



August 2015 Sustainability Hero Barbara Fiedler, Chief Sustainability Officer, Galloway Township; Chair & Founder, Go Green Galloway

Barbara Fiedler composted before it was popular, was first in line to earn a NJ Recycling Professional certification and knew she had met the man she would marry after spending one of their first dates sorting and collecting recycling with him. Barbara has always felt the pull to protect the natural environment. As a stand-out leader for sustainability in New Jersey, she optimistically motivates her green team and others across the state, while successfully communicating what can be done to achieve a more sustainable world.

For the past twenty-four years, Barbara has worked for Galloway Township and currently serves as the chief sustainability officer. She is charged with the Township's environmental education program, the Clean Communities Program and G-TV, the government-access cable station.

Located less than ten miles north and west of Atlantic City, Galloway Township covers approximately 100 square miles and is home to about 38,000 residents. It is the second largest municipality in New Jersey and has had a population increase of more than 14,000 since the 1990 Census. The Township is home to Richard Stockton College and the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge where more than 47,000 acres of coastal habitats are protected for migratory birds.

A life-long New Jersey girl, Barbara grew up in Pleasantville and Absecon with her brother Paul, Jr. and parents Jeanne and Paul Palmisano. She graduated from Pleasantville High School and then moved to Galloway Township after college when she married Stephen Fiedler, her previously-mentioned recycling date. Her work ethic comes from her father; each day he left the house at four in the morning and returned late in the evening, from his family business, Seashore Fruit Company, a wholesale fruit and produce supplier in Atlantic City.

She was one of the first in New Jersey to receive certification as a Recycling Professional from Rutgers University and is now an instructor for the "Effective Communication" portion of the Rutgers accelerated Recycling Professional Certification class. For the past fourteen years, Barbara has been a vice president of the Association for NJ Recyclers (ANJR). She is a two-time recipient of the Galloway Education Foundation's Governmental Advocate for Education and has received state awards for her Clean Communities program, public education and outreach and recycling excellence.

Silver-Certified Go Green Galloway

Barbara is the founder and chair of [Go Green Galloway](#), the green team for Galloway Township. The team, which has ten appointed members, is creatively organized to involve many more people.

Under Barbara's leadership, Galloway Township was an early adopter in the Sustainable Jersey program, demonstrating commitment by developing innovative waste reduction programs, fostering collaboration with local organizations and neighboring towns, and providing inspiration, mentoring, support and leadership to advance sustainability.

In 2009, Barbara led her green team to achieve Sustainable Jersey certification in the first year of the program and then received the silver-level of certification in 2010 and 2013. Galloway Township is one of two towns that have accomplished this in Atlantic County. Galloway Township has also received two Sustainable Jersey special awards: the Sustainable Jersey Leadership Award (2013) and the Sustainable Jersey Creativity Award (2010). Read the [Galloway Township Sustainable Jersey Certification Report](#).



Barbara serves on Sustainable Jersey Task Forces and is on the steering committee for the Atlantic and Cape May Regional Hub, providing support to other green teams. She has secured ten grants for Galloway. Four of these grants are from Sustainable Jersey and were used to fund an Environmental Resources Inventory, two for green team capacity building and a sustainable landscaping program.

A key to the green team's success is a good working relationship with the elected officials and the community. Barbara said, "It's important to maintain an open relationship with the mayor and the town council. I provide comprehensive verbal and written reports to the council." Once a year she provides an Earth Day to Earth Day Report that lists the green team's accomplishments. The green team is fortunate to work closely with Stockton College. Professors and students have helped with many actions including the energy audit, carbon footprint, creation of the rain and the community gardens—and the students are currently helping with a solar site. Go Green Galloway is also fortunate to have Mary Crawford on the team. Mary is the former president of the Galloway Township Business Association and serves as the GreenFest Chair. Mary has been an important liaison between the Business Association and the green team.



Waste Reduction: Backyard Composting Program

Barbara said, "I started the home composting program in Galloway almost as soon as I took my job in 1991. Having been a long-time composting advocate for about forty years now, I believe that composting is a great method of waste reduction with many bonuses." Barbara grew the composting program enlisting the help of compost bin vendors, the Girl and Boy Scouts and municipal complex staff. She provides composting workshops to residents, school and civic groups and homeowners' associations throughout the Township. About 3,500 residents have learned about composting from the program and composters are often on display at Go Green Galloway events.

Barbara also travels to speak about composting at state and county programs, including the composting component of the Atlantic County Master Gardeners course. She estimates that about 3,000 households are actively composting in their yards in Galloway. Read the Galloway Township brochures: [Galloway Guide to Home Composting Galloway Township Home Composting Demonstration Site brochure](#) and a [Family Guide to Home Composting and Creating a Backyard Wildlife Habitat](#).

Reusable Shopping Bags

Barbara explained, "The Go Green Galloway team and I are very passionate about the reuse of bags. We decided that educating the public about why single-use bags are so bad was a worthy early goal for our group." She notes that the average American family accumulates 60 plastic bags in only four trips to the grocery store and only a small fraction of these bags are recycled; the rest either end up in landfills (where they last for up to 1,000 years) or on roadsides, in trees or in storm drains leading to waterways.

The green team purchased durable reusable bags using Clean Communities grant funding and distributed the bags, along with donated bags from local businesses, and a plastic bag fact sheet at events including the Community Clean Up, tabling events at the Galloway ShopRite and Super Foodtown, National Night Out and Earth Day events. In 2013, the group distributed more than 1,100 bags and collected over 900 pledges that people signed to confirm that they would use reusable bags. The green team currently has a draft Reusable Bag Resolution that will go before the Township Council for consideration in the near future.

The green team joined forces with an Absegami High School media teacher to have his students create a Public Service Announcement designed to run on the checkout monitors at the local ShopRite. Sixteen student teams competed in developing advertising campaigns with strategic plans, TV PSAs, radio spots and print ads. The five finalists did presentations in front of judges that included two members of Go Green Galloway, two local radio personalities, a

grocery store manager and the owner of a Philadelphia advertising agency. Barbara said, “The teamwork for this initiative was a great example of how our Township, schools and businesses can work together toward a common goal.”

Wind Ordinance, Green Tips and Film Fests

Galloway Township was one of the first towns in New Jersey to pass a small wind ordinance. The [Galloway Township Wind Ordinance](#), passed in April 2008, addresses a growing need to allow for small wind installations while specifying safe heights and distances for the installations. Residents have successfully installed wind turbines since the ordinance was passed. The green team provides a successful Environmental Film Series and regular [Go Green Galloway Green Tips](#) that are often printed in the local weekly newspaper and can be accessed on the website.

Kids Go Green in Galloway

Galloway School District was one of the first districts to register with the new Sustainable Jersey for Schools program. A Go Green Galloway task force led by Ro Goldberg started a project at the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year called Kids Go Green in Galloway. The students' families took a [pledge](#) to reduce, reuse, recycle, prevent pollution and slow climate change for a more sustainable Galloway and a better planet Earth.

The task force also worked with the middle school student council and the environmental club to promote the Kids Go Green in Galloway pledge. The environmental club made recycling commercials that were broadcast in-house. The student council voted to create a “Resolution to Educate for Sustainability” after reading about the one that Cherry Hill passed. The resolution was passed by the Galloway School Board and then adopted by the Galloway Township Council.

The Package Goods Orchestra

Art and music have always been a part of Barbara’s life. At Glassboro College, she minored in art and did a variety of painting and sculpture. Before working for Galloway Township, Barbara participated in community theater, with parts in *Pippin*, *The King and I* and other plays at local venues like the Margate Community Theater.



With friends from her theater days, Barbara and her husband Stephen formed a band called the [Package Goods Orchestra](#), whose members, individually and together, have been making music for more than 25 years; you can see a video performance from the Wheaton Arts Festival of Fine Craft [here](#). The music runs the gamut – folk, rock, country, swing, torch and R&B and the group has a loyal following and a 400 song repertoire.

Family, Gardening and Pine Needle Baskets

Barbara says that everything she does is possible due to the support, guidance and love she has from her husband Stephen. Stephen is a true partner; he is a member of the Galloway Environmental Commission, serves as recording secretary for Go Green Galloway and is a steering committee member for the Sustainable Jersey Atlantic & Cape May Regional Hub. They have a grown son named Eric who lives with his wife Becky in Easthampton, Massachusetts. When asked if Eric has followed in his parent’s footsteps, she quickly replies, “We’re so proud of him-he and Becky belong to many organizations in their town and are active gardeners and composters.”

In her free time, Barbara likes to create pine needle baskets and work in her yard which is chemical free and wildlife full. Barbara and Steve love to go camping, hiking and kayaking; and enjoy traveling. She also spends a lot of time talking to green team members who may need advice. She said she is honored and happy to talk to all who need encouragement, and added, “I want people to know that everyone has an effect on the environment, we all make choices and can make a difference.”

