

Majority of schoolchildren prefer tap water to bottled

A campaign run by an innovative free water sourcing charity and a collapsible bottle manufacturer could have implications for changing attitudes to bottled water and improving children's health.

The School Drinking Water Campaign, run by Find-A-Fountain and Ohyo Ltd, has toured schools across the South East in an attempt to educate children about the merits of switching to tap water from factory-bottled which, it argues, could pave the way for a significant reduction in the estimated 150 billion plastic bottles dumped throughout the world each year¹.

As well as environmental factors, campaigners have highlighted the health risks associated with disposable plastic bottles, which have been found to leach harmful chemicals into bottled water left sitting on shop shelves².

The campaign has proved that taste is not an obstacle - among school children tested so far, more than half preferred plain tap water over bottled in blind tastings. Interim results from the participating schools indicate that 75% of pupils preferred tap water (25% bottled water; 25% filtered tap water; while 50% preferred plain tap). The test showed school children that they can save the environment and their pocket money by choosing to refill their water bottles every day, instead of buying bottled water.

With the final presentations completed in early June, FAF's environmental consultants have presented to more than 2,000 school children across the South East, from years four-seven. Downloadable lesson plans, promoting the benefits of tap over factory-bottled water, have been made available to all schools via the website and children and teachers have been encouraged to act as free drinking water detectives by uploading the sites of new fountains to FAF's website via its newly launched app.

The Find-A-Fountain campaign is building up a database pinpointing the locations of drinking fountains around the country, with the ultimate aim of increasing the number of free water sources and making them easier to find. The campaign's newly launched app will also allow general members of the public to upload new fountains or 'turn on the app' to find their nearest supply of free drinking water.

Guy Jeremiah, creator of Ohyo and co-founder of Find-a-Fountain says: "Drinking fountains used to be everywhere but from the '80s onwards the public went for the slick marketing of bottled water, and fountains largely fell into neglect. However, in recent years, concern about the environment has caused a rethink. By joining our campaign, schools can help everyone save money, reduce their impact on the environment and avoid the harmful toxins associated with some bottled water products - by educating the very youngest in our society we have a chance to change attitudes for the long term."

John Condon, project manager for the campaign, says: "We are delighted with the response of school children to the campaign presentation and lesson plans. For those schools that opted to participate in the campaign by inviting us to present at their schools, we have been delighted to find that our project complements both their curriculum needs, as well as providing a case study for inclusion in their environmental award schemes."

Ohyo, a reusable water bottle which collapses flat when not in use and can be carried in a pocket, was put forward as a reusable and safer alternative to disposable plastic bottles. The award winning product has been issued free to all participating school children and is now available to buy in Boots and M&S.

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Notes to editors

The average person in the Europe buys 85 bottles of mineral water a year. A typical UK local authority disposes of up to 10 million bottles a year at great cost to tax payers. Last year, humans worldwide threw away 5,000 bottles a second - 150 billion bottles a year, enough to circle the world a 1000 times or stretch to the moon and back 50 times.

Small doses of antimony can make people feel ill and depressed. Water normally contains two parts per trillion (ppt) of antimony. Bottled water which has sat on a shelf for three months can contain 700 ppt. Ref: Chemistry World. Ohyo bottles are made from plastic which is PET and BPA free.

The Find-a-Fountain campaign has been developed through the collaboration of three bodies: START – a charity set up by HRH The Prince of Wales in 2010 with a mission to inspire people to live more sustainably.

The 1859 Drinking Fountain Association which has been working to provide free drinking water for over 150 years. It focuses on providing drinking fountains for UK schools, and drinking wells in developing countries.

Ohyo Ltd is founder of www.findafountain.org and UK manufacturer of the Ohyo reusable and collapsible personal water bottle.

The **FindaFountain** app is free to download from the AppStore.

The Find-a-Fountain project hopes to start a renaissance in the use of drinking fountains by making public drinking fountains easier to find. Through public records, it has so far logged over 600 of the nation's drinking water fountains and more are being added by the public all the time. The www.findafountain.org website makes it easy to locate and upload drinking fountains via its newly launched app. It is hoped that this campaign will also lead to a second phase, which will facilitate the installation of new drinking water fountains around the country and the restoration of old fountains that have fallen into disrepair.

About Ohyo:

Ohyo, which is available online from [HYPERLINK "http://www.ohyo.me" www.ohyo.me](http://www.ohyo.me) and high street stores (including Boots and M&S), now features a custom-made spout designed to enhance the product's adaptability and ease-of-use. The Ohyo has a pop-out spout that means it can be used one-handed, making it suitable for a range of new users including children, commuters and gym users. Guy Jeremiah, Ohyo's creator was famously slated by Duncan Bannatyne on Dragon's Den, who threw the bottle back at him in rage. Guy's more than delighted to have proved Mr Bannatyne and the other dragons wrong. Using an Ohyo is a sustainable, safe, cheaper and convenient alternative to buying bottled water. Ohyo was designed and is made in Britain.

For more information, press enquiries, samples, images or interviews, please contact Alistair Pulling at Loop PR on 0786 643 0049 or email alistair.pulling@loop-pr.co.uk

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