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SUSTAINABLE BRAINTREE

## **Braintree Celebrates a Year of Green Initiatives at the Green Gala**

*Friday, January 29, 2010.* Sustainable Braintree, Inc. hosted its Second Annual Green Gala on January 23 to celebrate the culmination of a year of education, outreach, and action. What began as a small group of people with a shared desire to promote sustainable practices has evolved into a membership organization with a track record of getting things done. The Farmers Market provided delicious locally-produced food and created a true sense of community as we met our friends and neighbors on Saturday mornings on the historic Town Hall Mall. We presented our “Trash Talk” to groups interested in learning about recycling. We provided eighty recycling receptacles at Braintree’s Fourth of July Celebration and organized October’s Make A Difference Day, collecting items for reuse and recycling to benefit people in need. We gave away over 1,100 energy-saving CFL’s in exchange for working incandescent bulbs. We calculated Braintree’s carbon footprint and launched Braintree’s Cool Mass Program, a three year plan to reduce residential carbon emissions through the formation of “Eco-Teams”. These small groups help people save energy and save money immediately through conservation, instead of waiting years for the construction of alternative power-generating plants. We awarded two \$500 environmental grants to Braintree teachers and will award a \$1,000 scholarship to a 2010 Braintree High School graduating senior who intends to pursue environmental studies.

A broad cross section of our community attended the Green Gala celebration, including Town and State officials, people active in community organizations, and members and friends of Sustainable Braintree. Music performed by the Braintree High School Jazz Band kicked off the evening, followed by some rocking oldies tunes performed by East Coast Acapella. The night ended with dancing to the tunes of disc jockey Gerard Timmons.

Mayor Joseph Sullivan commended the accomplishments of Sustainable Braintree in its first year. As I viewed the gathering of friends and supporters, it was clear that our success is shared by the entire community. Every one of our initiatives has been supported by elements outside the immediate members of Sustainable Braintree. Our Town Departments, including the Mayor’s Office, Town Council, School Department, Braintree Electric Light Department, Recycling Department, Thayer Public Library, Braintree Emergency Management Agency, Department of Public Works, and Parks and Recreation have assisted in one or more of our projects. Businesses have gotten involved, not only as sponsors of the Green Gala but in other endeavors as well. We have appreciated the support of Rockland Trust, Big Brother Big Sister, Cardi’s, the UPS Store, Richmond Hardware and Capitol Waste. We have collaborated with Boy and Girl Scout Troops, Braintree Fund for Education, Parent Involvement Program, Braintree Rotary, Friends of the Library, Dianne Devanna Center, Humane Society and the Gardeners Guild. Over a dozen local non-profit groups signed up for the Community Table at the Farmers Market to foster community awareness. Every individual who has attended the Farmers Market or exchanged a light bulb for a CFL has played a part in this greening of Braintree.

We greatly appreciate the following Green Gala benefactors whose donations will fuel our green initiatives in the coming year: Covanta/SEMSS, **MKE Development & Egasti Consulting**, Agnitti Insurance Agency, Inc., Braintree Police Officers Association, Braintree Police Superior Officers

Association, Microsoft, Representative Joseph Driscoll, Charles Kokoros (Town Council Vice President), Charles Ryan (Town Council President), O'Connor & Drew, P.C., M2M Entertainment/Gerard Timmons, Bridget's Dance Studio, Dan Clifford (Town Councilor), Hank Joyce (Town Councilor), Braintree Rug, Representative Steve Tobin, Braintree Flower Shop, Gail Poliner Feldman, "g" Green Design, Huntington Insurance, Brian's Fine Desserts, Richmond Hardware, Innello & Company, Congressman Stephen F. Lynch, Lawn & Property Landscape, Inc., Lee & Associates Certified Court Reporters, Inc./LeeScribe Transcription Services. Donations of raffle prizes were generously donated by Sintra, Bertucci's, Muscle Medics, The Snippery, Dr. Cusicianna, and the South Shore Dining Out Meet Up Group.

With widespread community support and volunteers who are committed, talented, and creative, we plan to continue to enhance our educational and outreach programs to expand sustainable practices in our town. For more information about Sustainable Braintree, Inc., please visit [www.sustainablebraintree.org](http://www.sustainablebraintree.org) or call 781-794-8338.

***Sustainable Braintree, Inc.: Advocating smart living through sustainability and environmental awareness. Mary Mitchell is the President of Sustainable Braintree, Inc.***