

Celebrating Earth Day as a Community

By Lisa Wolff | Executive Director, FoHVOS

April 22nd is Earth Day. As environmental issues have captured the public's attention, local environmental groups have planned separate activities to celebrate the day. This year the Hopewell Valley school district seeks to unite the entire community around common goals of environmental justice and sustainability by announcing the inaugural Hopewell Valley Green Week from April 18-24, 2021.

Clean Communities Day on April 17th serves as a warm-up and pre-Green Week event. Come out and clean the community. The German Club and Scout clubs have become regulars. Come join the fun, receive hourly pay for your favorite nonprofit and go home with a tee-shirt.

The district has green teams in each of its schools and a district wide green team that also includes administrators, teachers, school board members, parents, students and representatives from the Hopewell Valley Green Team and FoHVOS. In addition, the district has released a brand-new Environmental Stewardship Statement:

"The Hopewell Valley Regional School District is dedicated to being a responsible steward of the environment, both within our buildings and beyond our classrooms. We are committed to using our resources responsibly; mobilizing our students, staff and the wider community, by providing them with the knowledge and skills to envision and create an environmentally just and sustainable future."

The statement also includes a commitment to environmental citizenship which seeks to "educate, innovate, engage, and advocate." Green Week is a natural outgrowth of this movement.

Green Week includes classroom activities in every school. Students will be introduced to an environmental problem at the beginning of the week and tasked with helping to solve this problem by participating in a challenge. At the conclusion of the week, students will reflect on how the challenge impacted their week.

In addition, after school Green Teams will be hosting Zoom events to help educate the community about Green issues. Activities may include Scavenger Hunts, Kahoots, and other engaging community events.

Two community film screenings and panel discussions are also planned. *Microplastic Madness* is an informative, entertaining and hopeful film about a group of 5th graders from Brooklyn New York sparking youth-led action for a plastic free future with schools as hubs for change. *The Sacrifice Zone* is a half hour film that follows local resident Maria Lopez as she leads a group of warriors to clean up one of the most toxic neighborhoods in the country -- the Ironbound district of Newark, New Jersey. *The Sacrifice Zone* highlights the group's efforts to break the cycle of poor communities of color serving as dumping grounds for our consumer society.

Finally, the Green Week schedule also includes other planned activities from student groups, FoHVOS, The Watershed Institute and the Outdoor Equity Alliance.

Carolyn McGrath, a teacher on the Green Week planning committee shared, "We hope that the connections, conversations, and learning that take place during Green Week will deepen our commitment to working together towards environmentally just and sustainable solutions, and provide opportunities for continued dialogue & sustained action."



We extend our thoughts, prayers and concerns to all who are affected by this global crisis.

Blackwell Memorial Home is here to continuously provide service and support to those that are experiencing a loss throughout this time.

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Kevin R. Latham
Manager/Lic. Director NJ #4625 / PA #000714

Elizabeth Blackwell Davis
Owner/Lic. Director NJ #2475

21 North Main Street, Pennington, NJ 08534

(609) 737-2900

www.blackwellmh.com | blackwellmem@verizon.net

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