



What happens to used hotel soap?

By [Kitty Bean Yancey](#), USA TODAY

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Typically it is thrown away.

But some hotels are recycling via various programs. One has been started by a former Ugandan refugee and his wife who live in the Atlanta area and have gotten more than 50 hotels to contribute to their "Global Soap Project."

Derreck Kayongo is collecting slivers and half-used bars, has acquired a machine that makes new soap from old (sanitizing it beforehand, of course). The next step is shipping the recycled suds to needy folk in Africa for whom a bar of soap might as well be a gold ingot.

Here's what Kayongo writes on the Global Soap Project [website](#): "My wife Sarah and I started the Global Soap Project in an effort to address one of the key issues that plagues these vulnerable populations and that is access to soap for sanitation reasons. We recycle partially used soap from hotels in the United States that we then send back home to those that can't afford to buy this very basic necessity. This may sound as somewhat simplistic, but when you think about the problem, the reality is that there is such a dire need for soap that this rather simple intervention on our part has actually got the propensity to literally save lives. Think about it, hand washing is one of the first lines of defense against infectious diseases like the flu and diarrhea."

Kayongo, who works for an international relief agency, told me that when he first came to the USA he stayed at a hotel and couldn't believe bars of soap were replaced daily and thrown away after being used once or twice. Soap in many African nations is a precious commodity, he says.

Participating hotels include Marriotts and Crowne Plazas, and most are in the East so far. But I heard from a rep for the Barona Resort & Casino in the San Diego area, who said it used to discard thousands of bars of soap weekly. It signed up with the Global Soap Project and has its housekeepers collect used soap for shipment to the project.

Barona is "excited that there was a way to help reuse the estimated one billion bars of soap the nation's hotel industry tosses ever year," Jay Bart, Barona director of safety, health and environment, says in a statement.

Recycling soap is a hotel-industry trend My colleague Barbara De Lollis wrote about another such organization, Clean the World, in her Hotel Check-In blog. Read about it [here](#). And some lodgings donate soap and toiletries to local charities. Readers, what do you think about such efforts? Do you leave behind slightly used soap or take home new bars and shampoos to give to the needy, as some travelers do?