

Berkeley Heights

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BENCHES FROM THIN-FILM PLASTICS - COLLECTION RESUMES

Submitted by Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission



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Since June 2018 when the Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission started the program of collecting thin film plastics in Trex® bins around town, the Township has collectively amassed a total of 12,805 pounds of thin-film plastics. Thanks to the community members who contributed their plastics to these bins, as well as to the volunteers, organizations, and businesses around town who delivered these plastics from these bins to Trex® partner store locations, Berkeley Heights has now earned a total of 17 Trex® benches.

The Trex® Company sources a portion of its raw materials for its outdoor decking products from the plastics it receives from its distributors. Trex® then uses these plastics in its manufacturing process. So, essentially, the plastics dropped off at the bins in town help produce the Trex® benches our town has received.

Because Vegan Fest was cancelled this year due to COVID-19, the Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission (BHEC) resolved to use funds that would otherwise have gone toward the event instead for engraving each bench earned with the name of the group or business responsible for delivering the collected plastics to partner stores. Most of the engraved benches now reside in the Lower Columbia Park tennis courts. Other benches appear outside the doors of local businesses, such as Taylor Rental and Smith Chiropractic, whose owners “adopted” a bin.

According to Dr. Patrick Smith, “I have always believed strongly in the importance of recycling and plastics are a particularly important resource to recycle. So, when Smith Chiropractic was asked to help host a plastics bin, we partnered with Paul Neuwirth at Taylor Rental, who has the perfect collection site. Together, we have recycled several thousand pounds of thin-film plastics. Our hopes are to collect thousand more pounds, helping to provide free sustainable benches to our community, and making our world a little better place for now and for the next generation.”

At this time, the BHEC is resuming the town-wide thin-film plastics collection. “The



(above) Bench at Smith Chiropractic on Snyder Avenue.

Environmental Commission truly appreciates it that Taylor Rental and the Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts are stepping up to take in thin-film plastics,” said Environmental Commission Chair Richard Leister. “It is clear that many residents are interested in this recycling effort.” The public can drop off their clean plastics (plastic grocery bags, produce bags, bread bags, case overwrap, dry cleaning bags, newspaper sleeves, ice bags, wood pellet bags, Ziplock® & other re-sealable bags, produce bags, bubble wrap, salt bags, and cereal bags) at the bin located inside Taylor Rental, located on Springfield Avenue (taylorrentalbh.com). Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts will also be accepting thin film plastics from those who come for lessons or rehearsals (whartonarts.org/).

The benches, as well as the thin film plastics collection program itself, are helping our local businesses attract customers while enabling them to give back to the community. Says Paul Neuwirth, owner of Taylor Rental who proudly displays his Trex bench outside his store, “Taylor Rental welcomes the opportunity to collect thin film plastics for recycling. A lot of our customers are surprised the first time they enter our building not only by the variety of items you can rent but with the size of our party store. So getting people in the door is a priority. To be able to do that as well as help the environment and build benches for the town is a triple bonus.”

For more information about the thin-film plastics collection program in Berkeley Heights, please visit the BHEC website, at berkeleyheights.gov/379/Recycling-Thin-Film-Plastics.

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