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## **Saving the earth, one business at a time**

### **Local entrepreneurs thrive by pushing sustainability, environmentalism**

by Stacey Palevsky

Anne Vollen and Sheryl Cohen — Jewish women, best friends, business partners and entrepreneurs — founded Green Zebra, a for-profit enterprise that in December published a 300-page coupon book containing 250 coupons that they say could save shoppers \$12,000 at local, eco-friendly businesses in San Francisco.

A disproportionate number of participating business owners are Jewish, which they didn't expect, they said. All the businesses in this story are also in the coupon book.

Their simple mission is to save people money. (“Who doesn't love coupons?” Vollen joked.)

Overall, though, Green Zebra's goal is to empower San Francisco consumers to make more educated, eco-friendly choices and while doing so give a boost to businesses working for a better earth.

“During Rosh Hashanah, I was sitting in synagogue, and thinking about my year, and realized, ‘You know, I feel pretty good about this year,’” Cohen said.

The Green Zebra guide also is a fundraiser. Cohen and Vollen want to help schools, churches and synagogues raise money. The coupon books cost \$25, and fundraising partners get \$10 for every book they sell.

Whichever school sells the most Green Zebra guides will receive a solar and wind power system for their school, donated by Bay Solar Power Design.

Cohen and Vollen are at work on Volume 2, and might also publish a coupon book for Marin County.

“We think people want to do the right thing if it’s easy for them,” Vollen said.

“We are a capitalist society,” Cohen added. “We’re talking to people on terms they understand: Money.”

And as people save dollars and cents, the founders of Green Zebra hope consumers will develop an interest in saving the earth, too.

Tikkun olam, one coupon at a time.

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