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## Plastic person teaches real lessons at market

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*KEYPORT BUREAU*

At the Whole Foods Market on Route 35, a tall mannequin clad in a costume made of recycled plastic bags hangs around the front of the store.

"The 500-Plastic Bag Man" is a project created by The New School, a private, ungraded kindergarten-through-eighth-grade school in Holmdel. It is meant to represent the number of plastic bags an average household uses in one year.

The impossible-to-ignore Plastic Bag Man is on display at Whole Foods as part of an environmentally themed fundraiser between the school and the market, "Small Change Adds Up."

The school's goal is to collect 1 million pennies to put toward environmental projects in the community.

Whole Foods is participating by giving customers an opportunity to donate to the fundraiser the 10-cent bag refund they receive for every reusable cloth bag they bring in for carrying groceries home.

Donations will be put toward the construction of a handicapped-accessible garden at Poricy Park, projected to be completed in 2010.

The Plastic Bag Man will remain on display at the store through Labor Day, store marketing director Susan Henderson said.

Whole Foods discontinued the use of plastic bags at checkout stations in 2008, according to a prepared statement from the company. Since then, store officials estimate, the ban has prevented approximately 150 million bags from ending up in landfills or turning up in the environment.

New School teacher Rebecca Chilvers said that in the fall, the store also will host a performance of scenes from the school's spring play, "Green-Gorgeous and Ghastly," as well as a workshop on how to knit using plastic bag strips, a project students worked on earlier in the year.

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