

Stepping up the fight against plastic straws

Presentation outlines dangers to animals, food supply by Sustainable Duxbury

By JONATHAN PAPPALARDO
CLIPPER REPORTER

Duxbury High School freshman Julia Murphy successfully had straws removed from the cafeterias at both Duxbury High School and Duxbury Middle School. Her achievement is the result of the implementation of a project she started last year. This move will save the school from using more than 300,000 straws annually.

Murphy spoke Jan. 17 as part of a larger presentation on the dangers of single-use plastic straws sponsored by Sustainable Duxbury and held in the Merry Room at the Duxbury Free Library. Murphy's initiative began as a project to implement environmentally friendly habits at DMS, specifically reducing plastic waste and eradicating the use of straws.

She worked in conjunction with the Green Team, an environmental club at DMS and DHS during the school year and took over the project last summer for the Girl Scouts. For the project, Murphy said she gathered information on the harmful effects of single-use plastic straws on the environment and took what she learned to DMS Assistant Principal Donna Theodossiou,



Members of Sustainable Duxbury are distributing cards like these to local restaurants to encourage them not to use plastic straws.

Photo by Jonathan Pappalardo

who called the school's catering company and initiated the ban.

Janis Owens and Marjorie Hanlon from Sustainable Duxbury explained the organization has created business cards intended to encourage restaurant owners to implement their own ban on single-use plastic straws. Their goal is to have people take these business cards, which feature their URL and information on where they can learn more about why these straws should be banned, into restaurants and leave them behind with the bill if they get served a single-use plastic straw.

Murphy's project and the

business cards are just two ways of getting the word out about the dangers of single-use plastic straws and plastics in general. The event itself was primarily designed as a viewing party, complete with pizza, of the documentary "STRAWS," which is the work of documentarian Linda Booker.

The 30-minute film, which features narration from actor Tim Robbins, traces the history of straws from their earliest use made from coal in Ancient Mesopotamia, to wheat and paper straws in the 1800s, and bendy straws by the 1930s. Single-use plastic straws first came into fashion

in the 1950s, when the rise in fast food chains brought with it demand for disposable dinnerware.

According to the film, plastic straws are cheaper to produce, but they're also non-recyclable and to make them, harmful chemicals are sent into the environment from the factories where they are produced. Billions of plastic straws are buried in landfills, litter the planet and wind up in

our oceans each year.

The film goes on to spotlight turtle researcher Christine Figgner, who was off the waters of Costa Rica in August 2015 with her research team collecting tissue samples from sea turtles, when she came upon a male sea turtle with something odd up its nostril. It turns out the turtle had swallowed and tried to regurgitate

Continued on page 17

Open house at Bay Farm Academy this week

Bay Farm Montessori Academy is hosting an admissions open house, Thursday, Jan. 24 at 9:30 a.m. Families are invited to learn more about Bay Farm's curriculum and see the school in action.

The school is located at 145 Loring St., Duxbury. More information can be found at bfarm.org/openhouse.

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Sustainable Duxbury steps up fight against straws

Continued from page 4

a plastic straw, but had only successfully gotten it lodged in its nasal cavity. Figgner filmed the whole process and the eight-minute video went viral, racking up more than 34 million views to date.

According to the film, plastic straws are cheaper to produce, but they’re also non-recyclable and to make them, harmful chemicals are sent into the environment from the factories where they are produced.

Sarah Mae Nelson, from the Monterey Bay Aquarium in California, appears in the film to bring awareness to growing concerns surrounding marine life and seafood. “We as marine scientists go out and look at the fishery stocks, we also look at the habitats, we also look at how those fish interact with other populations of fish and what our eating them means, not only for human health, but also for the health of the ocean.”

Nelson goes on to add, “Animals are going to eat whatever fits in their mouth. If they’re a plankton feeder, they’re going to eat microscopic things. But we choose to eat salmon, and tuna, and Mahi are like the lions and

wolves of the sea, so all of the chemicals, plastics and other debris that the small fish have eaten are now hyper-concentrated into these large predators. We’re only now starting to learn what that means for human health.”

Brian Taylor, an environmental educator with the North & South Rivers Watershed Association, commended Duxbury and other South Shore towns for leading the way with plastic bag bans, and he stressed when it comes to plastic straws, five million are used each day in the United States, which equates to 1.6 per person, and 177 billion each year. In terms of our eco-systems, he pointed out that

straws can easily look like natural food or worms and help animals feel full, which means they stop eating and getting the nutrients they need.

In terms of solutions, Taylor says to remember paper is biodegradable so always use paper bags, reusable cups and plastics alternatives. For straw alternatives, he says, get ones made from sustainable materials such as glass, bamboo, rye, metal and even dried pasta.

To find the business cards you can bring to restaurants, Hanlon says to email sustainableduxbury@gmail.com and to learn more about the organization visit www.sustainableduxbury.org.

Duxbury Council on Aging to launch Discovery Center for civic engagement

Research shows that an active, purpose-driven life is closely related to health, happiness, and longevity. To that end, a growing majority of older adults seek opportunities, paid or unpaid, that make a difference in their lives and their communities.

The question is how to go about finding those opportunities. That’s where the Discovery Center for Civic Engagement can help.

The Duxbury Senior Center is one of six senior centers in Massachusetts piloting Discovery Center in 2019. The Duxbury Senior Center Discovery Center will offer ideas, resources and a peer support system to help those 55 and older seek a stronger sense of purpose in their work, engage in their communities and create balance in their lives.

There will be an information session on Tuesday, Jan. 29 at 7 p.m. at the Duxbury Senior Center.

Reservations are requested. Please either email angelasinnott@duxburycoa.com or call her at 781-934-5774, ext. 5716.

Speakers to discuss VLAC pipes and cancer

On Thursday, Jan. 31 at 7:30 p.m., Dr. Ann Aschengrau and Duxbury resident Melissa Rosenblatt will speak at the Duxbury Middle/High School Presentation Hall to discuss VLAC water pipes and their association with cancer.



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Duxbury Business Association




Next Meeting:

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sponsored by Nancy Von Stakelberg, CFP of Radius Wealth Management, LLC



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| Plungerhead Zinfandel or Cabernet Sauvignon | 750ML..... | \$12.99 |
| 14 Hands Hot to Trot or Cabernet Sauvignon.... | 750 ML..... | \$14.99 |
| Sam Adams Cold Snap..... | 12PK cans... | \$15.99 <small>+DER.</small> |
| Ruffino Prosecco | 750ML..... | \$11.99 |

prices good through 1/29/19

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Author Keener to give talk

On Sunday, Jan. 27 at 2 p.m. in the Merry Room of the Duxbury Free Library, author Jessica Keener will talk about her newest novel, “Strangers In Budapest,” a story of trauma, grief, retribution and the persistence of love.

It was an Indie Next pick and published to wide acclaim.


It was selected as a best new novel by Entertainment Weekly. Boston Magazine called it “the perfect page-turner.”


This program is co-sponsored by Westwinds Bookshop, which will have books available for purchase and signing.

Registration is required and can be done by visiting the website at duxbury-freelibrary.org or by calling 781-934-2721, ext. 5655.

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