



WEST CHESTER GREEN TEAM NEWS

December 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:

The auction continues, Report from Gifts & Thrifts, Living sustainably as a college student, Volunteer of the month, Real v. fake Christmas trees, and more!



WCGT Calendar of Upcoming Events

When – What – Where.



December 10: Green Holiday Celebration. 5-7PM, Sykes Student Union, WCU See page 3 for details.

December 20--Planning youth group meeting on plastics. Contact Margaret Hudgings for more information. mhudgings@gmail.com.

December 21, 2 pm. WCGT Trip to People's Light & Theatre Co for their holiday show. "A Christmas Carol." Tickets are \$50 for adults and \$25 for children and amazingly \$15 for college students. Just a few remain so be in

touch right away if you are interested. mhudgings@gmail.com

For details on other December and later events, see listings beginning page 3. Also see more events at <https://wcgreenteam.com> and countywide events at <https://chescoenvt.org>.

Related groups and committees (please check online before attending, especially on or near a holiday):

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 January 2026 issue is December 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.

This and That: More Coming Attractions

Until December 6: Seasons Greenings Auction

Closing soon! Head over to <https://givebutter.com/c/wcgtseasonsgreenings25/>. Now and get your bids in!



West Chester Green Team Presents **Season's Greenings!**

A virtual fundraiser auction

November 26- December 6

Items on offer:

- A house in the French Alps
- Florida Vacation Stay
- Private Soccer Lesson & Signed Shirt by Aiden McFadden
- Acupuncture Session
- Private Ice Tool Museum Tour & Baked Goods
- International Dinners
- Variety of Theater Tickets
- Children's Art Lesson
- ...And More!

Pickup at West Chester Friends Meeting or delivery possible

Support the Green Team's Educational and Community Initiatives

Visit wcgreenteam.com for more info!

Thanks to all who donated and are participating—and tell your friends and family to join in!



December 10: Sykes Student Union, WCU, 110 Rosedale Ave. 5-7PM

Help us make baskets for the residents of Church Street Towers (senior citizen complex) in West Chester. Enjoy refreshments and get your photo taken with our Green Santa and piper the Elf! Piper will be handing out red, white and green candy canes for kids of all ages. This year Mike Galey will do the Santa honors and Piper Corridoni, age 8, will act as elf.



Through January 3: Season of Light, Chester County History Center, N. High St., West Chester



Come and see the History Center decorated for the holidays and be sure to tour the display of trees decorated by various local civic groups, schools, and cultural organizations. You'll definitely want to see our Green Team "tree." Fashioned from a stack of green tomato cages and sitting in one of our plant wagons, it is trimmed with seed packets, bird and butterfly ornaments, tags listing our interests, and more. It's been drawing a lot of attention, so come see for yourself.

The display was set up by Dianne Walsh with help from husband Tom. Chris Pugliese built a sturdy platform onto the wagon so that the tree would have a stable place to sit.

Volunteer of the Month: Jordan Norley

Jordan, former mayor of West Chester, has been an active leader and advisor to the Green Team for many years. He has led marches, spoken at events, and supported and advised on our fundraising efforts. Jordan attended the Green Team's annual meeting this year at West Chester Friends School where he was invited to introduce this year's winner of the Green Team's Environmental Leadership award, County Commissioner Josh Maxwell. Jordan attended with his children who seemed to enjoy the crafts and the celebratory gelato and cake.



In September, Jordan spoke on the transportation panel organized by Brad Flamm of WCU's Sustainability Office and updated everyone on the possibility of returning train service to Philadelphia from WC borough. This is an issue Jordan has worked on for many years. In summer of '23, Jordan took a number of Green Team leaders including Cara Corridoni, Stephen Marvin and Mateo Niler, along with Daily Local News reporter Bill Rettew and Borough Sustainability Advisory Head Barbara Clarke to the factory in Central PA that rehabs old London subway cars. These used and rehabbed cars are central to his plan for proceeding with the mission without spending a huge amount of money.



Jordan and his wife Rani advised us on the use of the logo on all Green Team documents and on getting insurance and other business-related issues. Rani spoke at WCU as part of our Earth Day sign dedication and taught a class on New Zealand as part of a Green Team's summer programming for children at the Melton Center (now West Chester Community Center).

While Jordan is the volunteer of the month, the Norleys are truly a Green Team family. Jordan always led our Earth Day marches with his family by his side. This family leads by example which is the best way to teach children what matters. Congratulations, Norley family.

Green Team Turns Out for Benefit Concert

Rev Dan Schatz of the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester and his friends organized a benefit concert to provide needed food and money for food programs serving local residents facing challenging times. The West Chester Co-op and the West Chester Green Team joined the Unitarian Congregation in sponsoring this event which raised money and collected food for the West Chester Food Cupboard and the Senior Center Food Bank.

The Feed Our Neighbors Concert raised \$2,734.66 which was split evenly between the Food Cupboard and the Senior Center Food Bank - plus, of course, all the food we were able to deliver. It was a true community effort, and we all worked together to make it a success.

And a resounding thank-you to the musicians who donated their time and talents to the event. Two of a Kind with David and Jenny Heitler-Klevins--singing duo, performing many children's songs; Mark Rimple professor from West Chester University and expert in medieval music; Lisa Jeanette, singer extraordinaire who performed a special song for the Green Team about bats, a Mexican song sung in Spanish that was amazing. And Dan Schatz, minister and recording artist for the Smithsonian in American music. What talent and what a joy to be gathered together for a good cause with like-minded people.

And a note from Dan Schatz:

Dear Judy and Margaret,

I want to thank both the Coop and the Green Team for helping so much with the Feed Our Neighbors Concert on Saturday. It looks like the final amount is \$2,734.66, to be split evenly between the Food Cupboard and the Senior Center Food Bank - plus, of course, all the food we were able to deliver. It was a true community effort, and you all had a lot to do with making it a success. So, thank you both, and here's to more work together in the future!

Warmly,
Dan



The Report from Gifts & Thrifts 2

On November 28, Black Friday, Aiden McFadden, professional soccer player and green activist, organized his second local clothing exchange event through his organization, Collective ARC. The WC Green Team helped facilitate the event - which offered donated clothing to the public for free at the Unitarian Congregation! At the conclusion of the exchange all remaining items were donated to ACTnow, Safe Harbor, the WCU career closet, as well as other intentional outlets.

Thanks to Aiden and the McFadden family for their commitment to helping our community.



Living Sustainably as a College Student

By Katie Ulmer



College life can be hectic, and attempting also to live with a low impact on the environment can at times feel out of reach. It doesn't have to be complicated or expensive, though. There are many ways to incorporate a more sustainable lifestyle, even as a college student on a budget.

Sustainable living isn't about perfection, but rather progress towards reducing our carbon emissions, plastic waste, and food waste, to help ensure that future generations can thrive. As a college student, your impact can feel limited by your food options, budget constraints, housing, and busy schedule. Students are indeed a part of a larger institution with many decisions they cannot control, but there are also a number of ways that universities can actually help you to live more sustainably.

At West Chester University, for example, there are sustainability-focused clubs and groups that can connect you with others who share the same values as you. Students for Sustainable Action, Sustainable Living Yoga Club, and Outdoors Club are a few of the groups open to any WCU student. The Office of Sustainability also runs a number of programs and events and even hires student workers each year to connect with peers on all facets of sustainability. There is also a Sustainability Council that meets three times a semester, including with a number of committees, all open to all WCU students, faculty, or staff. Joining these groups, attending sustainability-focused events, and signing up for the weekly bulletin from the Office of Sustainability can help students to foster community and learn more about what is happening right on campus. In addition to these groups, the University has programs such as the bicycle lending library, where students and staff can take a bike on loan for up to an entire semester, and Sustainable Fish Friday, which features different fish entrees each week. The university itself is also situated in a walkable town and offers free shuttle services, so students living on or around campus have less need for a car. Outside of university clubs, programs, and events, college students can join community organizations and volunteer to further gain community and feel a sense of belonging. Organizations, like the West Chester Green Team, are more than welcoming to students who wish to get involved.

Besides getting involved, there are many other ways to live more sustainably, even as a college student. One way is to switch over to reusable water bottles, shopping bags, paper towels, and plates/utensils. These are simple swaps but can save you money while helping the environment. WCU has free water bottle filling stations throughout campus, and bringing your own bag saves you from paying the bag fee when you make purchases in the Borough! Walking more, including taking the stairs to your dorm, if able to, instead of the elevator, can also help to reduce your carbon footprint and is beneficial to your health. Another way to decrease your environmental impact is to eat more plant-powered meals and decrease your meat consumption. Meat production accounts for up to 20% of greenhouse gas emissions, so limiting the amount you eat, even by 2 or 3 meals each week can have a significant impact. The dining hall at WCU has a great salad bar and a vegan station that makes eating plant-based easy.

If you live off campus, try lowering your heat by a couple of degrees and shopping at the Grower's Market (corner of Church and Chestnut Streets) each Saturday morning. There is also a great app, "Too Good To Go," which saves excess food from local restaurants that would otherwise be thrown away and schedules pickups for a low cost. Being conscientious about your plastic use, energy consumption, and overall daily habits can help to highlight the areas that you are already doing well, and places where simple switches can be made. Buying items and clothing used, using them in their entirety before discarding, and buying less will also make an impact. Be creative, find other uses for items, and swap with your friends to eliminate clothing and other pieces going to the landfills. Living sustainably can be easy, low-cost, and better for your health!

Sadsbury Woods Preserve and US Route 30

From: Natural Lands

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) is working on a reconstruction program of US Highway 30. This includes what PennDOT describes as “a series of projects that will upgrade the Coatesville-Downingtown Bypass (US 30) to improve safety, reduce congestion, accommodate planned growth, improve facility deficiencies, and improve system connectivity.”

One portion of this plan, the “Western Terminus/PA Route 10 project area,” will impact Natural Lands’ Sadsbury Woods Preserve, which is located close to US 30 where the 30 bypass comes to an end. A set of three alternative plans has been developed. The first alternative (R2A) would require 7.2 acres of the preserve to be developed, including a section where we have recently planted thousands of new trees. The second and third alternatives (R2B and R2C) will require development of 2.2 acres of the preserve. Our feedback to PennDOT is that **Natural Lands does not support the first alternative (R2A) because of its negative impact on this important natural area.**

These highway expansion plans have been underway since 2019, and, despite our advocacy, some portion of Sadsbury Woods Preserve will be purchased through eminent domain. The question now appears to be whether that will be 2+ acres or 7+ acres.

PennDOT is actively seeking public input into these plans, and we encourage you to **share your feedback**. From Natural Land’s perspective, alternatives R2B and R2C are the best options for the health of the preserve and the wildlife and waterways it protects. The public comment period will close on December 5, 2025. Construction is likely to begin sometime after 2030.

For more detailed information and to leave your feedback, please visit:

[PennDOT project information](#)



A Real vs. Fake Christmas Tree: Which is Greener?

From Active Beat by Emily Lockhart | published Dec 10, 2015

Every year millions of families place gifts under a Christmas tree. It's a long-running tradition that, for most of its history, involved the use of real trees. But these days many people prefer fake trees, which can be used year after year and don't make a mess in the living room.

The question is, which is the greener option? Is it better to buy a real tree that will dry out in January or a fake tree that can be used for years to come? Here are some things to consider when deciding between a real and fake Christmas tree...



1. Real Trees Are All Natural

Fake trees are just that—fake. They're made of various plastics that, when disposed of, can be harmful to the environment. Additionally, many fake trees are made elsewhere, such as China, while real trees are produced and processed closer to home.

A real tree can be a pain. After all, it will probably leak sap and needles on your floor.

2. Real Christmas Trees are Made Close to Home

Fake trees are complicated products that are often manufactured far from North America. In fact, many are produced across the Pacific Ocean in China, one of the United States' major trade rivals. That means fake trees have to be transported long distances to reach you. Not only is that expensive, but it's hazardous to the environment. Keep this in mind when buying your next Christmas tree.

3. Fake Christmas Trees Contain PVCs

Many fake Christmas trees contain PVCs, or polyvinyl chloride plastics. The problem with this is that PVCs are virtually impossible to dispose of without seriously damaging the environment. They can also be hazardous to humans, particularly if they're burned or singed. If you're determined to buy a fake Christmas tree, make sure to look for one that is PVC-free. Afterwards, take good care of your fake tree—the longer it lasts, the less harm you do to the environment.

4. Studies Back Buying a Real Tree

While it's difficult to say that every real tree is better for the environment than every fake tree, studies suggest buying the real tree is the greener option. In fact, [one study carried out by Ellipsos](#) showed that an artificial tree has three times the impact on climate change and resource depletion than a real tree.

Of course, Ellipsos assumed most people would do away with their fake tree after about 6-years. Should you keep the fake tree for 20 years it may be less harmful to the environment than buying a real tree every year over that two-decade span.

5. Watch for Pesticides

Generally speaking, scientists and environmentalists support buying real Christmas trees over fake trees. But some real trees are grown using pesticides and herbicides, which are bad for the environment and can be harmful to humans when brought into the home.

So, the next time you go to buy a real Christmas tree, be sure to ask the vendor if pesticides or herbicides were used. If they were, keep looking for the perfect tree elsewhere.

6. Cut Your Own, if Possible

Many American states and Canadian provinces allow people to cut down their own trees in lands that must be kept clear anyway for various reasons. For example, areas with hydroelectricity equipment must be kept clear of trees most of the time.

When it comes time to acquire your next Christmas tree, check to see if your area has a program in place that allows people to cut down their own trees. Again, just be sure the tree you cut down is herbicide and pesticide free.

7. Always Recycle!

Whether you opt to purchase a real Christmas tree or a fake tree—always be sure to recycle it when it's no longer needed. Most areas have an annual recycling program for real Christmas trees, with sessions running through January. If you miss out, be sure to do some digging and dispose of your real Christmas tree in a safe and green way.

If you need to get rid of a fake tree, look for a local drop-off recycling center where you can leave your tree. Most towns and cities have such centers, which can reuse the plastic, glass, metal, and other components found in fake trees.



Wishing you all the joys of the season and the happiest of new years!

--The West Chester Green Team

