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Town Recreation Kicked Off Back2Tap Movement

100 Million. This is the number of plastic water bottles Americans send to landfills each day. Lined end to end, that's enough to reach from New Jersey to China and back in one day. Almost 15,000 miles of bottles! It doesn't take an environmental expert to know that this staggering amount of waste is an extremely inefficient use of earth's limited resources. There is a better alternative.

In the fall of 2007, after seeing dozens of these plastic water bottles overflowing from garbage cans at parks and fields across Chatham, NJ, the founders of Back2Tap felt they had to do something about it. Initially, they wanted to work with the town to improve recycling efforts but after learning that only 23% of all disposable plastic water bottles are recycled and learning about the tremendous waste involved in the production and distribution of water in disposable plastic bottles, they knew that recycling was good but not enough. Approximately 17 million barrels of oil are used to make and ship water in disposable bottles, enough to run 1,000,000 cars for a year. Plus, it takes three bottles of water to make and ship one bottle of water. Also, they discovered that tap water makes sense for your pocketbook. Tap water will cost a household approximately 2¢ per gallon versus 99¢ to \$4 per gallon for bottled water. All these factors led to the start of Back2Tap.

Back2Tap started with the Recreation Department of the Chathams. Coaches were asked to encourage all players and spectators to bring drinks in reusable containers instead of throw away plastic bottles to sporting events at parks and fields. The Chatham schools then joined the campaign by spreading the message about the waste associated with disposable plastic and why going "Back2Tap" was best for the environment. Students were shown an entertaining yet educational video (available online at www.back2tap.com) and were offered an online "green" fundraising campaign of stainless steel bottles customized with the school logo. Four of the seven schools in Chatham are using their profits to install filtered water coolers to provide chilled, great tasting tap water to students and teachers. Plus the Recreation Department and Public Works are working together to try to provide better tap water accessibility at outdoor facilities.

In Chatham alone, over 2,000 bottles were sold representing an annual savings to the planet of 93,000 gallons of water, 270 barrels of oil and 44 tons of CO₂ – all of which are involved in the production and distribution of disposable plastic water bottles. Imagine the impact we can have by moving other towns across New Jersey "Back2Tap?"

Every town Recreation Department plays a critical role in helping to preserve the environment and keeping the town parks and fields clean. By encouraging people to use reusable bottles and by providing the education and solutions to do so, the Recreation Departments can help reduce the amount of trash and recycling across each town. Wouldn't you like to help your community get "Back2Tap?" For more information, contact Mary Lonergan at marylonergan@back2tap.com or call 866-B2T-3453.