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Get Back₂School with Back₂Tap!

1 Billion. That is the number of disposable plastic bottles that could be kept out of the environment every year if just 10% of the US K-12 students made the switch from disposable plastic bottles to reusable bottles. That's a lot of bottles! 31 million gallons of oil and almost 400 million gallons of water would be saved, plus the equivalent of 12 billion balloons of CO₂ would be kept out of the air. And that's if just 10% make the switch – imagine the impact if every school, one school at a time, got "Back2Tap!"

In an effort to help end this staggering amount of waste, four women in Chatham, NJ, launched Back₂Tap, a new program developed to help schools make the switch from disposable to reusable bottles for school lunches, sports, and school events. It is a new "green" program that combines fundraising with an environmental initiative – a unique combination that allows the schools to offer a fresh idea and avoid fundraising fatigue. The program has two key components – on-line educational tools, including a video made for a student audience available on their website at www.back2tap.com, and stainless steel reusable bottles, customized with school logos for fundraising programs and green initiatives. Sales of the bottles in schools help schools raise money while offering a solution to the mountain of plastic bottles found in the trash.

"As parents we saw countless plastic water bottles overflowing from garbage cans at parks and fields across town plus we were asked to bring cases of disposable water bottles to almost every school event," stated Mary Lonergan, one of the founders of Back₂Tap. "After learning that only 23% of all disposable plastic water bottles are recycled plus the waste and detriment to our watersheds associated with making and shipping the bottles, we knew recycling was good, but not enough."

Back₂Tap bottles are available in a 12oz lunch box size, an 18oz everyday use size and a 27oz sports size with either a loop or sports cap. According to Lydia Chambers, another founder, stainless steel bottles were selected because they have the lowest long term impact on the planet, are the safest health-wise because they are BPA-free and don't leach any harmful chemicals, and have the best performance features. "As long as you use your stainless steel reusable bottle at least fifty times, it is better for the environment than disposable plastic ones", says Lydia.

Thousands of students across the country have already gone Back₂Tap. "The kids really love the bottles with their school logos and are using them because they better understand the importance of using reusable after going through the Back₂Tap program", says Ellen Blazoski, another founding partner. "We are excited to bring this idea to every school interested in taking the simple step of switching from disposable to reusable bottles. It really is an easy way to help the environment", notes Ann Whitman, the fourth partner on the Back₂Tap team.

Back₂Tap has partnered with Spectrum Water Coolers for water filtration at schools (bottle-less filtered water coolers) and PUR for other filtration products (pitchers, faucet mount filters, and refrigerator filters). Schools can use the money raised from the Back₂Tap program to help fund these water filtration products if needed. As a way to complete the total water solution, Back₂Tap is giving 5% of their profits to Central Asia Institute to provide clean water to schools in need.

For more information on how you can get your school "Back₂Tap", visit their website at www.back2tap.com or call 866-B2T-3453.