

# SUSTAINABILITY HERO

## April 2018



**Edward Cohen**  
Founding Member, Mount Laurel Green Team  
Board President, Sustainable Cherry Hill  
Chair, Tri-County Sustainability Alliance

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Ed Cohen spent the last ten years working on community sustainability efforts and earning a reputation as a dedicated South Jersey sustainability champion. He serves on the Mount Laurel Green Team, which he is a founding member of, and is the chair of the Tri-County Sustainability Alliance (TriSCA). He is board president of Sustainable Cherry Hill and a founding member of an environmental education working group in Camden. He received the Camden SMART Environmental Hero Award and was recognized as a Sustainable Cherry Hill 'Agent for Change'.

Ed is a skilled networker and collaborator. In addition to being active on the ground as a volunteer, he also sees the big picture that enables him to connect the dots between people, organizations and issues. He is organized and manages to keep people moving forward with his enthusiasm. Ed has a Ph.D. in computer science and runs a computer consulting business. He also leads an Ultimate Frisbee league, mentors a high school robotics team, performs magic and is active in his family life.

Ed is always ready to volunteer and consider the next sustainability action. He explained, "I've learned to keep the complaining to a minimum because it doesn't help move us forward. By focusing on the positive, people feel better about what they are doing and then we all work harder to make change."

Ed runs a variety of outreach events and gives talks on climate change, energy use and water conservation. He has published green articles in newspapers, magazines and online, and has performed green magic shows. Ed revealed that he feels a new urgency to make progress when he said, "Change is not happening fast enough. I've added advocacy work to my to-do list. I try to attend protests and have been making phone calls to elected officials and writing letters to the editor."



## Tri-County Sustainability Alliance

Since 2016, Ed has served as the chair of the [Tri-County Sustainability Alliance \(TriSCA\)](#), which is a Sustainable Jersey regional hub for Burlington, Camden and Gloucester counties. TriSCA provides local green teams support for sustainability actions and programs to educate residents.



The group arranges fun events like Sustainability Sips and Sustainable South Jersey Meet Ups in collaboration with Sustainable Cherry Hill. On April 13, 2018 you can attend the first collaboration event between the South Jersey Urbanists and the Tri-County Sustainability Alliance at Cooper River Distillers, visit the [TriSCA Facebook page](#) for details.

## Environmental Leadership Program and New Jersey Learns

Ed credits two leadership training programs with making him more strategic about his commitment to sustainability. Ed is an alumna of the [Environmental Leadership Program \(ELP\)](#), a program that provides intensive skill training for environmental leadership. Ed said, "As part of ELP, I was required to write a personal leadership plan. This plan helped me do less wandering through choices and showed me how to give more thought to how I want to spend my time. I made a conscious decision to dedicate a certain number of hours to my community sustainability work." Ed is also a graduate of the New Jersey Learns Program, a leadership course for sustainability change agents that was provided by the [Cloud Institute for Sustainability Education](#). Both programs also provided a valuable network of sustainability changemakers.



## Magic Tabling for Change

On weekends, you can often find Ed behind a fold-up table sharing information about his green programs. Ed admitted, "At first I wasn't crazy about tabling, but now, I have incorporated my magic. So instead of standing around, I do a few tricks to get people engaged. Then I share with them about the work we are doing." You can see Ed at an upcoming event at Mom's Organic Market in Cherry Hill on April 22, 2018. He will also be at the Mount Laurel Fall Festivals and Sustainable Cherry Hill's Food Day events.

## Advice for Green Team Members

When Ed first started volunteering with Sustainable Cherry Hill, he worked with the organization's founder, [Lori Braunstein](#). Lori is a great inspiration to him. When asked if he has any advice for new green team members, he said, "Green team members and sustainability activists should find a group or mentor and get out there and work with other like-minded people. If you are in South Jersey, let me know and I can help connect you with the right people. I like helping people find their passions and connect with others on mutual goals."



## **April 28: Sustainable Cherry Hill Earth Festival and the Mount Laurel Clean Up Day**

Ed coordinates the entertainment for the 9th Sustainable Cherry Hill Earth Festival that will take place on Saturday, April 28, 2018 at historic Croft Farm in Cherry Hill. This popular event attracts 5,000 visitors; the theme this year is: Reduce Plastic–Fantastic! Ed is also supporting the annual Mount Laurel Cleanup day which will take place on April 28, 2018 at the Mount Laurel Community Center. “We get the community involved in cleaning up and removing litter from the parks. The overall goal is to make it fun and add in a little sustainability information at the same time,” said Ed.



### **What Issue Is a Hot Topic?**

Ed said, “Water is a hot topic that everyone is concerned about and provides a nice entry point to talk about other sustainability topics like conservation, pollution and plastics.” For the past several years, Ed has given the keynote talk at the Palmyra Cove Nature Park Water Festival in the fall. He includes magic and talks about the important role of water in our lives.



### **Education and Computer Consulting Business**

Ed received a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from Cornell University. He continued his studies and earned an M.S. in Computer Science and a Ph.D. in Computer Science at from the State University of New York at Buffalo. For over twenty years, Ed has worked as a consultant and now has his own software and engineering consulting business. He works on real-time problems in system control and imaging. He holds eight patents and has published over a dozen technical papers.

### **What You May Not Know About Ed**

Ed grew up in Newark, Delaware. He was an avid kayaker and has great memories of spending time on the water with his father during his high school years. Ed is also a bike enthusiast; he uses his bike for practical reasons and enjoys 20 to 30-mile bike rides solo or with a local bike group.

Ed started and helps run a co-ed Ultimate Frisbee league. The league continues to grow and has ten teams and over 160 people involved. He is a mentor with the FIRST Robotics high school team that builds robots to compete in tournaments to get students involved in solving real-world engineering challenges.

Ed’s wife, Karen, is also a sustainability advocate; she was the first person to send him to a green team meeting. They have two children, who generally support their parents’ activism at home but Ed jokingly said, “The kids don’t always appreciate our home’s energy-conserving low temperature settings.” His daughter, Rebecca, is working for Andy Kim’s campaign for the U.S. Representative seat, NJ District 3 and his son, Lucas, aspires to be in the environmental services realm. They live in Mount Laurel, New Jersey.