

Wyandanch

Community Advisory Board

In This Newsletter

Community Issue

Withering Waste in Wyandanch
(page 1)

Women's Month Highlight
Environmental Feminism (page 3)

About Us

Community Advisory Board
(page 4)

Upcoming Events

April 8th: Long Island
Youth Summit

April 23: Walk with a Doc

Links

NYSHECK website:

<https://nyscheck.org/wyandanch>



Withering Waste in Wyandanch

-Erin Torres, Walt Whitman High School, Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition EH Ambassador, Community Advisory Board, Long Island NYS Children's Environmental Health Center

Hate to break it to you, but we are bad at recycling. However, it is not entirely our fault.

"In all our years that towns on Long Island have been trying to recycle, we've never been clear about instructions, nor strict about enforcing them," exclaims Laurie Farber, a decade long Wyandanch resident and Wyandanch Community Advisory Board member. On Tuesday, I got to interview Farber regarding Wyandanch's waste practices and I learned just how confusing the recycling process actually is.

Because Long Island governments have never communicated to the public what items they were allowed to recycle, residents tend to mix recyclable materials with items that can not be taken by the town or that cannot physically be recycled.

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It can be difficult to determine what can be recycled.

"Consequently...we mix all our recycles together to be picked up," says Farber. "Once it's contaminated, there's no market. No one wants it."

Of the 2.4 million tons of waste Long Island produces a year, only 654,000 tons or 27% of waste, is recycled. What can be recycled? Plastics (# 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7), glass, metal cans, paper, and cardboard. The Town also recycles many other items including bicycles, books, eWaste (old TVs and computers) and waste oil at the Field St. Recycling Center.

What can we do to reduce the amount of waste we throw away? Start with plastic drink containers. According to Farber, there are two options.

"First, get yourself a reusable bottle, and if you don't like the taste of the water, get a water filter," she says. Water filters reduce exposures to water contaminants that may compromise our health.


Farber is actively working with her 4th and 5th grade environmental group, Earth Rangers, on this issue. At MLK Elementary, the students compete in a refill bottle initiative. Each student receives a reusable water bottle to refill throughout the day at school water fountains. Every time they do so, they receive a sticker, which can be traded in for prizes. The students love it and has worked well in encouraging usage of the water fountains.

The second campaign is to push New York governments expand the Bottle Bill to non-carbonated drinks. Right now, only water bottles, soda, and beer cans can be recycled through machines for a refund.



"The original bill was passed many years ago. It was intended to reduce outdoor liter, Farber explained. "It was successful, but it was addressing the beverage containers that existed at the time... the ones thrown on the highways. It does not include beverages that now come out of cans and bottles that did not exist."

"I see people with shopping carts here all the time, looking in garbage cans, so they can get the refund," she continues. By pushing to expand the Bill, more bottles will be able to be recycled properly for an economic incentive.

With these practices, we take steps closer to a waste free town. 

For more information on the Bottle Bill:
[click here](#)

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH WITH ENVIRONMENTAL FEMINISM

-Aliyyah Hamid, Syosset High School, Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition EH Ambassador, Community Advisory Board, Long Island NYS Children's Environmental Health Center



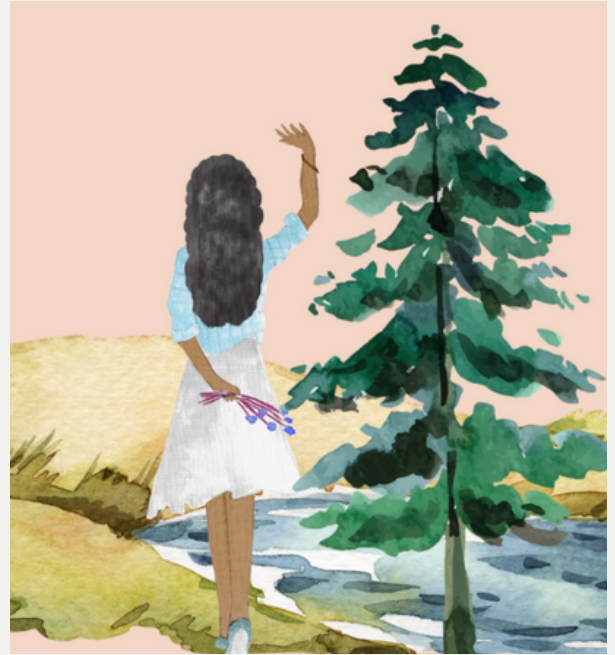
"The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house," says Audre Lorde, a remarkable writer and self-described "black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet." As a feminist, I am inspired by this quote. **We cannot achieve social equality if society is built upon institutions of disparity.**

Environmental health, human health, and gender equality are intertwined. Environmental feminism is the interweaving of these philosophies to end social and environmental inequalities created by patriarchy and capitalist structures of society.

A year ago, I knew nothing of these concepts or jargon. My personal sense of environmentalism went as far as "climate change is bad." When I was introduced to environmental health by the Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition, I found new ways to express my intersectional feminism. I found my calling!

I love that Earth Day, April 21, follows Women's Month.

Earth Day has special meaning for women and girls. Both are great ways to celebrate beauty. But beauty products contain chemicals and social expectations that may cause harm. And, colorism - prejudice against individuals with darker skin tones - affects women in a plethora of ways.



Second, our **skin absorbs the toxicants** in beauty products, such as skin lightening creams. The Environmental Working Group (EWG) reports that "Pressure to meet Western standards of beauty means Black, Latina and Asian American women are using more beauty products, and thus are exposed to higher levels of chemicals known to be harmful to health."

Third, the beauty industry produces a lot of **pollution**. Zero Waste Week reports that "beauty packaging amounts to 120 billion units every year." This plastic packaging harms our oceans and our tap water.

Total wellness means adopting new standards of beauty and buying products that are truly safe for our bodies and nature. In other words, environmental feminism works best when it embraces total wellness. So what can you do? Use your voice. Uplift the women in your life. Claim what is beautiful about yourself and Mother Earth.



The first is **mental health**: "I'm not pretty enough because I'm not white enough" is a common epithet young girls of color may hurl at themselves. According to a study by Maya Williams, MSW, from Washington University St. Louis, "dark skin African American women had the worst health and mental health outcomes." These women had higher rates of depression, hypertension, and diabetes.

**When you think of environmental feminism, what do you think of?
Contact us and share your response!**

About us!

Wyandanch Community Advisory Board (CAB)



“Environmental health is an opportunity. We can choose to raise healthy children in healthy places. The ideas are simple, because we know what works and what doesn’t. The implementation is hard, because it takes collective action over time.”

-CAPPY COLLINS, MD, MPH; DIRECTOR, LONG ISLAND CENTERS, NYSCHECK (FROM THE CAB CASE STATEMENT)

In 2021, the Long Island Chapter of the New York State Children’s Environmental Health Centers ([NYSCHECK](#)) created the Wyandanch Community Advisory Board (CAB) to identify and address the community health needs of regional children and youth.

In coming months, the CAB will promote youth leadership and provide guidance to:

- **Identify** local environmental hazards and community health resources.
- **Review** strategies to reduce exposures to hazards and expand access to health resources.
- **Work** with public health officials to reduce or eliminate sources of known pollution.

Click Here to subscribe to our newsletter, provide comments, or volunteer. We seek writers, youth leaders, and health advocates from the Wyandanch area.

Newsletter Editor, Erin Torres

Wyandanch CAB Coordinator, Dr. Scott Carlin

CAB is a project of the Long Island Chapter of NYSCHECK

