

Proud Preserver of Planets, People, and Pets

BY ANA LUISA TERRAZAS | PHOTO COURTESY OF MRS. GREEN'S WORLD

GINA MURPHY-DARLING'S MOTHER PROBABLY DIDN'T realize she was planting seeds when she washed and reused aluminum foil, but her daughter definitely took notice.

"Nothing ever got wasted," says Murphy-Darling. "My dad was a retired New York executive, yet he always picked up cans. There was a lot of role modeling for me."

Her parents are just one of the reasons Murphy-Darling is now known around the world as Mrs. Green and the host of the radio program, *Mrs. Green's World*. Her journey here had its twists.

A self-proclaimed "Wildcat freak," Murphy-Darling graduated from the College of Education in 1979. During her student teaching at Catalina High School, despite having a "wonderful mentor," she realized, "I cannot do this. I cannot make this commitment."

While the stereotypical classroom did not suit her, she definitely became a teacher, just "not in the strict sense," she adds. She began working at Pima County Adult Education, where she helped people learn English and work toward a GED.

She then founded Parents and Children Together, a resettlement program for Arizona's refugees. Throughout her career, there was one constant: She always encouraged and worked with at-risk families and children.

Her career took a dramatic change in the early 2000s when she planned a workshop, *Awakening the Dream, Changing the Dream*, for a group dedicated to the preservation of the rainforest. Not long after the presentation, she took a trip to Peru to see the rainforest for herself.

On a boat floating down the Amazon, she was in awe of the magnificent trees and the dense canopy.

She says, "The canopy is so dense, you actually can walk on it." However, when the boat turned a corner, the splendid view turned to mass destruction. Miles and miles of old-growth trees were razed and gone forever.

The shocking sight changed her. "I knew I had to do something."

She came back to Tucson — once she arrived in Tucson to attend the UA, she never wanted to leave — and started a radio interview program on a local Tucson station called *Mrs. Green Goes Mainstream*. She also reached people through her website, blog, newsletter, and social media. She did the program for three years when she decided to build a radio studio in her house and start an Internet radio show called *Mrs. Green's World*.

Followed by thousands of listeners, she also has a weekly podcast, carried on six networks (including the Iglu Radio app), which is downloaded in 29 countries around the world. There now is a Mrs. Green satellite office in Phoenix, and including Murphy-Darling, there are eight Mrs. Green staffers. Her husband runs the radio board and edits all the files. Other staffers ("I have been blessed with an amazing team," she says) don't even live in Tucson. Thanks to technology, sound engineer Kelly King is able to work from her home in Beckett, Massachusetts.

Murphy-Darling recently published a book, *Your Mother Called (Mother Earth) ... You'd Better Call Her Back!* (available on Amazon), which provides easy tips to live more sustainably.

No shrinking violet, yet never invasive, Murphy-Darling also provides environmental education to businesses that want more sustainable business practices.

When asked what one small step people could start taking today, she says, "Stop using disposable water bottles. The bottles are made of petrochemicals, they are a landfill item, and they are harmful to the environment. Buy a safe, refillable bottle. This small step is the gateway to consciousness."

She realizes it is not possible to change everything at once, although she has vowed to never use a disposable water bottle, and she shops secondhand, buys and eats local, and strives to eat a more plant-based diet. "No matter what you do or how small it is, it all adds up."

This social entrepreneur especially enjoys featuring other planet preservers on her radio show. She recently featured One More Generation, founded in 2009 by two sisters, then ages 7 and 8, to educate children and adults about the plight of endangered species.

They are unstoppable and have become known around the world for their work on plastic-pollution education and animal conservation." Their latest campaign is OneLessStraw.org, which tackles the daily use of 500,000,000 plastic straws, enough straws to fill 46,400 large school buses per year.

One of Murphy-Darling's favorite partnerships is Mrs. Green's Pick a Pet Day with the Humane Society of Southern Arizona and Chapman Automotive, which she holds twice a year. Chapman hosts the event and pays for the adoption fees.

A record 17 dogs were adopted at the last event. "Now, that's what I call the ultimate recycling event," she proudly adds. ◀

Listen to Mrs. Green at mrsgreensworld.com.

Gina Murphy-Darling, aka Mrs. Green

