

*As seen in The Independent Press, October 17, 2007*

## **Rec goes “Back to Tap” – Urges use of water jugs instead of plastic water bottles (by, Tracy Ness)**

THE CHATHAMS – After observing dozens of plastic bottles left at fields and overflowing out of garbage cans at parks across the Chathams, parents in the recreation programs decided to go back to tap – tap water that is.

“We hope that we could make a positive impact on the environment by switching to only re-usable containers at sports events,” said rec parent Mary Lonergan. “Recycling bins have been tried in the past and failed because trash was constantly put in the recycling bins and once trash is in the recycling, the recycling becomes trash.”

Mrs. Lonergan said she was surprised to learn that approximately 90% of all plastic water bottles in the U.S. are not recycled. She said this effort will also help the environment by reducing the amount of oil used to produce and ship the plastic bottles.

The Recreation Department is asking all athletes and their families to please bring reusable thermoses or coolers to all practices and games. Please have the container clearly marked with the player’s name and phone number.

On a healthy note, recent studies have shown that in some cases tap water is actually better than bottled water, especially if the water bottles have been heated up while sitting in your car or frozen.

### **Bottles by the numbers**

Only about 12% of “custom” plastic bottles, a category dominated by water, were recycled in 2003, according to industry consultant R.W. Beck, Inc. That’s 40 million bottles a day that went into the trash or became litter. In contrast, the recycling rate for plastic soft drink bottles is around 30%.

More than 60 million plastic bottles end up in landfills and incinerators every day – a total of about 22 billion last year. Six times as many plastic water bottles were thrown away in the US in 2004 as in 1997.

Plastic water bottles also waste a lot of energy. An estimated 1.5 million barrels of oil are used for their production, which is enough to run 100,000 cars for a year.

Finally, using tap water makes sense for your pocketbook. Tap water will run a household approximately 2 cents a gallon versus 99 cents to \$4 per gallon depending on what type of bottled water is used.

Residents with any comments or questions about the “Back to Tap” program can visit the Chatham Recreation website at [www.chathamrecreation.org](http://www.chathamrecreation.org).

