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Bill Rettew

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FEATURED

Earth Day a colorful event in West Chester

By Bill Rettew brettew@dailylocal.com
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West Chester University student Foster W. Krupp and Professor Dr. Michael A. Di Giovine celebrate Earth Day.
Bill Rettew - MediaNews Group

WEST CHESTER — Colorful chalk drawings covered much of the red bricks and concrete sidewalks along High Street to celebrate and recognize Thursday's 51st Earth Day.



Kyle Hudson, candidate for mayor, chatted up the passersby midway down High Street and in front of the Methodist Church during Chalk the Walk. Earth Week events were organized through the grassroots West Chester Green Team.

“We only have one earth, there is no planet B,” was etched with chalk into the sidewalk at Hudson’s feet.

Former Mayor and state Rep. Dianne Herrin, D-156th, of West Chester, mingled with about two dozen Friends School students at the north end of High Street.

“If anyone understands the critical importance of sustaining a healthy environment, it’s our children,” Herrin said. “Today, students from the West Chester Friends School reminded us that their voices matter, and we must listen to and act on their vision, because we are the stewards of their future.”

Friends School Head of School Brian Fahey said students recognize Earth Day all year round.

Students pick up trash in parks and neighborhoods, and plant flowers and vegetables.

“They get so excited when they get to be involved in the community,” Fahey said. “And their level of understanding increases every year ... so they can be good stewards of the earth.”

A block west from the southern end of High Street, at Church Street and Rosedale Avenue, West Chester University threw open the doors for the opening of an Earth Day exhibit at the WCU Museum of Antropology and Archelogy.

Dr. Michael A. Di Giovine, director of the WCU museum and professor of Anthropology, led an afternoon tour.

Plans to open the exhibit, Earth Day at 50: Lessons for a Sustainable Future, was pushed back a year due to COVID-19.

Startling informative exhibits surround a mock tree, the Tree of Life, which stretches two stories to the ceiling. Its trunk was made with reclaimed and reused materials and its leaves feature 1970 plastic grocery bags, to recognize the first Earth Day in 1970. Those colorful bags also signify the average number of bags used annually by a typical American household.



“The exhibit is an important reminder that positive actions can combat the ongoing environmental crisis that humans have created,” Di Giovine said. “Students wanted to demonstrate that some of our habits are harmful to the environment, but we didn’t want to have visitors throw their hands up and say they can’t do anything about it.”

Foster W. Krupp, Senior Anthropology student and one of 15-student co-curators, showed off a diorama of a typical Chester County backyard scene with a squirrel, skunk, owl and hawk depicted at sunset.

“We want to connect back to people living in this area,” Krupp said. “Humans continue to modify and encroach upon this area.

“The sun can rise again and there is hope that we can work to find balance in our backyards.”

Other features are dioramas utilizing taxidermy specimens from the Delaware Museum of Natural History; an intriguing “anti-Cabinet of Curiosities” where visitors can glimpse products made from protected wildlife confiscated by U.S. Customs; a solar panel display donated by SolareAmerica; an interactive carbon footprint calculator designed by students; artifacts from the original Earth Day; and artwork from acclaimed Native American artist-activists Jaida Grey Eagle, Christi Belcourt, and Isaac Murdoch.

Tours are available by appointment only. Call 610-436-2247 or email museum@wcupa.edu.

For more information go to www.wcupa.edu/museum.

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Bill Rettew

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