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SILVER LAKE BUSINESSES COMMIT TO ELIMINATING PLASTIC BAGS BY EARTH DAY – WILL GATHER TO CREATE A GIANT PLASTIC BALL [SILVER LAKE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE GREEN COMMITTEE TO HOST EARTH DAY BALL ON APRIL 22, 2009 AT TRIANGLE SQUARE IN SUNSET JUNCTION.]

LOS ANGELES, CA – The cutting edge small business community of Silver Lake strives to set the green standard by saying they will stop stocking single-use plastic shopping bags for the good of the environment. Hoping to collect over 6,000 bags, an estimate of the number of bags Silver Lake stores use in a month, the Silver Lake Chamber of Commerce Green Committee is planning an Earth Day Ball on April 22, 2009.

The Silver Lake Chamber of Commerce Green Committee has asked local business to commit to no longer using plastic bags from Earth Day 2009 onwards and to encourage customers to bring their own re-useable shopping bags.

Participating businesses (to date): Medicus Graphics, Leela Thai, Monkeyhouse Toys and Art Gallery, lawson-fenning, Yolk, Lark Cake Shop, Sumi's, gingergrass restaurant, Silver Lake Wine, Panty Raid, Mexican Village Restaurant, Materials and Applications, Dr. Cheryl Revkin, D.C., Bleu Sage Restaurant, Modem Salon, Dr. Theresa Fitzgerald, D.C., Juvie, Trader Joe's, Large Marge Sustainables Catering, Sustain LA Restaurant Consulting, All Shades of Green, Rubbish, Solar Now, Studio 1617, Grace Ellay Botique, Dog Camp LA, Andiamo, Pet Express, Local, Matrushka Construction, Precision Motors, Shag, Silver Lake Yoga and SiLa Restaurant.

Participating businesses and local schools are also collecting used plastic bags for an Earth Day Ball, a giant ball made entirely of plastic bags. The idea came from Meher McArthur, Asian art curator, author and Green Committee member, after reading Theo and the Giant Plastic Ball (distributed by United Nations Environmental Project). The book is about a boy called Theo who starts making a soccer ball for himself out of discarded plastic bags he finds in the landscape. Various animals help him find more bags, and then his whole community joins him and the ball becomes huge - no longer a soccer ball, but now a monument to the community's commitment to protect its

environment. "It's a very inspiring tale for us all," says McArthur. "We really have to work as a community to make major changes like getting rid of plastic bags."

Dr. Cheryl Revkin has had a chiropractic practice in Silver Lake for 31 years. "The idea of the whole community, including our children, making the statement that we will help the environment in this way is typical of our Silver Lake ethic," says Dr. Revkin. "We're willing to make some sacrifices to do the right thing and be ahead of the curve in LA. I am proud as a business owner to be a part of this statement."

The plastic bags collected by the Silver Lake Chamber of Commerce Green Committee will be tied together and wound into a giant ball by volunteers at Triangle Square in Sunset Junction on Earth Day, Wednesday, April 22, 2009. The ball will represent the thousands of plastic bags used by Silver Lake business in one year. Over the course of the day, the ball will increase in size and become a dramatic symbol of the Silver Lake business community's commitment to eliminate plastic bags. A human "Bag Monster" will also be on hand from noon to 3pm. The Earth Day Ball will educate visitors about the negative impact single-use plastic bags have on the environment and emphasize the need to find alternatives.

"Plastic is convenient. Plastic is lightweight. Plastic is cheap. Convenient and cheap have unintended consequences," said Leslie VanKeuren of Sustain LA. "The 'hidden costs' of single-use plastic items like bags are becoming apparent. Business owners in Silver Lake are not waiting for an all out ban on plastic bags. They are voluntarily taking steps to better their business practices, clean up their neighborhood and build customer loyalty."

Medicus Graphics' owner Joni McCarthy has been an exemplary Silver Lake business, donating hundreds of dollars worth of eco-conscious signs, banners and letters to other businesses to support this event and other green events the Chamber has launched. Medicus has been in the printing and graphic business for decades. They have made their business a green business by offering soy ink on recycled paper options for their customers.

Local schools are making the effort to educate their students about the environmental dangers of single-use plastics. Micheltorena Street Elementary School, Ivanhoe Elementary, Camelot Kids Preschool, Lyric Preschool and the Silver Lake Jewish Community Center are incorporating environmental stewardship into their curriculum. Theo and the Giant Plastic Ball will be read to Kindergarten classes of SLJCC. Micheltorena School plans to show "The Synthetic Sea," a documentary detailing the consequences of our disposable society, to the entire student body and in addition to an Earth Day campus cleanup including a repainting of the mural close to the school, arrangements are being made for all 6th grade students to attend the Earth Day Ball at Triangle Square.

Once the Earth Day Ball is completed, it will be available to any local school or environmental group wishing to display it as an educational tool in promoting respect for the environment and the reduction of waste. Next year, Earth Day 2010, the Silver Lake Chamber of Commerce Green Committee hopes to unravel the ball and use the bags to create something useful, such as a woven shelter for a school yard.

To contribute your used plastic bags to the Earth Day Ball, visit: lawson-fenning, Dr. Cheryl Revkin, Micheltorena Street Elementary School, Silver Lake Jewish Community Center, St. Theresa of Avila, or All Shades of Green.

Green Committee Member Ann Bradley encourages all local residents to join the Green Committee, Silver Lake businesses and schools on Earth Day. She also encourages everyone to change their behavior. "To reduce waste, improve our air and water and protect our fragile environment stop using one-use bags when you shop. It's hypocritical to join a community cleanup in the morning and use plastic or paper bags in the afternoon. Bring your own bag, no matter what."

Meg Dickler-Taylor, co-chair of the SLCC Green Committee and owner of Large Marge Sustainables Catering, is of the same opinion. "The American Chemistry Council is trying to sell the concept that taxing or banning plastic bags is a racial divider in that it poses a hardship for lower income citizens. I'm not sure what the financial hardship is in remembering to bring your own bag to the grocery - that is a behavioral change that is free to anyone who accepts responsibility for his or her environment and its future. I encourage the American Chemistry Council to start working on a plan to produce and sell reusable shopping bags."

For more information about joining this campaign, volunteering on Earth Day or about using the Earth Day Ball as an educational tool, please contact Cheryl Revkin at Cheryl@cherylrevkin.com or at (323) 665-1281.

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