

"Get Drastic, Reduce Plastic" Initiative

UU Churches in Barnstable and Brewster had been wanting to collaborate on a project. A new Barnstable member had worked successfully in Kennebunkport, ME, to reduce the use of plastic bags there. This seemed like a perfect opportunity to collaborate on a similar project and the Falmouth Fellowship joined us. The name Cape Environmental Action, (CEA) was adopted.

Drastically reducing the use of single-use plastic bags and replacing with reuseable bags is important for multiple reasons. Plastic bags make up 10 percent of the washed-up debris polluting our coastlines; the average life span of a plastic bag is 700 - 1000 years; in the United States alone we go through 60,000 single-use plastic bags every 5 seconds; and about 12 million barrels of oil are needed to meet our annual plastic bag demand. There are floating "plastispheres" in the oceans with marine life becoming entangled or ingesting and dying from these substances.

The first action was for CEA members to contact six local Stop & Shop Supermarket managers as well as a corporate office to secure their support. They donated 250 reuseable bags per store. CEA members handed out the bags and educated shoppers about the environmental impact of plastic use and inappropriate disposal on a Saturday from 10:00 to 2:00 at two stores. Another date is planned for the other 4 stores. A showing of the entertaining and informative documentary, "Bag It," was held in a local theater to "kick off" the project. It continues to be shown in churches and libraries.

Cape Environmental Action hopes this is just the beginning of the collaboration with other churches, as we use our combined strength to raise environmental awareness.