

Decorated rain barrels provide fabulous funding

By Brielle Urciuli
STAFF WRITER

TRENTON — Who thought that catching rain could be so stylish?

An online rain barrel auction is offering twofold benefits to the environment while also adding a touch of yard decor, in what EarthShare New Jersey's Executive Director Paula Aldarelli called an "innovative way to raise money and spread awareness."

Twenty-five different environmental groups from New Jersey are teaming up with EarthShare NJ (ESNJ), a Trenton organization established in 1994 to provide funds to more than 65 local and national environmental groups. Together, they will sell hand-painted rain barrels on eBay. Each barrel was decorated by volunteers of the specific organization to showcase their cause.

"We would love it if we could bring in \$500-plus," Jenniss Watson, membership and development manager at NY/NJ Trail Conference said. "Their barrel, painted by two members, shows trail maps alongside paintings of trees in winter, spring, summer and fall. It is up for auction right now, and half of the funds will go toward developing and maintaining hiking trails and offering education on open space preservation, while the

other half, like all other companies' barrel sales, will go toward ESNJ.

Each of the 25 barrels, which were donated by the company Ocean Spray Cranberries Inc. in Bordentown, will be on the market for 10 days and have a starting bid at \$75. Since the program's beginning in late May, ESNJ, Clean Ocean Action, and the Conservative Wildlife Foundation have sold their barrels for between \$75 and \$350 each, according to Aldarelli.

Rain barrels are contraptions used to capture rainwater so it can be used for tasks such as watering gardens, saving the user's tap water. "Rain barrels offer long-term, sustainable ways to collect and store rain water that drains off roofs and gutters. The water can then be used around the home and in the garden," said Aldarelli. "So many people have become more conscious of water conservation."

More rain barrels, which will be available to bid on periodically throughout the year, will benefit multiple organizations, including the Pinelands Preservation Alliance in Southampton, Isles Inc. in Trenton, and Save Barnegat Bay. The auctions are expected to go on until December, maybe longer, Aldarelli said.



COURTESY PHOTO

NY/NJ Trail Conference is currently selling their handpainted rain barrel on eBay with Earthshare NJ. The barrel depicts some of the hiking trails in New York and New Jersey, with a centerpiece showing the seasons.

'Heal the City' campaign continues with hope of inspiring young women

By Jenna Pizzi
STAFF WRITER

TRENTON — Designed to shine a ray of hope into some of the city's worst neighborhoods, an ongoing "Heal the City" campaign will unveil its second billboard presenting positive role models for Trenton youth on Tuesday.

With the goal of encouraging young women to pursue higher education or enroll in job training programs, the billboard will feature a group of young women graduating from high school and going on to college in the fall.

The billboard will be

unveiled across from PJ Hill Elementary School on East State Street in Trenton on Tuesday at 6 p.m. The "Heal the City" campaign is being spearheaded by the S.E.E.D. male mentoring program, a local group that looks to guide city youth to become responsible and successful adults.

In an effort to show Trenton residents, visitors and passers-by that good things do come from Trenton, the group aims to place at least one positive billboard in each of the city's four wards.

The first billboard, at the corner of Stuyvesant Avenue

By Cristina Rojas
STAFF WRITER

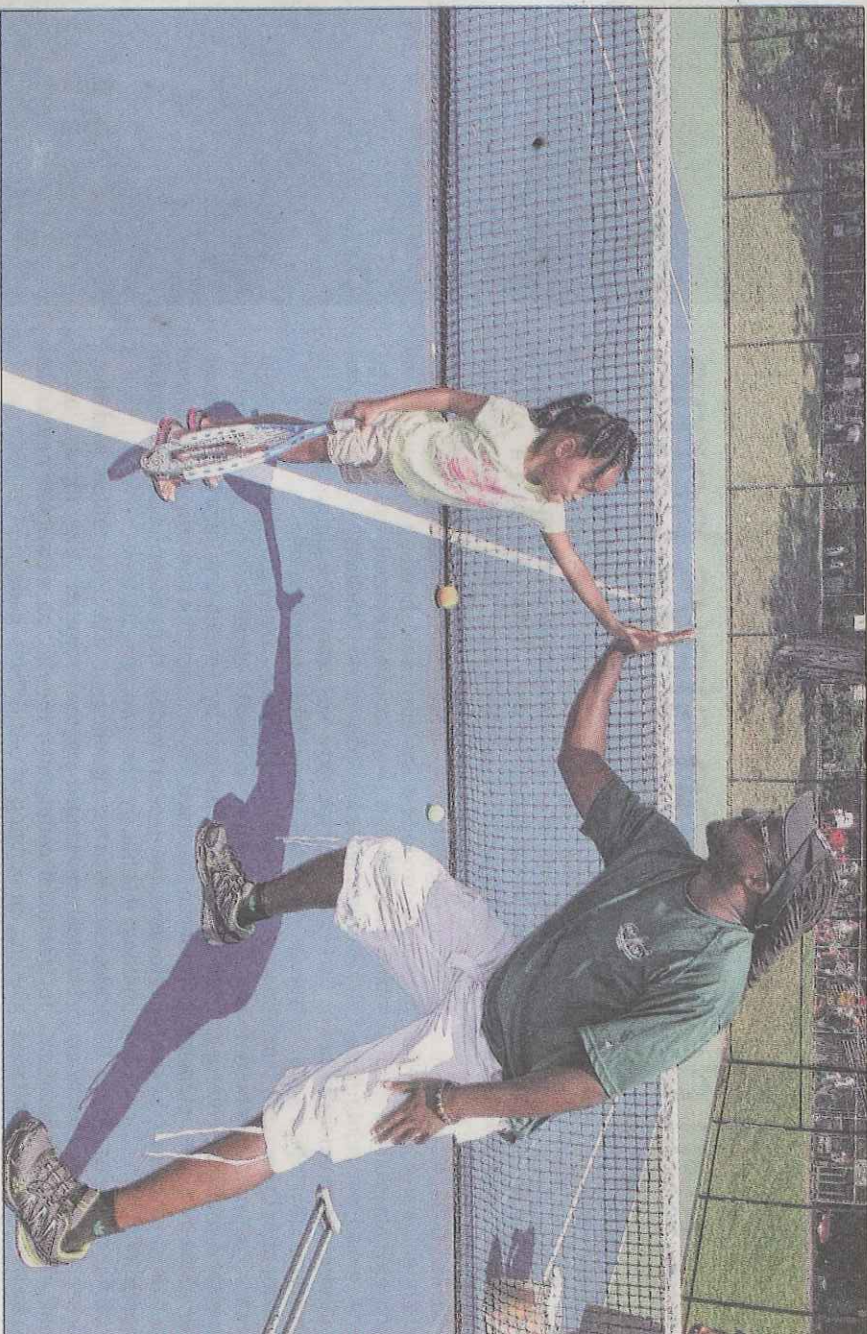
TRENTON — Cadwalader Park was abuzz with activity yesterday. Kids ran around the grass whacking balls with golf clubs. Players ran up and down the basketball court, passing, dribbling and shooting. Little League teams battled it out on the diamond. On the tennis courts, children picked up rackets and swung away, while the nearby fields played host to football, lacrosse and soccer.

The Youth Sports Expo, which gave children the opportunity to try their hand at different activities, served as a kickoff to next weekend's Trenton African American Cultural Festival.

Freeholder Sam Frisby, who is the executive director of the Trenton YMCA, said the event goes a long way in promoting community and improving the safety of the streets, but more important, informs families of activities they might not otherwise know about.

"I've heard people say, 'Well, there's nothing for kids to really do in the city,'" he said. "There's actually a lot to do in this city, but the challenge is communicating that to parents that need it. ... This gives organizations a great opportunity to expose parents and children to these sports."

At a station run by First Tee Golf, which introduces golf to



PHOTOS BY MARY JUVONE/FOR THE TTM

Brielle McCoy, 4, of Trenton, gets a high five from Joseph Revell, instructor with the National Junior Tennis and Learning of Trenton, during a tennis lesson. The Trenton African American Cultural Festival kicked off with a youth sports event, held at Cadwalader Park yesterday.

Kids gear up for city's Youth Sports Expo



Paloma Santiago, former student with the The First Tee of Greater Trenton, helps Amiri Cosme, 10, of Trenton, with his golf swing.

Kids while promoting personal

character development, Amiri Cosme, 10, didn't let a broken arm keep him from putting

Autism CARES law signed in by Obama

By Cristina Rojas
STAFF WRITER

Every year, some 50,000 youth with autism come of age in the United States. No one can say for sure what adulthood will hold for them, but legislation signed into law by President Obama Friday will help ease the burden on them and their families.

Known formally as the Autism Collaboration, Account-ability, Research, Education and Support Act of 2014 (Autism CARES), it was sponsored by U.S. Rep. Chris Smith (R-4th Dist.) and his fellow congressman Mike Doyle (D-Pa.).

The legislation authorizes \$1.3 billion over the next five years. \$950 million is allocated for research grants; another

\$110 million will go to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to continue

researching the prevalence of autism spectrum disorders; and \$340 million will go to early detection, education and intervention.

"And the new law, for the first time, tasks the federal government with examining and anticipating needs for autistic adolescents who are aging out of their school-based support and transitioning into adulthood," said Smith, who authored the original 2000 legislation that helped form the base line of federal autism programs.

Smith's commitment to the cause began 17 years ago when Bobbie and Billy Gallagher came to him, requesting

nothing that you wouldn't like about it."

Others, like Wisdom Madox, 12, were picking up sport for the first time. Smith and her friend, Elijah Clemens, 12, casually tossed around a lacrosse ball before Clemens went to give pointers to other newcomers.

The expo also promoted exercise and healthy living, which is a paramount in a city where one in two children are obese or overweight, said Mavis Davis, project manager for the New Jersey Partnership for Healthy Kids — Trenton.

"This is the perfect opportunity for the youth to come out and get physically active," she said.

Those who stopped by the booth spun a wheel labeled with a number and an activity like push-ups, arm circles and jumping jacks.

Zavilion Owens, 9, dropped and did 10 push-ups and was then given a crash-course lesson in the MyPlate nutrition guide, where he placed food produce, grains, proteins and dairy into the correct food group.

"It was a beautiful idea whenever thought of the day," his grandmother, Tracey McNamara said. "It's something that think they should have more often than just today. It brings the kids together from different neighborhoods and gives them a chance to play together."

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research into autism rates among children in Bristol Township.

Bobbie Gallagher, whose two autistic children are now over the age of 21, previously said that the inclusion of research on how to serve young adults with autism was overdue and necessary.

"The Gallaghers are pioneers in the effort to find better treatments and interventions for children with autism," Smith said.

"Together with other parents, they have been tenacious in their efforts to see this bill passed into law. The laws have today to help families with autism would not have been on the books were it not for them."