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Going Green

Gary Papouschek R.N.
Thomas Jefferson U Hospital

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Welcome to a new column committed to going and growing green. Together with a little effort, we will be able to utilize the Chester County Times to present ideas, options, as a springboard each other to make a “greener world”

To begin I do not claim to be a “green” expert, and I openly welcome feedback as this is a learning process for me as well as a source for information sharing. My background is medical I am a Registered Nurse at Thomas Jefferson U. Hospital. This column actually was developed in part due to my frustration in obtaining information to make my home, office, and leisure activities as green as possible.

Recently I took in the movie “The 11th Hour” a movie about global warming hosted by Leonardo DiCaprio, the most important piece of information I took away from this movie was that each and every consumer has a vote. A vote is cast by the purchasing power of our individual consumer spending. Whether we choose to purchase greener electricity form our electricity supplier or paper plates vs. styrofoam plates for a picnic, or choices made by office supply purchaser. We can all make a difference little by little to hopefully equal a difference that matters.

The first area that everyone can make a difference is to recycle. At home newspaper and post consumer packaging(cereal boxes, envelopes, magazines) should all be bundle in a used paper bag from the supermarket, or tied with string or placed in a plastic recyclable bucket(to be used again and again). Metals cans also make up a large portion of recycling whether aluminum or tin (soda, beer, fruit, and vegetable), old paint cans left open to dry can also be recycled. And finally plastics, according to the thickness of the plastic (all plastic are coded by number of thickness in a triangle located on the package). Each township is different as to the thickness of plastic that it collects. Please refer to your local municipality if there are any questions regarding recycling programs.

At work many employers have separate refuse containers. Cans, bottles, paper, and garbage are sorted into different collection bins in most cafeteria setting dining areas. I have heard of worm farms to help dispose of garbage waste at work. Instead of discarding your food scraps, you can recycle them with the help of worms. Vermicomposting (worm composting) turns many types of kitchen waste into a nutritious soilfor plants. When worm compost is

added to soil, it boosts the nutrients available to plants and enhances soil structure and drainage.

Using worms to decompose food waste offers several advantages: It reduces household garbage disposal costs;

- It produces less odor and attracts fewer pests than putting food wastes into a garbage container;
- It saves the water and electricity that kitchen sink garbage disposal units consume;
- It produces a free, high-quality soil amendment (compost);
- It requires little space, labor, or maintenance;
- It spawns free worms for fishing.

In the work station confidential paperwork can be shredded in the office or collected in a secure container then taken to be shredded and recycled. Everyday paperwork that is no longer needed or is outdated should be collected and recycled, folders and office supplies reused whenever possible.

The following phrase was learned many years ago to help with recycling program: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle it's a matter of waste minimization the idea is that the first priority is to reduce your use or consumption of something second priority; if you can't reduce your use of something, then reuse it if you can, and third, if you can't reuse something, then at least recycle it if you can a good example of this would be water bottles **REDUCE** your use of water bottles by filling a reusable container from the tap or from your Brita pitcher at home if you do use a water bottle, you can **REUSE** it a few times (within recommendations for cleanliness) after you have reused it, **RECYCLE** it. (In some areas where plastics are not picked up at the curbside with other recyclables, look for community groups or churches that may have a periodic drop-off time for other recyclable items)