



# WEST CHESTER GREEN TEAM NEWS

September 2024

*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:

A new book club, an E-recycling event, Hillsdale School's garden upgrade, Six facts about electronic waste, and more!



# WCGT Calendar of Upcoming Events

## When – What – Where.



**Monday, September 16, 6:30-7:30 PM:** Green Team Board meeting at the home of Margaret Hudgings. Contact [mhudgings@gmail.com](mailto:mhudgings@gmail.com) for details.

**Wednesday, September 24, 10 AM:** Mayday Coffee & Shop, 123 N. High Street, West Chester; reading books of green interest. See details page 5.

**For details on other September and later events, see listings beginning 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, 401 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 October 2024 issue is September 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

#### September 7: Shredding and E-Recycling Event

 **Senator Carolyn Comitta**  
Serving Chester County

 **CHRISTINA SAPPEY**  
\* STATE REPRESENTATIVE \*

# **FREE SHREDDING & E-RECYCLING EVENT**

 **Saturday September 7th 10am-1pm**

 **PennDOT Chester County Stockpile**  
1849 Telegraph Road,  
West Chester, PA 19382

This event is for **individuals**, no businesses please.

**Electronics Recycling Accepted Items:**  
Computer hard drives, CPUs, LCD (non-glass screen) and CRT glass screen, TVs & monitors, printers, computer accessories.  
Any small household appliance with a plug.

**Items that will NOT be accepted:**  
Air conditioners, dehumidifiers (anything with Freon)

**Document Recycling:**  
There is a three (3) box limit per car.  
Only paper will be accepted.  
Please do not bring binders, binder clips, or books.

[PASenatorComitta.com](http://PASenatorComitta.com) [PAHouse.com/Sappey](http://PAHouse.com/Sappey)





**September 9 at 7 PM:** The film "Common Ground," free and open to the public at WCU. Co-sponsored by WCGT and WCU Office of Sustainability. Celebrities explore how many of the problems that ail humans connect to the state of the world's soil. Independent farmers implementing historic indigenous techniques demonstrate how changing agricultural practices could potentially save the



**Presented by**



**WCU**  
WEST CHESTER  
UNIVERSITY  
SUSTAINABILITY

**WCU**  
WEST CHESTER  
UNIVERSITY  
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

**Free and open  
to all**

By fusing journalistic exposé with deeply personal stories from those on the front lines of the food movement, Common Ground unveils a dark web of money, power, and politics behind our broken food system.

**SEPTEMBER 9TH**

**RECEPTION 6:30PM**

**FILM AT 7PM**

*Business and Public Management Center Room 101*

world. From the Website: "Common Ground is the highly anticipated sequel to the juggernaut success documentary, Kiss the Ground, which touched over 1 billion people globally and inspired the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to put \$20 billion toward soil health. By fusing journalistic exposé with deeply personal stories from those on the front lines of the food movement, **Common Ground** unveils a dark web of money, power, and politics behind our broken food system. The film reveals how unjust practices forged our current farm system in which farmers of all colors are literally dying to feed us. The film profiles a hopeful and uplifting movement of white, black, and indigenous farmers who are using alternative "regenerative" models

*of agriculture that could balance the climate, save our health, and stabilize America's economy – before it's too late."*

**September 23:** Spotlight on tree planting enthusiast Ryan Davis from the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, speaking at WCU on September 23. A program jointly sponsored by WCU Office of Sustainability and the WCGT. Davis will also speak on meadows. We will also be honoring outstanding male gardeners at this event. Read more about Davis at: <https://www.greenzine.org/post/alliance-for-chesapeake-bay-ryan-davis>

Time and location: 7:30pm in SECC Ballroom A

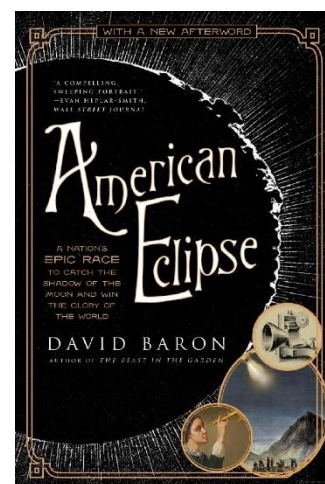


**September 24 at 10 am:**

**What:** Reading books of green interest *American Eclipse* by David Baron <https://wwwnorton.com/books/American-Eclipse/>

**Where:** Mayday Coffee & Shop, 123 N. High Street, West Chester

Our first book will be *American Eclipse* by David Baron <https://wwwnorton.com/books/American-Eclipse/>, in honor of our Dark Skies Committee and local leaders who are prioritizing keeping night skies dark so we can see the Milky Way. Carolyn Comitta, Chris Pielli, Prof Marc Gagne, Prof Tim Lawlor, Prof Suzanne Webster, and Bernie Flynn. Thank you, Austin Piona, for welcoming the Green Team. For more information contact Dianne Walsh at [ldwalsh318@gmail.com](mailto:ldwalsh318@gmail.com).



**Saturday, October 12, from 12 - 5 PM: Art in the Woods:** Experience the magic of art and nature coming together at Chester County Art Association's "Art in the Woods"! This one-day pop-up event will showcase over 50 incredible artists working in all mediums. For the first time ever, we're unveiling our brand-new walking trail, where 2D and 3D masterpieces will guide you along a self-paced journey through the CCAA's enchanting woods. If the weather doesn't cooperate, the rain date is Sunday, October 13, from 12 – 5 PM.

The Green Team will be there with our green wagons offering free plants. Plant donations will also gladly be accepted!

For more information on this event, see <https://www.chestercountyarts.org/art-in-the-woods.html>





**October 22:** Coming to WCU in October is a poet with an environmental focus. Ramya Ramana, is an American poet based in New York who was named Youth Poet Laureate in 2014. The Green Team has been invited to help welcome Ms Ramana to WCU.

More details will be coming soon.



**October 28<sup>th</sup>: Environmental Progress in Chester County:** Panel discussion. 6:30pm reception, 7pm event at WCU in SECC Ballroom A. More details to come.

**2024 ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRESS IN CHESTER COUNTY**  
Environmental Justice, Single Use Plastics, and more.

**Panel Discussion with**

- JOSH MAXWELL**  
Chester County Commissioner Chair
- MARIAN MOSKOWITZ**  
Chester County Commissioner Vice-Chair
- ERIC ROE**  
Chester County Commissioner
- RACHAEL GRIFFITH**  
Chester County Sustainability Director

**28 OCTOBER**  
**6:30PM RECEPTION**  
**7:00PM PANEL**  
SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING CENTER AND THE COMMONS ROOM 101A

REPORTING ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRESS IN THE PAST YEAR AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

**EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO ALL!**



## Want to Help?

Are you concerned about plastic waste and microplastics pollution? Would you like to help further the Green Team's efforts to educate the public and support public action? We are looking for someone to manage our Plastic-Free Please Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/WCPlasticFreePlease/>.

If you'd like to help, please contact us at [westchestergoesgreen@gmail.com](mailto:westchestergoesgreen@gmail.com)/. The goal is to provide a forum for current information (for example, we just posted a link to an article about research on plastic-eating bacteria) and to attract local residents to discuss the plastic waste problem and the best solutions. You can find a lot more info about plastics on our Issues > Plastics page at <https://wcgreenteam.com/issues/plastics/>.



## Moments from Our Dark Skies and Fireflies Celebration





# Upgrading Hillsdale's Garden

By Cara Corridoni from *Hello West Chester*, August 9, 2024

Four years ago, Hillsdale Elementary School decided its garden needed an upgrade. There had been a space but it had seen better days, so led by a knowledgeable teacher and a group of dedicated parents, they scouted a location, raised some funds, built some beds, got some soil, raised some more funds, added an irrigation system, partnered with the West Chester Food Cupboard, worked with the teachers, planted some veggies, organized volunteers to keep it running over the summer, donated the harvest, hosted a fall clean-up day, and then, asked themselves, "What the heck were we thinking?"

No, they didn't. They celebrated their success and kept right on trucking but it's easy to see why school gardens despite all their proven benefits - nutrition awareness, environmental awareness, community building, and even higher test scores - can be a challenge to maintain.



*The benefits of school gardens are numerous. The challenge is keeping them going.*

I chatted with the Hillsdale Garden Committee (Form a Garden Leadership Committee: [Journal of Education and Behavior](#), Strategy #6 for a thriving school garden) on their success so far and their plans to keep the garden growing. (Sorry.)

**HWC: So, tell the truth, after three years, how is the new garden doing?**

GC: 2024 has been both a very successful year and a year for change for the Hillsdale Garden. Every Hillsdale student got involved by planting a seed or seedling during our annual Planting Day on April 19th. We've had the help of 10 families who have taken a week over the summer to harvest, weed, water, and love the garden. As a result, we have donated over 542 pounds of



## Hillsdale, con't.

produce to the West Chester Food Cupboard. ([Partner with local organizations: Journal of Education and Behavior, Strategy #7 for a thriving school garden](#)) We are just over halfway through our harvest season and have seven more families who have volunteered to help keep the garden thriving.

**HWC: I know your inaugural teacher liaison (Ensure adequate school support. [Journal of Education and Behavior, Strategy #1 for a thriving school garden](#)) retired earlier this summer. What are your plans for keeping up support for the garden going forward?**

GC: The Hillsdale Garden wouldn't be what it is today without Mrs. Marilyn Quinn. She has been involved with the Hillsdale Garden for 15 years when it began with six wooden beds shaped in two H's for the Hillsdale Huskies. Also moving on this fall is Garden Club founding member, Rebecca, who will be at Pierce with her now sixth grader.

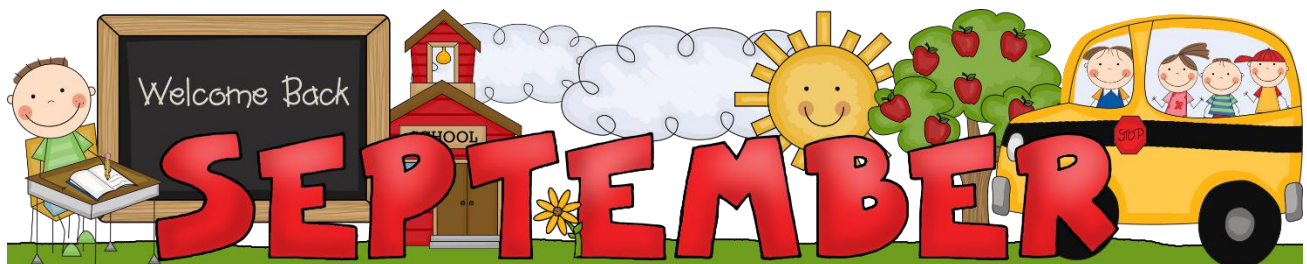
[Fourth-grade teacher] Mrs. Robyn Gardner King has been added to the team as the new teacher liaison and founding members, Courtney and Sara will continue to serve the garden club in leadership roles. Third-grade parent Liz will fill the final position. The Garden Club is also hoping to find new kindergarten and first-grade parents interested in joining the team to help continue this amazing tradition.

**HWC: Well, congratulations. I know this has been no easy feat. Have other schools in the district expressed interest in starting their own gardens?**

GC: With the amazing success of the Hillsdale Garden, a few other schools have reached out for information and ideas on how to create and continue excitement at their gardens. With the retirement of Mrs. Quinn, she is grateful to have the opportunity to help other schools work on a plan to create a garden to fit their space and community. We are excited about the collaboration and hope to offer advice or encouragement along the way. (Provide teacher garden training: [Journal of Education and Behavior, Strategy #4 for a thriving school garden](#))

Thanks, guys for the update, and best wishes for continued success with that garden! If you would like information on starting your own school garden, send the garden club a note at [hillsdaledirectory@gmail.com](mailto:hillsdaledirectory@gmail.com). They would be happy to point you in the right direction.

## School's Open. Watch out for the kiddos!



# Six Surprising Facts About Electronic Waste

From Pennsylvania Public Interest Research Group, Inc.(PennPIRG)

A new United Nations (UN) report on e-waste reveals more about how and why it has become such a big problem. Here are six surprising facts from the report:



Not only is e-waste the fastest-growing waste stream in the world, but that's the case for Americans at home, too: We throw out around 8 million tons of electronic waste each year.

**We're getting rid of more than 500 pounds of electronic waste each second. That's equivalent to more than 16,000 jumbo jets' worth of waste every year.<sup>1</sup>**



You might think that the bigger the electronics, the bigger the waste problem. But according to the UN report, that isn't always true.

Dishwashers and refrigerators may be larger than many electronics, but they make up a smaller portion of global electronic waste. **Instead, small appliances like microwaves, vacuums and even e-cigarettes compose the largest group of global electronic waste, weighing in at a whopping 45 billion pounds annually.**

Disposable electronics make little to no sense no matter the size. Nor do unnecessary "smart" products such as internet-enabled toilet bowl trackers, toothbrushes and microwaves that just end up as garbage once they stop working. **The waste from these small products adds up to billions of pounds and less than one-eighth is ever collected for recycling.<sup>2</sup>**

## Six Facts, con't.



Global recycling is growing at a rate of 30 billion pounds per year, and yet that is hardly putting a dent in the mountain of e-waste we produce every year.

**We can't recycle our way out of the electronic mess we're making when only 22% of global electronic waste is recycled.** If we want to protect our environment and our health from the heavy metals and toxic chemicals in e-waste, our social norms of buying, using and tossing phones, laptops and other electronics can't continue at this rate.<sup>3</sup>



Tech manufacturers often pressure us to replace our devices even when they still work. Phones and laptops end up becoming obsolete because of prematurely ending software support timelines, restrictions on reuse and repair, and (sometimes intentionally) bad design.

**Companies advertise a new phone every year, but ignore the waste problem piling up on the other side. We can't stay on this disposability treadmill that makes us replace devices that should still work.**<sup>4</sup>





## Six Facts, con't.

Rare earth elements are used in magnets, memory storage, electric cars and buses, e-scooters, and other necessities for a future without the air pollution that exacerbates climate change.

**Ninety-nine percent of the materials we use to meet demand come from extraction, while less than one percent is recycled.** We need to focus on reducing, reusing and recycling the electronics that require these rare earth elements before engaging in more damaging extraction.<sup>5</sup>



The market for vapes, or e-cigarettes, is expected to grow by 31% annually until 2030 and vape waste could grow at an equally dangerous rate.

**Lining up the disposable vapes sold in a year would stretch for 7,000 miles -- long enough to span the continental U.S. twice. Nothing used for a day or two should pollute our environment for hundreds of years.**

Because there is no standard legal way to recycle these products, many users just toss them. U.S. PIRG Education Fund's Vape Waste report found that Americans throw out 4.5 disposable vapes per second.<sup>6</sup>

Vape batteries also contain lithium, also used in electric vehicle batteries. In EVs, we recharge these batteries hundreds of times. In vapes, they end up in the trash after a few days. **If we stopped wasting the 23.6 tons of lithium contained in disposable vapes, we could create 2,600 batteries for electric vehicles each year.**<sup>7</sup>

**Mining for and disposing of lithium can have negative environmental repercussions.** The report points out that although lithium recycling is technically feasible, it's not economically viable under current conditions. In 2022, only 13,000 pounds of lithium were recovered from all e-waste. That's less than 5% of the lithium needed to power disposable vapes just that year.

**Dozens of countries around the world have banned disposable vapes.** In the U.S., lawmakers across the country have introduced some 48 bills that ban, partially ban, or implement recycling programs for vapes.<sup>8</sup>

**Through our Designed to Last and Right to Repair campaigns, PIRG is working to curb e-waste.**

It's already starting to pay off. Oregon's governor signed the nation's strongest Right to Repair legislation in March. Similar laws will go into effect in California and Minnesota in July.

## Six Facts, con't.

**Our Chromebook Churn report pushed Google to extend support to 10 years for its popular Chromebook laptops.** Previously, the software on these computers would expire and they would become unsafe for school use after only a few years.

Recently, Microsoft decided to end support for its Windows 10 operating system, which could send 240 million computers into the junkyard. **But, after our network delivered 20,000 petition signatures calling on Microsoft to do better, the company announced it would extend paid support for the operating system.** The work isn't done yet though, because the best way to prevent waste would be to automatically continue software support.

**We're also working to ban disposable vapes and stop producing disposable technology items that waste our finite resources.** Thirty-two states have introduced legislation that would ban, partially ban or implement recycling programs for vapes. We're also calling on retailers and franchisees such as 7-Eleven, Mobil, Citgo and others that have received warnings from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to stop selling these products.

1. Lucas Gutterman "[6 surprising facts from the UN's 2024 electronic waste report](#)," U.S. PIRG Education Fund, April 11, 2024.
  2. Lucas Gutterman "[6 surprising facts from the UN's 2024 electronic waste report](#)," U.S. PIRG Education Fund, April 11, 2024.
  3. Lucas Gutterman "[6 surprising facts from the UN's 2024 electronic waste report](#)," U.S. PIRG Education Fund, April 11, 2024.
  4. Lucas Gutterman "[6 surprising facts from the UN's 2024 electronic waste report](#)," U.S. PIRG Education Fund, April 11, 2024.
  5. Lucas Gutterman "[6 surprising facts from the UN's 2024 electronic waste report](#)," U.S. PIRG Education Fund, April 11, 2024.
  6. Lucas Gutterman "[6 surprising facts from the UN's 2024 electronic waste report](#)," U.S. PIRG Education Fund, April 11, 2024.
  7. Lucas Gutterman "[Disposable vapes are creating piles of electronic waste](#)," U.S. PIRG Education Fund, August 4, 2023.
  8. Lucas Gutterman "[6 surprising facts from the UN's 2024 electronic waste report](#)," U.S. PIRG Education Fund, April 11, 2024.
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**THINK GREEN**