



# WEST CHESTER GREEN TEAM NEWS

October 2025

*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:

Volunteer of the month, More unusual things you can eat, Pawpaw Fest Recap, Gifts & Thrifts Returns, Transportation Equity Panel summarized, Who is Jonathan Sprout? And much, much more!



# WCGT Calendar of Upcoming Events

## When – What – Where.



**October 7, 6:30 – 8:00 pm, Business and Public Management Center Rm 116, WCU: "Toward a Plastic-Free Future,"** A community panel moderated by Elizabeth Gombosi. See details on page 3.

**October 20: 6 PM, Business and Public Management Center, Room 110, WCU: Seeing Stars: Panel Discussion on Dark Skies.** See details on page 4.

**For details on other October 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 November 2025 issue is October 31! 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



**October 4, 2025, 7pm: Goose Creek Get-Down** Join GCA for our annual event, the Goose Creek Get-Down, which will take place at the Melton Center in West Chester Borough. This event will celebrate the progress that we have made so far as an organization. We would not have been able to get this far without our community. Come out for a great night with food, drinks, raffles and live music! [Visit our website](#) to get your ticket or to sponsor the event!

**Tuesday, October 7, 6:30 – 8:00 pm,  
Business and Public Management  
Center Rm 116, WCU:** "Toward a  
Plastic-Free Future," A community panel  
moderated by Elizabeth Gombosi



## TOWARD A PLASTIC FREE FUTURE

A Community Panel

**October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
6:30pm**

Business and Public  
Management Center  
50 Sharpless St,  
West Chester, PA

**6:30pm Reception (Room 102)  
7:00pm Panel (Room 116)**

**Moderator**  
Elizabeth Gombosi,  
West Chester Green Team

**Panelists**  
Dee Durham, Co-founder and  
Chair, Plastic Free Delaware  
Elliott Arnold, Professor, West Chester  
University Earth and Space Sciences  
Rachel Joy Davis, PA GIT and  
Sustainability Leader

Questions? Email [sustainability@wcupa.edu](mailto:sustainability@wcupa.edu)



**October 11, 11 AM – 4 PM Art in the Woods at Chester County Art Association, 100 N. Bradford Ave., West Chester.** A day to celebrate creativity, community, and connection in a beautiful natural setting. Join us for an unforgettable afternoon featuring over 50 talented artists showcasing work in a wide variety of media. Enjoy a full schedule of activities including live music, a sound bath, children's programming, and of course, s'mores by the fire. A major highlight this year is the debut of our expanded walking trail, now featuring stunning new 2D and 3D artworks that harmonize with the surrounding landscape.



# Seeing Stars: Panel Discussion on Dark Skies

Featuring the presentation of the West Chester Green Team Environmental Leadership Award to State Representative Chris Pielli by Professor Marc Gagne






**Monday,  
October 20th  
6:30pm**

Business and Public Management Center,  
Room 110  
50 Sharpless St,  
West Chester, PA 19383

**MODERATOR**

- Timothy Lawlor, Penn State University

**PANELISTS**

- Jeff Buler, University of Delaware
- Marc Gagne, West Chester University
- Sandy Goodstein, The Pennsylvania Outdoor Lighting Council
- Mark Grosz, Dark Sky PA
- Bill McGeeney, Light Pollution News
- Suzanne Webster, Elizabethtown College

**October 20: 6 PM, Business and Public Management Center, Room 110, WCU: Seeing Stars: Panel Discussion on Dark Skies**

**Fall Sustainability Events at WCU.** This includes some events already described in this listing.

WCU OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY & THE WEST CHESTER GREEN TEAM

## Fall 2025 Community/Campus Sustainability Events



**Transportation Equity in Chester County Panel Discussion**

September 16<sup>th</sup> 6:30-8:30pm  
Business and Public Management Center Room 116

**Toward a Plastic Free Future Panel Discussion**

October 7<sup>th</sup> 6:30-8:30pm  
Business and Public Management Center Room 116





**Seeing Stars: Panel Discussion on Dark Skies**

October 20<sup>th</sup> 6:30-8:30pm  
Business and Public Management Center Room 110

**Green Holiday Event**

December 10<sup>th</sup> 5-7pm  
Sykes Student Union Ballrooms



More information to come at [wcupa.edu/sustainability](http://wcupa.edu/sustainability)



## Save the Date: Our Annual Seasons Greenings Auction November 26 - December 6

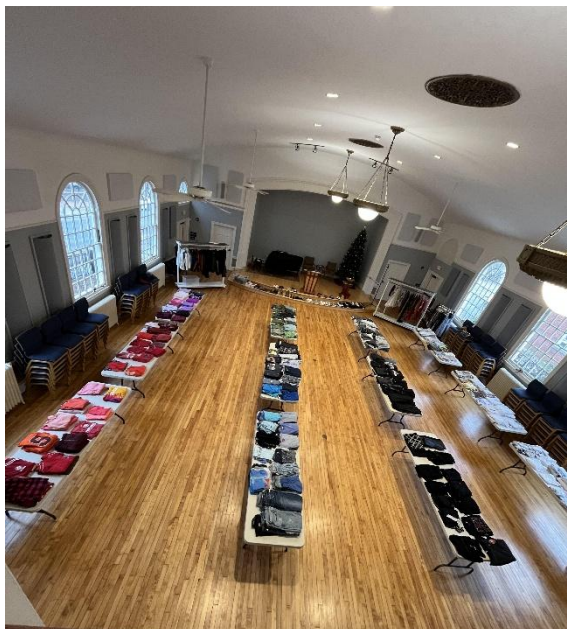
It's not too early to think about the holidays, so we are once again reminding you about our annual Seasons Greenings auction coming up next month. Look for details in next month's newsletter and get ready to bid!



### Friday, November 28: Gifts & Thrifts returns to West Chester!

Aiden McFadden, who grew up in East Bradford and is now a professional soccer player in Louisville, will be home for Thanksgiving this year. But he's not resting. To give back to the community, he is planning a second clothing swap for Friday, November 28. Place and time to be announced later.

And congratulations to Aiden for being voted LouCity's Impact Player of the Year for his work with Collective Arc and Gifts & Thrifts!



# I Can Eat THAT!?!

*By Dianne Walsh (one of a series on edible plants that you might not think are edible)*

Tiptoe through the tulips and then take a big bite...well, the flowers won't have much flavor but tulips are edible, along with their bulbs, which do have an onion-like taste. Many garden flowers can also be on the menu as well as decorating your table. The list goes far beyond Nasturtiums and those little orchids you see at banquets. Among the healthiest edible flowers are Hibiscus, Marigold, Lavender, Dandelion (what a shame we think of this plant as a weed), and Rose due to their rich content of antioxidants, vitamins, and other beneficial compounds, though the specific benefits vary by flower. Hibiscus is packed with antioxidants, marigolds are excellent for eye health with carotenoids and lutein, lavender is known for its calming effects, dandelion provides Vitamin A, and roses contain antioxidants and vitamins. Other more common edible flowers include: Borage, Calendula, Chamomile, Lavender, Pansy, Bee balm, Chives, Marigolds, Daylily, Dianthus, Anise Hyssop, Dandelion, Bachelors' buttons, Dahlia, Lilac, Snapdragons, Squash blossoms, Begonias, Chrysanthemums, Elderberry, Mint, Clover, Cornflower, English Daisy, Fuchsia, Sunflower, and Violet. But please do NOT eat flowers grown in greenhouses. These can contain pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals. Also, Before consuming any of the plants described here, please check out the identification from a reliable source.



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## What Happened?

*From Spotlight PA*

In 2010, then-Gov. Ed Rendell, a Democrat, called Pennsylvania "a national leader" in the field of renewable energy. Twenty-four years later and the commonwealth ranks second to last in the country when it comes to electricity generated by renewables, and last year, Pennsylvania ranked 49th for renewable energy growth in the U.S. So what happened? [\*\*Find out here.\*\*](#)

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## Tai Chi and Some Earth Day Plans

We plan to offer a wellness fair next year for Earth Day as we featured a Tai Chi demonstration at our annual meeting last month and there was lots of interest.

The theme of Earth Day 2026 is Planet vs Plastic and we will feature that and have tabling and demonstrations of Health and Wellness offerings: exercise, food, spiritual practices, alternative treatments, creative and social connections. If you are interested in knowing more about Tai Chi, here is an informative article from *Superage*: [superage.com/this-slow-movement-grows-new-neurons-and-repairs-old-ones/](https://superage.com/this-slow-movement-grows-new-neurons-and-repairs-old-ones/)

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## Rachel Carson's Warning Still Echoes: 63 Years After Silent Spring

*From: Earthday.org*

September 27, 1962, launched a pivotal moment in U.S. history—the birth of the modern [environmental movement in the U.S.](#) A quiet but forceful voice published [Silent Spring](#). [Rachel Carson](#), a biologist and nature writer from Pennsylvania, authored the book to expose the hidden costs of widespread pesticide use, particularly focusing on their devastating effects on birds, insects, and the broader natural environment.

Carson focused especially on the pesticide DDT (dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane) and warned that [pesticides don't stay where we put them](#); they get into the soil, our waterways, wildlife and even inside us. They move through the food chain (whether absorbed by crops or consumed by animals) exposing people, even those living far from farms, to harmful chemicals. Read more at <https://www.earthday.org/rachel-carsons-warning-still-echoes-63-years-after-silent-spring/>



## Volunteer of the Month: Sue Patterson

Back in the fall of 2017, Sue Patterson started attending our events and has attended more than any other representative of an allied organization--for the past 8 years. The WC Green Team would, therefore, like to honor her as Volunteer of the month for October.

Sue has represented the West Chester Cooperative, which plans to open a new grocery store at 204 W Market Street, next door to La Baguette Magique, who are also great friends and strong allies. She tables for the co-op and attends and supports WC Green Team events--dozens of them!



Sue has handed out information in the lobby of the Business building at WCU, baked strawberry shortcake--many, many times, served Hawaiian snacks when we showed a film about green issues there, prepared Lenape food for cookouts at Camp Linden, organized volunteers to help with Green Team events, participated in our Earth Day celebrations, marched with Jordan Norley, worked at Porchfest, and read the part of Rachel Carson at a Green Team event at the Unitarian Congregation.

In addition, she pulls it all off with a smile.

Sue likes music, and she enjoys a good gathering. As she said about the joys of the co-op's signature item. "Strawberry shortcake always brings a smile to people's faces! The shortcake is not only savored for its sweet, fresh deliciousness, but it also represents the start of the brief, local strawberry season and the hint of summer to come." Sue has helped the Green Team with her enthusiasm as a volunteer for eight years in every season of the year.

During that first year of our environmental film series with West Chester University's Office of Sustainability, we showed films on climate change and the dangers of pesticides and plastics. Sadly, we are still addressing these same issues today. We, with Sue's help, and the work of many, many volunteers continue to shine a light on better ways forward for the planet.

During our first season of programming at WCU, when we were still Don't Spray Me!, Sue Patterson was there tabling about the importance of healthy food. The co-op now has over 700 member-owners and is actively implementing their plan to build and open their store, which will feature lots of locally produced food. If you would like more information about the co-op, please email [info@westchester.coop](mailto:info@westchester.coop) or visit the website <https://www.westchester.coop/>

The Green Team thanks you, Sue. Many, many thanks for years of hard work to advance the issues central to a happy and healthy community--with a strawberry on top!



# West Chester University's Pawpaw Fest

*By Katie Ulmer, WCU '26 and GT intern*

On September 20<sup>th</sup>, West Chester University held their first-ever Pawpaw Fest in the ballrooms of Sykes Student Union. This event was hosted by the University's Office of Sustainability's Peer Educators (SPEs). WCU students, faculty, and community members all gathered to celebrate this seasonal and relatively niche fruit. There were tables providing information on various aspects of pawpaws, a recycled bookmark craft with a handmade stamp, cornhole and, of course, pawpaw tastings! Following the event in the ballrooms, Dr.



Nur Ritter, Steward of the Gordon Natural Area, took a group of attendees to the North Campus Gardens to explore one of the campus's pawpaw tree stands. Other pawpaw trees can be found in the Gordon Natural Area. The turnout for the event was great, and it seemed many enjoyed lively conversation as well as the treats!

Pawpaws, North America's largest native fruit, are only in season for a limited time each year. Almost never seen in stores due to their quickness to bruise and spoil, these mango-banana tasting fruits can be hard to find. Luckily, Dr. Nur Ritter grows them at his own property and has planted several on WCU's campus. The fruits found at the festival were a mix of Dr. Ritter's own and those of a grower in Reading, Mr. Pederson. If you are looking to try this fruit next season, Facebook Marketplace has been a great tool.

Pawpaws have been used in Shawnee, Osage, and Lenape diets. The Lenape word for pawpaw is "Mahchipki," and you can hear it pronounced here: <https://www.talk-lenape.org/detail?id=4177>. One of the tables at the event, run by fellow SPE and Secretary of the National Anthropology Honors Society Ollie Scott, showcased the Lenape pronunciation as well as an interactive display where attendees could try out which tool is best suited to cut open a pawpaw--a stick, a stone tool similar to ones Lenape used, or a butter knife! This archaeology-based display was actually the inspiration for this festival. One of our archaeology professors, Dr. Wholey, brought in a few of her own pawpaws and taught our class about indigenous interactions with this fruit.

We hope everyone who attended had a great time and learned something new about eating seasonally. Plant native fruits!





## Why Does Being Generous Make You Feel Good?

From: *CNBC.com*

Buying someone a coffee, making a donation, volunteering, or holding the door open for the person behind you are examples of one of the simplest ways to increase your happiness: generosity.

Find out the science behind this at:

<https://www.cnbc.com/2024/02/28/heres-the-science-behind-why-you-feel-happier-after-being-generous.html>



## Landmark Legal Settlement in Pennsylvania Will Help Prevent Plastic Pellet Pollution

From: *BreakFreeFromPlastic.org*

**Victory!** Styropek, a plastic production facility located in Monaca, Pennsylvania, U.S. has agreed to pay \$2.6 million dollars to remediate plastic pollution in the Ohio River watershed after being sued by local #BreakFreeFromPlastic Member Three Rivers Waterkeeper in collaboration with Penn Environment.

What makes the settlement particularly special is the “zero discharge mandate” that requires Styropek to install state-of-the-art technology to detect the release of any plastic pellets from its facility, and which charges a fee to Styropek for each pellet released into the local waterways. The only other facility in the world with this type of mandate is the [Formosa Plastics](#) plant that fellow BFFP changemaker Diane Wilson **successfully sued in her community of Point Comfort, Texas, U.S.**



*Plastic pellets (AKA “nurdles”) on a leaf in the Pennsylvania waterways outside of the Styropek facility, which now has a zero discharge requirement thanks to the lawsuit won by Three Rivers Waterkeeper and Penn Environment. Photo credit: Three Rivers Waterkeeper.*

# Transportation Equity in Chester County

By Nathaniel Smith

The September 16<sup>th</sup> program “Transportation Equity in Chester County: A Community Panel Discussion, co-sponsored by West Chester University’s [Office of Sustainability](#) and the [West Chester Green Team](#), raised many interesting points at the intersection of sustainability, public service, and human rights.



The title, urging fairness in people’s options in moving from place to place, references not an engineering question but how society meets people’s need, their right even, to move around.

Mass transportation has been in the news, with far-reaching SEPTA cuts now reversed. The 104 bus between the WCU campus and 69<sup>th</sup> St. in Philadelphia was to be cut back, at great inconvenience to many students and others. Trains from Exton and Paoli to Philadelphia were also threatened but largely retained. The move to restore rail service from West Chester to 69<sup>th</sup> St. has not yet worked out, however.

What’s the problem, when our County has plenty of roads? That’s where equity comes in. Moderator Brad Flamm, head of the University’s Office of Sustainability, pointed out that 30% Americans don’t have driver’s licenses. Our state has about 9.2 million licensed drivers out of over 13 million residents, exactly the national average.

That figure includes children and teenagers—precisely one of the issues raised by the SEPTA cuts: a lot of high school and college students in cities depend on public transportation to travel to school.

And then, some people, whether or not they have licenses, aren’t comfortable driving, or don’t wish to run up fossil fuel consumption sitting in a multi-ton piece of metal and plastic, or can’t afford to buy, insure, fuel and maintain a car, or have age-related or medical conditions that prevent them from driving. Should our society say to those people: “Tough, just stay home?” Of course not.

As president of the [American Bicycling Education Association](#), WCU English Professor Michael Burns spoke up for the many educators and educatees who commute to class or work by bicycle (that was in fact mostly my case from middle school right through to my 20 years of traveling to and from Lancaster by train and, at the other end, by bicycle). The campus maintains a “lending library” of 30 bicycles that students can use to get around campus.

Connor Descheemaker, statewide campaign manager for [Transit for All PAI](#), characterized transit as not just an urban issue, but as a broad-based public good.

Former West Chester Mayor Jordan Norley spoke for the Borough's [Rail Service Restoration Committee](#), which for ten years has worked to revive the rail line from Market St. via WCU to Media and on to 69<sup>th</sup> St. The trip would help individuals and businesses and take about an hour, considerably faster than when the last train ran 40 years ago.

**Restoring Rail Service to West Chester**

**Where Did The Trains Go?**

Train service to West Chester began in 1832 with a branch from the Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad (now the Amtrak Harrisburg Line) from "West Chester Interceptor" (now Malvern). In 1858, a second branch was extended from Media. The Pennsylvania Railroad electrified the southern route via Media in 1928 making it the dominant branch serving the Borough. The northern route (relocated to Frazer in 1980) was abandoned in the 1960s.

Passenger train service to West Chester was suspended in 1986 due to:

- Declining ridership (about 106 weekday riders beyond Elwyn)
- Deteriorating track conditions (allowing trains to unmanageable levels)
- Extension of Route R5 service (offering faster and more frequent service)

**Why Should Trains Return?**

There has been tremendous growth in residential development since 1986 in West Chester and the surrounding communities. Traffic congestion has grown accordingly, bringing locals roads to gridlock during rush hours. A 2011 study by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission estimated that a restored rail service today would attract nearly 2,000 weekday riders, 20 times the 1986 ridership!

SEPTA is working to restore service on the first three miles of branch to Wawa (US Route 1). There are a range of possible service and technology options for the remaining 9.4 miles, offering different levels of cost-effectiveness and economies of scale. They include one-seat rides to Philadelphia using traditional "Silverliners" or new dual-powered locomotives, or other alternatives that might require a change of trains en route.

West Chester Borough Council has appointed a committee to investigate options and to cause, as soon as possible, the reestablishment of rail service to West Chester. We want to hear your opinions and ideas about the type of rail service you and your family would use and support.

**What Do YOU Think?**  
Let us know at [RAIL@WEST-CHESTER.COM](mailto:RAIL@WEST-CHESTER.COM)

Tim Phelps, Executive Director, [Transportation Management Association of Chester County](#), a coalition of public, private and non-profit organizations, explained that more public transit, vehicle-pooling, and bicycling would reduce congestion and improve air quality, among other benefits.

WCU grad Alex Sankaran, Transportation Planner, [Chester County Planning Commission](#),

emphasized the need to coordinate different means of transit to help users better.

I'm just going to summarize a few of the replies to the questions that the group fielded.

All Pennsylvanians should have access to transportation. We need to reduce barriers, like the 2 hours that public transit takes to move someone from South Philly to West Chester. Some Chesco areas are densely enough populated to support robust means of travel.

Chesco is lucky to have good infrastructure, such as roads, trails, and train rights of way. We must educate drivers and bicyclists to coexist and we need to build on the structures we have to increase access.

Roads predominate, from dirt lanes to 6-lane highways; currently the only practical way to travel some routes, like West Chester to Pottstown or Oxford to Coatesville, is by car. Government should support transportation in proportion to the number of drivers and non-drivers. Rural areas gain from public transportation too.

Affordable housing needs access to public transportation. All residential developments should take transportation into account. There are in fact examples of developers planning for bus shelters.

Different lines need to connect more efficiently, including combinations like bicycle or car + train or bus. Planners need to look at travelers' ultimate destinations. Government should be more supportive of people who don't drive. Anecdotes were told of mismatches like bus stops on opposite sides of a road that people are not allowed to cross on foot. Bus stops need shelters, sidewalks,



and safe crosswalks. Unfortunately, PennDOT prioritizes cars. Meanwhile, AARP is doing bus stop audits.

The County supports Park and Ride areas but utilization needs to be increased by encouraging more carpooling, including in minibuses.

How about WCU students: how do the half of them who don't live on campus get there? Brad explained that 47% of that half drive, 31% walk, 9% carpool, 6% take the campus shuttle, 2.5% use public transportation, and 1% bicycle. As for employees, 80% drive there alone. The University would like to make it easier for all to make that regular trip in environmentally-friendly ways.

Conversation and refreshments by the [West Chester Co-op](#) and the Green Team were a much appreciated complement to the information shared.

You can check out the entire panel discussion in [the video](#).

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## Keep Pharmaceuticals, Heavy Metals, Micro Plastics and PFAS Off Our Farmlands and Out of Our Food

*From: Organic Consumers Association Newsletter #913*



To protect human health and the environment, the Environmental Protection Agency should fully re-evaluate the [multiple problematic ingredients found in the sewage sludge](#) that is now being spread on farmland. Sewage sludge contains toxic substances like [PFAS “forever chemicals,”](#) [pharmaceuticals](#), hormone disruptors, microplastics, and [heavy metals](#) that contaminate soil, water, and [food](#).

These contaminants have been shown to lead to cancer, reproductive issues, developmental problems, and long-term environmental damage. PFAS “forever chemicals” persist in the environment and accumulate in the food chain. Pharmaceuticals and personal care products can cause antibiotic resistance and hormonal disruptions. Heavy metals like lead and mercury are also absorbed by plants and enter the food chain.

In the U.S., there are generally three options for use or disposal of sewage sludge: land application, landfilling, and incineration, despite these known toxic substances, the EPA encourages the disposal of sewage sludge on farmland, as a way to dispose of it, misrepresenting biosolids to farmers as a safe, cost-effective, and natural alternative to chemical fertilizers when nothing could be further from the truth.

We need a ban now!

The EPA must ban the use of sewage sludge on farmland to prevent further contamination and sickness. Maine and Connecticut have already enacted bans. We need to [ban it in all of our states!](#)

Instead, we should promote organic and regenerative farming practices that prioritize human health, environmental protection, and a safe food system.

**[TAKE ACTION: Tell the EPA to Ban Toxic Sludge from Farmland!](#)**

**[READ: Plastics Found Inside Vegetable Tissues for the First Time, Raising New Food Safety Concerns](#)**

**[Learn more about the accumulation of pharmaceuticals in produce grown in soils amended with wastewater, manure, and biosolids](#)**

**[Learn how to avoid eating microplastics and chemicals in plastic](#)**

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## Who is Jonathan Sprout and What is Force for Good?

Jonathan Sprout, born in New Jersey, has released twelve albums, many of which feature children's music. Sprout has performed more than 6,500 concerts and taught more than 800 songwriting workshops throughout the United States. In 1994, Sprout began a 20-year stint researching, writing, and recording songs about American heroes. This resulted in four albums that received 26 national awards including a Grammy nomination in the Best Children's Album category. In 2010 his ninth album, *American Heroes #3*, was nominated for a Grammy Award in the "Best Music for Children" category. He is also the founder of Force for Good.



"Force for Good is an impact-driven institution focused on transforming capitalism for a secure, sustainable and superior future. The organization seeks to influence the deployment of capital to address major global issues and opportunities in this regard. Force for Good engages key stakeholders, conducts research, publishes thought leadership and has an active outreach program to major global financial institutions as well as development banks, NGOs, and other stakeholders with the potential to act as a force for good in the world. It works with major institutions to accelerate their efforts to tackle increasingly complex and interrelated challenges like climate change, social inclusion, and sustainable development in the spirit of encouraging collaboration and spurring a race to the top in making an impact for good in the world."

Sprout worked with co-producer Joe Mennonna for two years, orchestrating 24 original music pieces. He worked two more years creating films for each piece of music with Emmy-winning filmmaker Rodney Whittenberg. Force For Good's songs and films address important issues, including sensible gun control, immigration reform, climate change, renewable energy, hunger, homelessness, and racial and gender equality.

**[Force For Good](#)** has released one film each month, beginning in January 2020 with *Ice*, a piece about the melting of the polar ice caps and the effects of climate change. The Force For Good audio CD *Passions* was released February 2020 and followed by a second CD, *Innocence*, in February 2021. The *Passions* CD debuted on the February ZMR Top 100 Charts at #4, and placed

#2 on the March Top 100 charts. The film “Safe” (about sensible gun regulation) is a Finalist in the Independent Shorts Awards.

Jonathan Sprout came to visit Green Team during our first Porchfest. We have followed his positive message and were so glad to welcome him to our August “Happiness” dinner. Here is an excerpt from his newsletter *Uplifters*.

*Recently I was a guest on journalist [Harriet Tramer’s “Aging Without Wrinkles”](#) podcast. We did not discuss wrinkles; beauty is only skin deep. But talking “heroes”—and about my career writing and singing about [American heroes](#)—took us straight to the core of important issues.*

*My favorite heroes are uplifters.*

*Take Major Leaguer [Jackie Robinson](#). He fought racism and death threats with talent and strength of character. He was a gentleman who hit baseballs, ran the bases, and made great defensive plays on the field. Jackie’s spectacular sportsmanship crushed the myth that the color of your skin determines how much you can achieve.*

*Harriet asked for a current sports hero example. “Aren’t they just in it to make a lot of money?” she asked. I brought up the Philadelphia Phillies’ superstar home-run hitter, Kyle Schwarber.*



*Kyle is much more than a talented, well-paid athlete. On his website he writes, “I grew up in a first-responder family in a small town in Ohio. My father, mother, and sister all served. Being around the first responder community made me who I am today.” His charitable organization, [Schwarber’s Neighborhood Heroes](#), supports first responders, military personnel, and their families. Fun fact: The night after Harriet and I taped our interview, Kyle hit an astounding four home runs in one game—a feat accomplished only 20 times in the 150-plus years of professional baseball.*

*But [Kyle Schwarber](#) uplifts a lot more than just baseballs into the stands. A hero is someone who helps bring out the best in us, who inspires us with hope that we can make our own lofty dreams come true.*

*The greatest of heroes are uplifters.*