

Come see the arts in full bloom

April is Earth Month, and here in Cherry Hill, we will be capping the month off with our annual Art Blooms Earth Festival at Croft Farm.

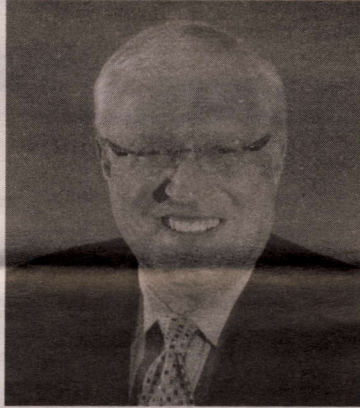
From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, April 30, thousands of people will come out to soak up a variety of arts, culture, local food and environmental knowledge that will be on display – all while leaving as little impact on our planet as possible.

After all, that's the focus of this daylong, rain-or-shine event, which is sponsored by the Cherry Hill Township Recreation Department, in partnership with Sustainable Cherry Hill and the Arts Advisory Board. The day will feature food and entertainment that will satisfy visitors of all ages, making this a free and very family-friendly way to spend a Saturday afternoon.

This year, the event's organizers are trying to make the day as "green" as possible. If the weather allows, the event will feature solar-powered entertainment stages; additionally, a water truck will be on-hand, so visitors can refill their own reusable water bottles.

What's more, the event will feature vendors and food-service providers who use eco-friendly packaging and serving products. And at the end of the day, event organizers will be composting all leftover food scraps and – in keeping with a major theme of the event – recycling as much as possible.

Recycling is a major focus of this year's festival, where visitors will be able to safely drop off a number of items that can be recycled or reused, including: plas-



Bernie Platt

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

cell phones, electronic waste, toner cartridges, wire hangers, gently-used pet beds and supplies, and even cooking oil. Look for student volunteers, who will be manning disposal stations throughout the festival grounds.

For 2011, the Earth Festival will feature displays from several Cherry Hill schools, including a self-watering window garden; a display that teaches individuals how to reduce trash; and one display that will serve as a drop-off for Soles4Souls, which collects shoes for people in need. Other displays include how to reduce your own carbon footprint; bicycle/pedestrian safety; and properly composting your own food waste at home.

Live entertainment includes performances by local bands Plus Shipping and Handling, The Point Break Band, Suite Deception, and an Aerosmith cover band, as well as dance and school group performances. Youngsters can jump around on

across mats provided by My Gym, before exploring displays from Adventure Aquarium and the Garden State Discovery Museum.

And the Earth Festival will be another opportunity for our residents to get to know Joan Simpson, the Township's Environmental Outreach Coordinator, who runs our EPA-sponsored program, "It's In Our Power." Joan will be on-hand to meet residents, and encourage them to take our pledge to make easy, affordable steps to cut their energy usage and save money.

Of course, the Earth Festival is the inaugural event to our annual Art Blooms Week, which runs through May 6. Once again this year, our Arts Board has assembled an impressive array of art exhibits, poetry readings and live performances that I would encourage all residents to check out throughout the week.

Art Blooms is a time-honored and important annual celebration of the arts, culture and the renewing theme of the spring season here in our community, and I'm proud that we're once again taking the opportunity to highlight our efforts to preserve the environment.

It's affordable and accessible, and most importantly, it's family friendly. Please come out to Croft Farm on April 30 for our Earth Festival, and throughout the week to sample all Cherry Hill's arts community has to offer.

For information on the Art Blooms Earth Festival including details on family fun entertainment, student displays, vendors and more, visit www.sustainablecherryhill.org or <http://cherryhill.org>