



# WEST CHESTER GREEN TEAM NEWS

June 2023

*Mission: The West Chester Green Team is a civic organization in West Chester, PA, that works to educate the local public and to establish and nourish green initiatives in the community in harmony with nature and each other, promoting the health of all living things and of planet Earth.*

## Inside:

Big issue! Porchfest wrap-up—and a challenge, Legendary Lenape schedule, Hillsdale kids, June fundraiser, High-density housing pros and cons, and more!



# WCGT Calendar of Upcoming Events

## When – What – Where.



**June 13:** 6 PM, Dark Skies meeting. Virtual. See page 4 for details. Contact Tim Lawlor at [tml10@psu.edu](mailto:tml10@psu.edu).

**June 22:** 7 PM, Youth program meeting, 409 W. Union St., West Chester. We are taking a look at what we can do to reach out to children and youths on environmental and sustainability themes. Contact [westchestergoesgreen@gmail.com](mailto:westchestergoesgreen@gmail.com) for details.

**June 23:** 6-9 PM, Beer & Wine Garden Party, 234 E. Biddle St., West Chester. See details page 4.

**June 24:** First session of the WCGT Legendary Lenape program. See details page 3.

**June 27:** 7PM, WCGT Board meeting, 409 W. Union St., West Chester

**For details on these and other June (and later) events, see listings beginning on page 3.**

### Related groups and committees:

**4th Monday of every month: East Bradford Environmental Advisory Council (EAC),** 7 – 8:30pm, East Bradford Township Bldg, 676 Copeland School Rd.

**4th Monday of every month: East Goshen Sustainability Advisory Committee,** 7 – 8:30pm, East Goshen Township Bldg, 1580 Paoli Pike

**4th Tuesday of every month: West Goshen Sustainability Advisory Committee,** 6 – 8 pm, West Goshen Township Bldg., 1025 Paoli Pike

**4th Tuesday of every month: Westtown Environmental Advisory Council,** 7 – 8:30pm, Westtown Township Bldg., 1039 Wilmington Pike (Rt. 202)

**4th Thursday of every month: West Chester Sustainability Advisory Committee,** 6:30 – 8 pm, Room 240, Borough Hall, E. Gay St.

Be sure to visit our Web site at <https://wcgreenteam.com/> and our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/WCGTeam/> (all are welcome to post environment- and sustainability-related items there). If you wish to support our work, please donate here: <https://wcgreenteam.com/contact-2/>

**NOTE: Deadline for the July issue is June 30! We welcome contributions and suggestions from our readers for possible inclusion in a future issue. E-mail your ideas to Dianne Walsh at [LDwalsh318@gmail.com](mailto:LDwalsh318@gmail.com).**

# ***This and That***

## **More Coming Attractions:**

**The Legendary Lenape:** Our summer program features these sessions. Sign up at <https://wcgreenteam.com/2023/05/15/legendary-lenape-summer-program-june-august-2023/>. Please note that there is a registration fee per session of \$10 per person or \$15 for a family of 4. Canoe sessions have an additional fee of \$60 per canoe.

**Saturday, June 24: Turtle Song Session:** 10am-12pm at West Chester Friends Meeting House, 425 N High Street, West Chester, PA 19380. Speaker: Chris Applegate from Allentown's Museum of Indian Culture. Learn how the Lenape and other woodland tribes lived where we now call home, Chester County. View a display of Lenape tools, clothing and other furs, weapons, and a cradleboard.

**Sunday, July 2: Wawaset Creek Session:**, 8:45-11am, Northbrook Canoe Company, 1810 Beagle Rd, West Chester, PA 19382. Canoe along Wawaset Creek, one of several Lenape names for the Brandywine. Enjoy the beauty of the Wawaset and its natural landscape while paddling along. We will launch from Northbrook Canoe Company at 9 am. Cost is \$60 per canoe, each of which can hold 2-3 adults and 2 children ages 2+. **No children under the age of 2 permitted.** WCGT will contact you about payment--and scholarships are available!

**Saturday, July 8: Eagle Heart Session:** 10am-12pm, Birmingham Meeting House, 1245 Birmingham Rd, West Chester, PA 19382. Learn about the Lenape's lifestyle through crafts and games. Come hear Lenape stories and enjoy a traditional Native American snack: popcorn!

**Saturday, July 15: Fox Mill/Living with the Land Session:** 10am-12pm, Bondsville Mill Park, 1647 Bondsville Rd, Downingtown PA 19335. Carrie Hawk, Environmental Educator with Stroud Water Research Center, will lead this session, teaching participants about native animals and plants. Come see how have adapted to our world. Discover how we can adapt to live with nature, not against it.

**Saturday, July 22: Moose Lake Session:** 10am-12pm, Westtown Lake. Back on the water! Participants will canoe around the lake, taking in the natural landscape of the Westtown School, founded as a coeducational Quaker boarding school in 1799. There will also be a scavenger hunt and the opportunity to learn some words in the Lenape language. Meet at the lake.

**Saturday, July 29: Beaver Creek Session:** 10am-12pm, Bondsville Mill Park, 1647 Bondsville Rd, Downingtown PA 19335. Faith Zerbe, from Maya van Rossum's Delaware Riverkeeper organization, will conduct a stream study in Beaver Creek at Bondsville Mill Park. Come enjoy a lesson in science at this historic mill and find all the interesting creatures that call streams their home!

**Sunday, August 6, Drumming Bear Session:** 4pm-6pm, Melton Center, 501 E Miner St, West Chester, PA 19382. Learn how the Lenape grew their "three sisters" crops. Also learn the basics of drumming and of cooking food, clambake-style. Featured will be local corn on the cob.

**Sunday August 13, Feast of the Lenape:** 4pm-6pm, Melton Center, 501 E Miner St, West Chester, PA 19382. Get together one last time to celebrate the end of our sessions with a banquet of traditional Native American dishes (including dessert!). The recipes were pulled from the Mitsitam cookbook produced by the Smithsonian's American Indian Museum and will be prepared by local chefs. Desserts will be sweetened with maple syrup.



You can read more at <https://www.dailylocal.com/2023/05/16/canoeing-popcorn-and-mother-earth-celebrating-the-legacy-of-the-lenape/>

As always, see updates and other events in our website calendar at the bottom of our Web site homepage at <https://wcgreenteam.com>

# Dark Skies Meeting

By Tim Lawlor

Our next Dark Skies committee meeting will be held on June 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm. Among other items, we plan to report on a meeting that Suzanne Webster has scheduled for us with Chris Pielli, a state representative in the WC area. We plan to convey to him the items and information we've collected from all of you as he plans to reintroduce statewide legislation related to this issue! We may have a friendly state government composition, so hope springs eternal.

We can also discuss how to approach a potential second meeting that Suzanne, Marc Gagne' and I hope to set with the Malvern Planning Commission. They want to update the language in their lighting ordinances. I'm waiting to hear back from them what the format of the meeting will be (discussion or presentation, etc). Their meetings are held the first and third Thursday of each month, so the earliest will be June 15th.

Hope to see you on June 13th! This meeting will most likely be held via Zoom, but we'll announce this when we get closer.

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## June 23: Green Team Benefit Beer & Wine Garden Party



Support the West Chester Green Team and have a fun evening at our family-friendly Garden Party, food and drinks included, at 234 E. Biddle St., West Chester, Friday June 23, 6-9pm. Menu: shish kebabs, hearty sides sourced locally when possible; vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free options. Advance sign-up required by email [here](#). Please include name, email, number of adults and children, dietary restrictions or aversions, and expect us to invoice you via Square.com @ \$45 per adult (children free).

Proceeds benefit Green Team programming.



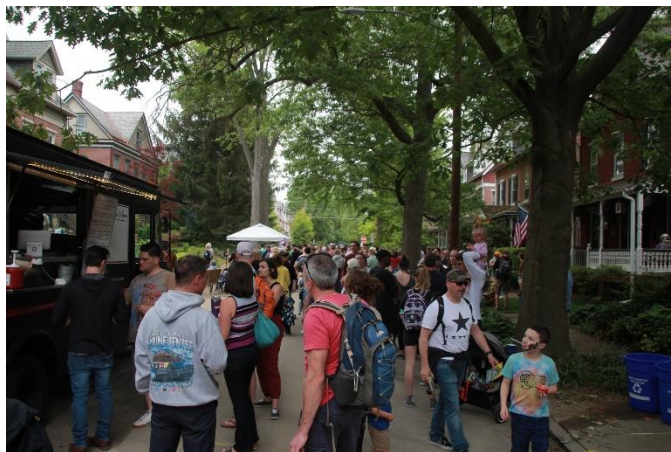
## Help Needed!

The Melton Center is seeking community volunteers to help with its vegetable and perennial gardens. Please view the sign-up page at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508054aa8ac2d6-melton?useFullSite=true#/> for details on what they need and when you will be needed. Please note that you will be required to obtain clearances to volunteer at the center. These are detailed on the sign-up page. Also, our Green Team Living Landscapes committee is looking for volunteer gardeners to help with our garden sites around West Chester. Contact Courtney Finneran at [Courtney.marm@gmail.com](mailto:Courtney.marm@gmail.com) for more information.



## Porchfest Wrap-Up

On behalf of the Porchfest Committee of the West Chester Green Team, we would like to thank Mayor Lillian DeBaptiste, West Chester Police Department, West Chester Parks and Recreation, West Chester Public Works Department, Good Fellowship Ambulance (GFAC), West Chester Parking Services, Sponsors, Performers, Porch Hosts, Volunteers and all of the other personnel (too many to name) who assisted with the planning and execution of the Second Annual West Chester 2023 Porchfest event on Saturday, May 20, 2023. Porchfest would not have been possible without all the help and support received!



. Photo by Taka Nagai

The event was a huge success, which was apparent when one walked around with the sounds of different types of music coming from all directions and seeing the smiles on the faces of the many visitors, porch owners and performers.

Thank you again and we wish you all a wonderful summer!

The Porchfest Committee of the West Chester Green Team.

## Kids Get Involved

West Chester PORCHFEST, a popular local music festival, entered performance weekend \$724 in the red. Thanks to brisk tee shirt sales and the help of local children, that deficit has been erased. The Dean and Union Street children came to the rescue with a bake sale. Quinn and Owen presented their earnings to Green Team president Margaret Hudgings who thanked them for their donation of \$213.27.



The bake sale table did a brisk business. Photo by Taka Nagai

Hudgings stated, "These kids exemplify the values that our community and our nation stand for. Quinn and Owen stepped up and acted on their concern for the environment. They did not complain, drop out or act victimized. They made a plan and worked together." Porchfest and the West Chester Green Team were in need because of increased costs in this its second year. The children set up a table, baked treats and raised money for their cause.



*Owen and Quinn present their bake sale proceeds. Photo by Rachel Kagan*

The children who live on Union and Dean Streets care about the environment--wanting it full of flowers and free of pesticides and plastic trash--which are Green Team goals. Children generally like family friendly events too and this one has music, ice cream, face painting, crafts, and closed streets so children could run around freely.

As Owen said: "Well initially we wanted to sell cookies and lemonade because we thought it would be fun, but then we realized we could raise money to help the WC Green Team and help support our local environment and that made it even more fun because we had a reason to try and sell more. We raised over \$200!"

Quinn explained her motivation: "I'm concerned about how climate change is changing the weather and making it more severe so I wanted to do anything I could to help stop that. Porchfest was a great opportunity to make a stand and start raising money to help the West Chester Green Team."

Rachel Kagan, a Union Street parent, added, "We are proud of the kids for putting others first and using this opportunity to help an organization that we all believe in." Meghan Weber added, "It was certainly a proud parent moment to watch the neighborhood kids give back. We're always happy to support our children in their entrepreneurial and philanthropic endeavors."

Hudgings from the Green Team, explained the connection between the environmental group and the Porchfest music festival. "In 2020, the Green Team applied to become a Transition Town. This movement began in England and has spread around the world--with 2 other TTs in our area in Media and Phoenixville. The goals of Transition Towns include living sustainably, growing native plants, sponsoring community gardens, stopping plastic and pesticide pollution, respecting everyone and promoting community happiness. For that last goal, the Green Team decided on a music festival because we thought it would build community spirit and make everyone happy. It worked with 6,000 people attending this year according to an estimate by Mayor DeBaptiste. And doesn't West Chester have great music and the perfect porches for a PORCHFEST!"

Read more in the Daily Local News at: <https://www.dailylocal.com/2023/05/30/sounds-of-life-west-chester-celebrates-2nd-annual-porchfest/>.

## ***Comments from the Public about Porchfest***

Good morning,

Kathy and I walked the entire event and felt what a wonderful day in the borough. I received no complaints, just how much fun everyone was having.

Hello, West Chester blog put out a challenge to the other parts of the borough to get involved, not sure the response levels because of the enormous planning.

It's just easier to walk a few blocks and start dancing.  
Congratulations to you and your team!

Bernie



Hi Margaret,  
We loved porchfest! The School of Rock students were so talented and energetic. We enjoyed meeting their parents.

I will fill out the survey.

Thank you for the monumental effort to pull off such a successful event.

Regards,  
Marie Paxson



People are sometimes surprised to hear this was only year 2. I think it will become a WC tradition.  
Great work.  
Marc Gagne'

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## The Porchfest Challenge

*By Cara Corridoni; originally shared on [Hello, West Chester.](#)*



Last month, the West Chester Green Team executed another successful Porchfest event drawing 6,000 neighbors and residents out into the streets to enjoy some music and each other.

When Porchfest was originally discussed the West Chester Green Team had proposed rotating the event through the borough's quadrants. Which has merits. It would make it easier to involve more residents and give each neighborhood an opportunity to highlight its distinctive charm. It also wouldn't be easy.

Porchfest has grown rapidly in just two years. It takes a lot of volunteer time, effort, and coordination to pull off. Organizers are just now beginning to feel like they have an understanding of what is needed and the core group in place with the skills to pull it off. Moving the whole endeavor to a new team with new streets and new constraints would be a heavy lift.

So, instead, I would like to propose a challenge. What if each quadrant came up with its own version of Porchfest? A unique way to invite the community to their neck of the woods and show off their little slice of the Borough. The mini-festivals could rotate through the calendar year giving us multiple opportunities to celebrate together. Perhaps the northeast quadrant could build on Marshall Square Park's Santa in the Square by adding a neighborhood holiday lights tour or a caroling festival. Or maybe the southeast quadrant could partner with the university to make homecoming something more than a football game?

I am sure your ideas will be better than mine but coming out of another successful Porchfest – I just wanted to throw out the idea for more.



# Hillsdale Kids are Growing

*From the West Chester Area School District's Facebook page*

Hillsdale Elementary's garden project has officially come to fruition (literally)! Last year, the PTO garden committee and Marilyn Quinn, the garden teacher leader, worked tirelessly to turn some of Hillsdale's outdoor space into a thriving garden.

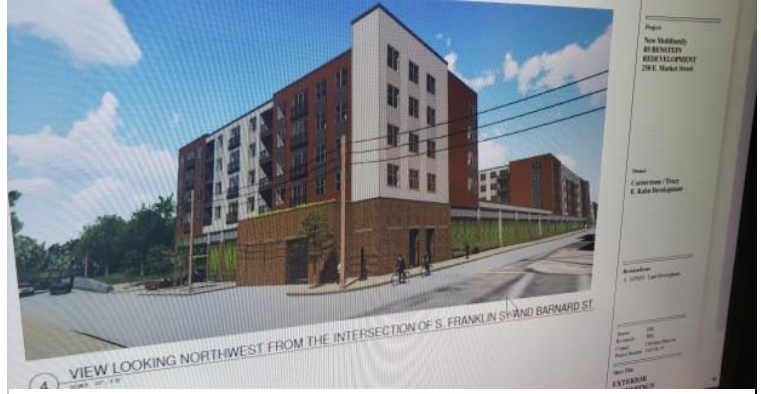
These young gardeners have already made a huge impact as they donated over 500 pounds of food to the Chester County Food Bank in the last year! Thank you to everyone involved in making this project a success. Your hard work and commitment have created a beautiful and sustainable space.





# High-density Housing: Can it Be a Good Thing?

If you've been anywhere near West Chester recently you know that much of the talk around town has been about the new apartment complexes that are soon to be built. The Burger King site will become apartments. The Rubinstein's/Salvation Army Store site will become apartments. West Market St? Apartments are coming to the old Mitch's Gym site. Residents are rightfully concerned about this massive development: increased traffic, more demands on infrastructure, environmental impact, and let's not forget—in this town at least—the ever-popular question WHERE THE HECK DO I PARK?



*Apartment building planned for the Rubinstein's site*

It's not all bad news, though. It turns out that higher-density housing may be a good thing. The following points are from an article by Rose Morrison, managing editor of [Renovated](http://Renovated.com), that appeared in *Unsustainable Magazine* online at <https://www.unsustainablemagazine.com/benefits-of-high-density-housing/>

*Note: We know that some Green Team members may agree with this article while others are concerned about such projects from the point of view of environment and sustainability. Also, the article excerpted below is preceded by some negatives. Please write us at [westchesstergoesgreen@gmail.com](mailto:westchesstergoesgreen@gmail.com) to let us know what you think about the issue.*

## Environmental Benefits of High-Density Housing

Despite the drawbacks and concerns about high-density housing, it can have a profoundly positive [impact on the environment](#).

### 1. Saves Essential Ecosystems

Suburbs grow exponentially as city populations continue to increase, taking up more of the local environment. Animal and plant species already struggling for survival could cease to exist due to this increased expansion. Many animals, like the Florida panther, need [large swathes of land](#) to hunt. Others require a very specific natural environment to thrive. Further splitting up their natural habitats disrupts and destroys entire ecosystems.

High-density housing keeps population growth within the preexisting boundaries of the city. Instead of clear-cutting new land, builders can repurpose unused and unsightly buildings and build taller structures. Sacrificing the American dream of an acre for everyone creates a tighter community that preserves surrounding natural habitats.

### 2. Increases Energy Efficiency

The close nature of [apartment and condo living](#) means less heat loss. These structures are built with efficiency in mind, using better insulation materials to preserve heating and cooling. Also, since warm air rises, apartments near the top of these buildings can often use less heat. Units are much smaller than single-family homes and therefore take much less energy to heat and cool.

## High-Density, con't.

A traditional single-family home is exposed to the elements on all four sides, whereas an apartment unit is typically only open on one or two. Due to the extra exposure and difference in [building materials](#), apartments can use much less energy to heat and cool the same amount of space.

A study from the late 2000s [examined the difference](#) between the two and found a typical home used around 100 million BTU a year, and an apartment in a complex with two to four units used 60 million. A unit in a building with five or more apartments used 40 million. The savings are significant, and energy efficiency in apartment buildings has only improved since then.

### 3. Offers More Within Walking Distance

A larger number of people living in an area can support more amenities and services within a short distance. People don't need to be as reliant on cars or public transportation since more shops and entertainment options are close by. Landlords can keep good tenants by [encouraging active involvement](#) in the community and local offerings.

With high-density living options, anyone can ride a bike or walk to accomplish most of their daily errands and possibly even get to work the same way. In fact, it's possible to reduce your carbon footprint by [half a ton each year](#) just by walking or biking for one trip each day instead of using other transportation.



### 4. Provides Easier Access to Public Transportation

Using public transportation over individual cars can [reduce carbon emissions by 45%](#). However, suburbs and towns with low-density [housing are so spread out it's nearly impossible to maintain sustainable](#) and cost-effective transit systems.

More people living in a smaller area makes it much easier to develop a good infrastructure of public transportation options. Taking more cars off the roads also reduces sound [pollution and improves air quality](#), especially as we explore newer, more sustainable methods of public transport. Another benefit of fewer cars is reducing other harmful chemicals like antifreeze, which can run off into the water supply.

### 5. Consumes Less Water and Energy in Home Maintenance

Another significant environmental benefit of high-density housing is the reduction of outdoor maintenance required. Families use fossil fuels to power mowers and energy for snow and leaf removal in a traditional home. They spend our dwindling water supply on watering brown lawns and flower beds. However, apartment buildings and condos have much less outdoor maintenance per family since the walkways and entry are communal.

## One Final Caveat

The environmental benefits of high-density housing are undeniable, but they only exist if everyone involved in planning prioritizes sustainability.

## High-Density, con't.

Repurposing should come before knocking down old structures to build new ones. Also, builders must select their materials carefully, and architects should create energy-efficient designs to maximize a building's potential. City planners need to ensure reliable public transportation, a balance of amenities close to living areas and plenty of land left for communal green space.

Otherwise, the [impact of creating new dwellings](#) would overwhelm the potential environmental benefits of high-density housing.

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## Landscaping Tour



CONCORD QUARTER CLIMATE ACTION  
WORKING GROUP INVITES YOU TO

# AN ECOLOGICAL LANDSCAPING TOUR

## JUNE 17 10 AM-2 PM

10AM-12 noon: **At Barclay Friends**, a retirement home, horticulturalist Cheryl Bjornson will lead a tour of the community gardens tended by residents and staff. Flowers & More, landscapers for Barclay Friends, can share their practices for integrated pest management and answer other questions about the grounds.

12-2 PM: **At Birmingham Friends**, member Gwynne Ormsby will lead a tour of the native species on the grounds, the childrens' tree nursery, and the meeting's Peace Garden.

2-4 pm: **At Kendal-Crosslands**, visit beautiful lawn to meadow conversion areas, solar installations, walking trails, native plant gardens and more.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
[HTTP://CONCORDQUARTER.ORG/](http://CONCORDQUARTER.ORG/)