



## Rain Barrel Project Connects Arts, Business and Sustainability

*Over the next several months, we (the St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District) will be presenting "mini-features" on a community rain barrel project that will culminate in May 2011 with a Rain Barrel Auction... Check out Part 1 in this series below:*

**November 16, 2010 – written by Kathleen Petitjean**

As a 2010-11 Fellow with IUSB's Center for a Sustainable Future, Kathleen Petitjean has enlisted 12 artists and artist groups, including local school groups, to showcase their artistic talents on 55-gallon plastic rain barrels. After being coated with an eco-friendlier automotive clear coat to protect the artwork, the barrels will be displayed at underwriting businesses and organizations for about a month in early Spring 2011.

Following this display period, the barrels will be sold at a public auction on the evening of May 6th (location to be determined). Proceeds from the sale of each barrel will be split between the artists and the Center for a Sustainable Future.

The purpose of this project, according to Ms. Petitjean, is to raise awareness of water as a natural resource and demonstrate how homeowners can beautify their gardens or patio, conserve water and save money while protecting our watershed and the St. Joe River. "Our antiquated sewer systems cannot handle the volume put into it during a rain event," said Ms. Petitjean, "so rainwater and untreated sewer water goes into our river nearly every time it rains. What better way to do our part than to install a rain barrel on our home's downspout; collected rain water is excellent for vegetable and flower gardens and can be used to wash your car or even your dog! A power outage last summer left many homeowners unable to flush their toilets; a barrel of water would have been most useful for these folks during an already difficult time."

Mark your calendar for the auction at 7:00 p.m. on May 6, 2011.

Keep tuned for updates on this project including the location of the auction as well as features on the artists.

Don't forget to watch for the Rain Barrel Art displays throughout the county this coming Spring!

The project is being underwritten so far by:

· [Indiana University at South Bend Center for a Sustainable Future](#)

- [St Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District](#)
- [South Bend Museum of Art](#)
- [Coca Cola Bottling Co of Indiana](#)
- [Goodrich Auction Company](#)
- [Lochmandy Collision Center](#)
- [Teachers and Therapists of the Special Needs and Abilities Preschool of the South Bend Community School Corporation](#)
- [The Troyer Group](#)
- [Martin's Supermarkets](#)
- [Lawson-Fisher Associates](#)
- [Just Goods](#)
- [Barnaby's of South Bend](#)
- [Red Hen Turf Farm](#)
- [Uptown Kitchen](#)
- [Purple Porch Co-op](#)