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**\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\***

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**“Don’t Chuck Your Shucks” celebrates 10 years with over 3 million pounds of shell recycled for the bays**

**REHOBOTH BEACH** — What started as an ambitious shell recycling pilot in 2015 has officially hit a major milestone: the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays’ Don’t Chuck Your Shucks program is celebrating its 10th anniversary with an astounding **3,015,587 pounds** of oyster shells collected and returned to the Bays.

Over the last decade, the Center, with the support of dozens of dedicated restaurant partners and shellfish-loving diners, has kept oyster shells out of landfills and put them to work restoring vital estuarine habitats.

Jack Gazda, Shellfish Project Specialist, has spent the last two and a half years hauling shells for the program. After a career managing service industries and being “strapped to corporate communications devices 24/7,” he was ready for something different.

“This role is just a small aspect of the Center’s mission, but I was thrilled when I found it,” said Gazda. “Where else can you work without management breathing over your shoulder, listen to classic rock while driving along the Bays, take in the view from the Inlet Bridge, and know you’re helping protect this incredible place for our children and grandchildren?”

Since its launch, Don’t Chuck Your Shucks has grown from a handful of restaurants to an extensive network of partners who collect discarded oyster and clam shells, which are then cured and reused for habitat restoration projects across the Inland Bays watershed.

Oyster shell is a critical material for rebuilding reefs, protecting shorelines, and providing habitat for young oysters, fish, and crabs. More oysters mean more natural filtration in our Bays, working 24/7 to improve water quality.

The impact is measurable. The Center has collected over three million pounds of shell that otherwise would have gone to landfills, countless volunteers bagged cured shell for habitat

restoration projects, and in 2024, that recycled shell was used to build the largest oyster reef in Inland Bays history.

The success of Don't Chuck Your Shucks wouldn't be possible without the commitment of partner restaurants and the patrons who enjoy fresh local seafood. A current list of participating restaurants and the restoration projects supported by their contributions can be found here: [https://inlandbays.org/projects\\_issues/dont-chuck-your-shucks/](https://inlandbays.org/projects_issues/dont-chuck-your-shucks/)

Looking ahead, the Center plans to continue expanding the program to keep pace with demand for restoration materials while keeping shell waste out of local landfills.

For more information about Don't Chuck Your Shucks, becoming a partner restaurant, or volunteering, email Jack Gazda at [dcys@inlandbays.org](mailto:dcys@inlandbays.org) or call the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays at (302) 226-8105

***About the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays***

*The Delaware Center for the Inland Bays is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving, protecting, and restoring Delaware's Inland Bays—Rehoboth Bay, Indian River Bay, and Little Assawoman Bay—and their watersheds. The Center works through scientific research, education, and advocacy to ensure these vital ecosystems thrive for future generations. More information can be found at [inlandbays.org](https://inlandbays.org).*

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Photo Caption: Delaware Center for the Inland Bays Shellfish Specialist, Jack Gazda, transfers oyster shells collected from restaurants to the Center's shell yard, to be used in future restoration projects.