

# CHESTER FAIR ZERO WASTE GUIDEBOOK



**Event Organizer - Kim Price, Member of the Chester Agricultural & Mechanical Society Board of Directors, Chester, Connecticut**

**Guidebook compiled 9/2024 by Karen & Julian Evans, Members of Sustainable Essex, Essex, Connecticut**

## **Overview**

In 2022 Kim Price implemented a “Zero Waste” program for the Chester Fair which takes place in Chester, Connecticut the third weekend in August. With support from local sponsors and volunteers, the aim was to reduce the environmental impact from the fair by diverting as much trash as possible by providing bins for composting and recycling in addition to the garbage bin. During the 3 years Price has been collecting data for the event, the amount of garbage that has been able to be composted/recycled went from 47% to 60%. With improvements implemented each year, the goal will be to continue to get the

percentage of waste diverted to show growth. The common theme throughout all phases of promoting the program, recruiting volunteers and creating awareness was:




## Goals

1. Achieve significant waste diversion rates.
2. Promote zero waste education and awareness.
3. Improve waste management strategies at the fair.
4. Increase volunteer engagement.

## Specifications

**FUNDRAISING** Fundraising began with an initial proposal on 2-7-22 to Sustainable Connecticut (CT). Once accepted by Sustainable CT, the idea was shared with fellow board members of the Chester Agriculture & Mechanical Society for consideration and approval on 3-22-23. The BOD gave approval to continue to the fundraising phase.

Once approved, Sustainable CT handed off the fundraising phase to a crowd fundraising specialist from Detroit, Patronicity. Patronicity, assigned a coach, provided a template to



create a go-to website and created a donation link for our Chester Fair Zero Waste fundraising efforts to the site.

Fundraising dates were established from April 1 to May 31, 2022. 8 weeks to raise \$10,000. A flier was designed and hung in 15 public places in Chester, 7 in Deep River, 5 in Essex and 2 in Killingworth- libraries, business, breweries, eating establishments, town halls, etc. Starting on April 1, the first 3 weeks went well with 14 donors joining the cause. Kim Price then reached out to over 40 businesses and individuals in the Chester, DR, Essex and Old Saybrook area, securing another 21 donors. The \$5000 minimum for Sustainable CT to match was exceeded, and Price was able to get Sustainable CT to go to \$7,500 as a match, and then raised another \$3000 on top of the \$15,000 match equaling \$18,000 in total.

Patronicity applied their fee and money was transferred to the non-profit Community Foundation of Middlesex County. CFMC continues to hold the funds as an overseer of the account dispensing money for approved expenses.

## **DATA**

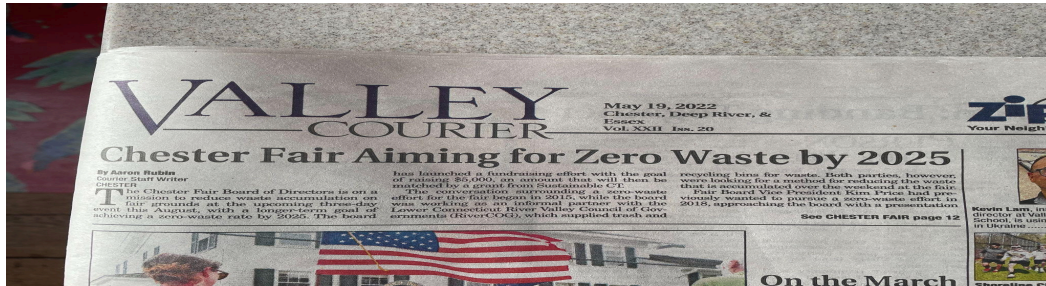
Information, with respect to weight and volume were gathered from every source possible to determine the Fair's history of the pounds of trash and recyclables removed from the grounds in prior years. Bags of redeemables were also included as a means of establishing metrics for the program as base numbers to work off of once the Zero Waste effort began.

## **VENDORS**

Prior to the fair, Price contacted each food vendor to find out their specific needs both in terms of items typically purchased (utensils, cups, plates, straws, etc) and quantities used. Price bought items in bulk, reselling at cost and subsidizing the expense by 75% to the vendors. Standards were established with each vendor for dinnerware and utensils, meeting Blue Earth's composting requirements. Food vendors are included in the Zero Waste program and close to 90 percent of the service ware they provide (cups, plates, lids, straws, etc) have been converted to either compostable or recyclable items.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

Prior to the Fair, information about the Fair's Zero Waste Program was published in the local paper with an article about Price's efforts.



Price also promoted the program weekly at the local Sunday Farmers Market, at the same time calling upon volunteers to help with over 60 volunteers recruited.

## Call For Volunteers!

### Chester Fair Aug 26-28

Free Admission to those who volunteer, training provided.



Zero Waste

Help us reduce the amount of waste generated at our event.  
We are the *first* traditional country fair in New England to start this program!

Contact Kim to sign up:  
kpricechester@gmail.com or 203-464-6289

<https://patch.com/connecticut/essex-chester-deepriver/chester-fair-year-expands-it-s-environmental-commitments><https://www.zip06.com/person-of-the-week/20220810/kim-price-waste-not-want-not/>

## SIGNAGE/EDUCATION

Food Scrap/Recycled Board created to show fairgoers what items go in each bin. It is important to have clear signage next to each of the bins along with consistent bin

placement at all stations. All of the items sold at the fair need to be shown which bin they go in.



The plan was to have a table/booth with displays to educate fairgoers helping them visualize the transformation of food scraps and recycled items into finished products. Here, the focus will be less upon the rules and what goes where, but a shift more towards the, 'why we recycle' and the results of what happens when we do. In other words- motivate fairgoers' cooperation and behavior by offering a vision of what their actions literally become. The table and props were on display at the Fair, but out of 3 area high schools environmental clubs contacted, none participated. Here's an example of the visual transformation of materials:

Food scraps & compostable food ware = compost (slice open one bag and add a growing plant)

Aluminum cans = a finished product

Recycled plastic = finished product



Bags of aluminum cans and bags of plastic bottles showing materials in their 'raw' form were included in the display. Props of finished aluminum were provided by the local scrap yard, and materials made (socks) from recycled water bottles were provided by the manufacturer, Repreve, to show how the products were transformed. Bags of compost were also included, one cut with a small tree growing out of it.

## **SORTING STATIONS**

In '22, 5 sorting stations, staffed by volunteers were available across the fairgrounds. One bin for garbage (green), one blue topped frame with clear bags for recycling and one blue bin from Blue Earth for composting. Bin placement needs to be consistent at each location to make it as clear and understandable for fairgoers as possible. All of the items sold at the fair need to be shown which bin they go in.



In 2024, Sorting Stations were reduced to 3, but 40 unsupervised Satellite Sorting Stations were placed around the fairgrounds. The Satellite Stations were inspected by Monitors who removed improperly placed items and put them in the proper bin.

During the 2024 fair, volunteers tested a hand sorting method of going through waste with gloves and garbage pickers to separate items that had been thrown out as trash. The majority of misplaced items in the trash bin were salvageable food scraps, recyclables and redeemables. In the future, the idea of crews hand sorting on a table invented by Price, may be added to divert an even higher percentage of material from the Fair's wastestream.



### **RECRUITING CONCEPT FOR TRASH GATHERS AND HAND SORTER**

In 2024, to recruit volunteers for trash gathering and sorting, an idea was put into place to encourage them to join our effort. That idea was, contacting area 501c3 non-profit groups, teams and clubs and offering a \$10/hr wage (as a donation). An area business was contacted and they approved making \$3500 available to pay the groups in the form of a tax deductible donation. Teams would be rewarded proportionately by the hours they put in with a total of 342 hours determined to be necessary to implement the program.

One key barrier seems to be the timing of the Chester Fair, at the end of August, when schools are not in session making it difficult to get student volunteers, and many older students are going back to college. The shifts and amount of time for volunteering were on a first come, first served basis. Volunteers were directed to and posted on the 'Sign Up Genius' website.

Dates/Times ✨	Location	✍ ✕	Available Slot ✍	↕ ✍
08/23/2024 (Fri. 5:00 pm - 11:00 pm)	Gatherer	✍ ✕	Trash & Recyclables G... (6)	✍ ✕
08/23/2024 (Fri. 6:00 pm - 10:00 pm)	Sorter	✍ ✕	Trash, Recyclables & R... (6)	✍ ✕
08/24/2024 (Sat. 9:00 am - 11:00 pm)	Gatherer	✍ ✕	Trash & Recyclables G... (6)	✍ ✕
08/24/2024 (Sat. 9:00 am - 11:00 pm)	Sorter	✍ ✕	Trash, Recyclables & R... (6)	✍ ✕
08/25/2024 (Sun. 9:00 am - 7:00 pm)	Sorter	✍ ✕	Trash, Recyclables & R... (6)	✍ ✕
08/25/2024 (Sun. 10:00 am - 7:00 pm)	Gatherers	✍ ✕	Trash & Recyclables G... (6)	✍ ✕

The necessary paperwork and tax ID number need to be provided by each team/group. Unfortunately, the plan needed to be tabled for '24 due to the lack of volunteers. Price hopes that 2025 will be the year the program can be instituted by appealing to groups other than school to find helpers to participate .

### **VOLUNTEER CHECK IN**

Near the entrance to the fair, a tent was set up for the volunteers to check in. Volunteers were told about their assignment and directed to it. They were issued gloves, vests (bright yellow with "I'm Talking Trash Zero Waste Ambassador") and trash pickers (grabbers) where appropriate. Free admission will be given to all volunteers and parents.

## **Milestones**

The plan began in 2022, becoming only the second traditional country fair in the U.S. with such a program. In its first year, 47 percent of the fair's trash was diverted. In 2023, that total went to 59 percent while 2024's fair was in the same range at a 60 percent diversion. Two water bottle filling stations were also in place to reduce the demand and sale of single-use plastic bottles. Cups were provided, but the fair posted a fun theme of BYOWB, encouraging fairgoers to: "Bring Your Own Water Bottle."

## Chester Fair Attendance

	2024	2023	2022
Adult/Paid attendance	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
Friday	1935	626	1784
Saturday	4845	4153	4954
Sunday	<u>2111</u>	<u>2184</u>	<u>2226</u>
Total	8891	6963	8964
Children 12 and under			
Friday	na	120	na
Saturday	na	1248	na
Sunday	na	712	na
<b>Final total</b>	<b>8891</b>	<b>9043</b>	<b>8964</b>

8/29/24

## Chester Fair Zero Waste Results

	2024	2023	2022
	<u>Pounds</u>	<u>Pounds</u>	<u>Pounds</u>
Compostables (Food scraps & compostable items)	2570	2580	2320
Recyclables (Redeemables & all 1, 2 & 5 plastics)	1300	1720	1040
^Trash	<u>2560</u>	<u>3040</u>	<u>3780</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6430</b>	<b>7340</b>	<b>7140</b>
Recyclables and Compostables, combined =	3870	4300	3360

## Percentage Diverted

	<b>60%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>47%</b>
Pounds of waste per person			
adults only	<b>0.72</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>0.80</b>
adults & children	<b>na</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>na</b>
Fryolator oil recovered- gallons		161	150

^With the fairgrounds broken into thirds, this is the 2023 Trash Team supervisors' assessment of the source:

20% Midway, 50% Food Tent area and 30% Cow Barn area

Using 2024 data, to achieve 70, 80 or 90% trash diversion,  
here's what we'd have to do [keeping recyclables at 1300#]

<u>To reach 70% diversion</u> 23.5% increase in compostables with a 23.5% decrease in trash	<u>To reach 80% diversion</u> 50% increase in compostables with a 50% decrease in trash	<u>To reach 90% diversion</u> 75% increase in compostables with a 75% decrease in trash
<u>Pounds</u>	<u>Pounds</u>	<u>Pounds</u>
3174      increase of 600#	3855      increase of 1285#	4498      increase of 1928#
1300	1300	1300
1958      decrease of 600#	1280      decrease of 1280#	640      decrease of 1920#
<hr/> 6432	<hr/> 6435	<hr/> 6438
4474	5155	5798
<b>70%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>90%</b>

#### ARTICLES/RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THIS INITIATIVE

- [Trash in America](#)
- [Zero Waste Is a Climate Change Solution - Eco-Cycle](#)
- [Benefits of Zero Waste - Toronto Environmental Alliance](#)
- [How Communities Have Defined Zero Waste | US EPA](#)
- [Why Zero Waste Matters | GrowNYC](#)
- [https://loctree.com/blogs/blog/the-importance-and-benefits-of-practicing-zero-waste-living?srsltid=AfmBOoqMgt4\\_dVCkKaYAbYOmPDgvZJqolhtWu5SGgNjYmbFzACyH3Q74](https://loctree.com/blogs/blog/the-importance-and-benefits-of-practicing-zero-waste-living?srsltid=AfmBOoqMgt4_dVCkKaYAbYOmPDgvZJqolhtWu5SGgNjYmbFzACyH3Q74)