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Green Hanson teams with Children's Museum for Earth Day

BY TRACY SEELYE
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2011 04:31 PM

Ever wonder how to make a toilet use less water without sacrificing an effective flush? Children attending Earth Day events at Hanson Town Hall from 1-4 p.m. Saturday, April 30 will get an "inside" view of the question.

How? A giant toilet display will let the kids follow the route to the sewer or septic tank that — er — waste material travels.

"We want this to be an envrionmental expo," said Hanson Children's Museum Executive Director Juvelyn Hartweg. "The kids actually go into a huge toilet and they figure out the engineering of the toilet — exactly as it looks. As they are crawling through the maze, they are like little poopies."

A more regional effort is the object behind the Children's Museum's involvement with Green Hanson's program.

The object of the toilet maze is to teach exactly what it means to be environmentally friendly — an engineering project set up by the South Shore Charter School.

South Shore Charter got the idea from a wastewater department on the Cape, Hanson Earth Day organizers said this week. The charter school is also bringing the Veggie Van.

"We focus a lot on events for children," said Audrey Miller of Green Hanson. "It does bring the families out and gets the community out there, too. We also bring a lot of the town's committees to Earth Day. You'll usually see the Water Department, the Conservation Commission, the Trails Committee, the Garden Club."

It gives residents a chance to ask these officials and club members environmental questions.

In Whitman, members of the Whitman-Hanson student government took to Franklin Street to work on cleaning up the roadside on the official Earth Day, Friday, April 22. The Children's Museum is also working to include Whitman in their effort to regionalize the Earth Day event. The Duval School is showcasing birdhouses made by a collaborative effort between first and fourth grade classrooms. The birdhouses will be presented to Whitman seniors.

"We want to encourage that," Hartweg said. "That's what community is."

Hanson opted to wait a week for their observance due to the Easter weekend, and hope that waiting a week may mean better weather.

"We're hoping to combine our resources," Hartweg said of the event with Green Hanson this year. "Our hope was, because they do a lot of education in terms of the environment and we have an environmental component in our museum — obviously with geography, environment is a big part of history."

The museum had a cranberry bog exhibit which toured area schools and libraries last year. Hartweg said the current Lexington Green project also ties the environment and history together.

"It was just such a natural partnership," Hartweg said of the two small grassroots organizations. "They have done a phenomenal job."

A local disc jockey, Mike Amado will provide music to keep things lively and his services are funded by a bake sale held at the event. He also supervises games and contests for the

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children who attend.
"Even the Garden Club does a planting project for them," Miller said. "They get to plant seeds and take them home."
One year children decorated small milk cartons as people and planted grass seed that served as the "hair" of the creations called Hairy Harry. The idea is for hands-on activities that drive home the point of Earth Day in an entertaining way.
Miller is also bringing a composting bin and a rain barrel to use in answering questions should residents be interested in water conservation or recycling of kitchen waste.
"There are Web sites that can help people," Miller said. "And that's one of the things we can do for people with questions. We can give them resources and ideas."
People who are local distributors of green products will also be on hand at vendor booths to supply information about and sell their products. Campfire USA and the Boy Scouts will also be on hand to discuss the activities of their organizations. Trader Joes will have a food booth and Whole Foods will offer reusable bags.
From 3-4 p.m. the Toe Jam Puppet Band will perform and a bounce house will be available. A company specializing in composting and organic mulches will be conducting a raffle.

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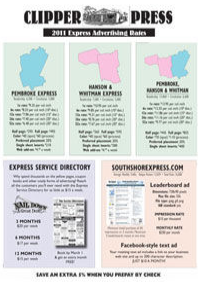

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