



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Paper or Plastic??? NEITHER!**

Stuart, FL - Next time you go to the grocery store and the bagger asks if you'd prefer paper or plastic, consider responding with a simple one word answer – NEITHER! The item rapidly gaining in popularity is the recycled tote bag! Now becoming more trendy, recycled totes are multi-use, and are being used by concerned citizens everywhere as a replacement for grocery bags, shopping bags and even beach bags.

Did you know that over 306 trillion plastic bags have been used this year (in the US?), and the number continues to climb every second of every day? Plastic bags are so cheap to produce that they have captured at least 80 percent of the grocery and convenience store market since they were introduced over a quarter century ago, according to the Arlington, Virginia-based American Plastics Council. But these inexpensive bags are produced at a tremendous cost to our natural environment.

Plastic bags show up everywhere – and in some very disturbing places! They clutter landfills. They flap from trees, float in our waterways and clog roadside drains. They drift out to sea and wind up in sea turtle and fish bellies after being mistaken for food. The consequences are often tragic!

Many families are making a simple change in their shopping routines to address this issue. Stacy Ranieri, President of the Firefly Group and Keep Martin Beautiful supporter,

and her husband Rob recently discussed ways their family can reduce their carbon footprint. They came up with several simple changes, including reducing the use of plastic bags. Rob is in charge of grocery shopping, having relieved Stacy of that responsibility after complaints from their children that her groceries were boring. Tired of the wad of plastic bags that would accumulate after weekly grocery purchases, he made the decision to bring recyclable totes on a recent trip to Publix.

“At first I thought it would be a hassle, but it was pretty painless,” explained Ranieri. He brought 8 totes with him to the store, threw them in the cart and gave them to the bagger when he checked out. “Our kids thought they were easier to carry into the house and unpack and when we were done, we folded them up and stuck them in a cabinet until the next time we need them. We normally use about a dozen plastic bags and now we won’t need any. It’s such a small thing, but it made us all feel really good that we could change one simple behavior and eliminate the need to use more than 600 plastic bags,” Ranieri added.

So where can you find these recycled tote bags? They’re everywhere now, from Whole Foods, to Wal-Mart to clothing stores such as Steinmart. And you can always purchase them online at such websites as [www.treehugger.com](http://www.treehugger.com), [www.ecobags.com](http://www.ecobags.com) and [www.reusablebags.com](http://www.reusablebags.com).