

Drowning in Plastic

In 1950, the world produced just two million tons of plastic. It now produces over 450 million tons a year. New York alone creates more than 8 million tons of plastic waste a year, and, contrary to popular belief, very little of that waste gets recycled.

Because it does not biodegrade as natural products do, most plastic waste ends up falling to pieces in landfills and then dissolving into micro-bits in our air, soil and water. More and more studies are revealing the presence of plastic micro- and nano- bits just about everywhere, from the Antarctic to our bodies. The possible bad effects of their presence range from cancers to increased global temperatures.

New Lebanon's Climate Smart Communities Task Force is taking on the plastics challenge. On April 18, we showed a film at the library. The film is geared to children to help them understand the problems with plastics in a friendly, diverting way. and offered practical steps to reduce exposure to plastics. These included:

- avoid bottled water. Use tap water, filtered if possible
- avoid foods with excess packaging. Why put those bananas in a plastic bag?
- wash clothing containing plastic fibers (most clothing does) in a filter bag
- hang clothes out to dry This saves power and won't melt plastic fibers
- damp dust and vacuum with High-Efficiency Particulate Air filters-
- choose lotions and cleansing products with as few additives as possible,

The Task Force is committed to finding more ways to educate residents about avoiding exposure to plastic particles and buying alternatives to plastic when possible. For more information on microplastics check out the New Lebanon [CSC website](#).