesting. Anyone who is concerned in the future of our planet would enjoy this book about one of the pioneers and her quest to save it.

Great story about a remarkable woman from Sauk County, Wisconsin who changed the world by convincing the Society of Plastics Industry (SPI) to adopt a triangle with numbers in the middle to

identify the plastic used to make the product it was on. This made large scale plastics recycling possible.

Absolutely fantastic! A must read for all ages. I am not a tree-hugger, but this book does a great job of highlighting the importance of recycling. I bought a copy for my nieces and another copy which I donated to my local library. Well written with footnotes, and index and citations to other sources. (Teachers: check this out!)

This story is very inspiring, not only for youth, but also for adults! I would recommend this book to readers of all ages. It is well written, motivating and informative. I hope this finds its way to libraries and classrooms. Milly was marvelous!

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