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PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Keep Mohawk Valley Beautiful Celebrates Year of Growth

Keep Mohawk Valley Beautiful (KMVB), a six-county NYS affiliate of the national Keep America Beautiful (KAB) program, is celebrating the achievements of the Mohawk Valley's 21st annual *Great American Cleanup*. KMVB is a standing committee of the Mohawk Valley Economic Development District, Inc. (MVEDD).

KAB works to create sustainable communities that are socially connected, environmentally healthy and economically sound. Their annual cleanup effort is the country's largest community improvement program. Each Spring, KAB affiliates, like KMVB, engage more than 4 million volunteers in more than 20,000 communities nationwide.

Today, KMVB and the Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CABVI) hosted a wrap-up event at CABVI's Dwyer Avenue Distribution Center and Kenneth Thayer Production Facility in Utica, NY to announce the results of the 2022 KMVB *Great American Cleanup*. CABVI generously provided Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) to volunteers that participated in the *Great American Cleanup* again this Spring.

This year, KMVB welcomed two new sponsors to the local *Great American Cleanup* Effort: the Bank of Utica and PJ Green, Inc. These sponsors, along with the longstanding support of the Oneida-Herkimer Solid Waste Authority, Positively Rome, the City of Utica, CABVI, the Genesis Group, Rome Clean & Green, as well as the Otsego, Schoharie, Herkimer and Fulton-Montgomery Chamber of Commerce offices, made this year's cleanup a great success.

"The level of participation we had for this year's cleanup was inspiring," said Stephen Smith, MVEDD Executive Director. Over 1,700 volunteers collected over 3,100 bags of litter from parks, roadways and waterways in Central NY during the months of April, May & June – more than *tripling* the impact of last year's clean up event.

There are environmental and economic costs to litter that negatively impact local wildlife, public drainage systems, road safety and property values. "It is estimated that cleaning up one piece of litter saves a community \$0.40. If every KMVB volunteer picked up 50 pieces of litter, this year's clean up benefitted the Mohawk Valley by over \$34,000," continued Smith.

If picking up litter is not something you can commit to – there are other ways you can get involved. KMVB supports various recycling and beautification projects in the region. Sam Russo, a KMVB board member, has started five perennial gardens in the Mohawk Valley, and is always looking to partner up with local community groups to build more. "Keep Mohawk Valley Beautiful is not only about litter. We want to create spaces that bring people together and inspire a sense of responsibility to *keep* those spaces clean and beautiful," says Russo. If you have a community garden, or would like to start one, please contact info@mvedd.org find out how KMVB can help.

Groups will be able to register for the annual event next Spring on the Authority's website, www.ohswa.org. By registering, you will be eligible to receive free materials including gloves, trash bags and other assistance. KMVB encourages any individual or group hosting a cleanup, community garden, recycling or beautification project – new or existing – to **register** their event. In addition to free materials and resources, registrants will be highlighted for their efforts on the Authority website and KMVB social media platforms.

For more information, or to report a site that needs to be cleaned or rehabilitated, email us at info@mvedd.org. You may also follow KMVB on Facebook (Keep Mohawk Valley Beautiful – KMVB) for additional information. To donate funding or materials, call (315) 866-4671.

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Photo 1: Wolfsped getting ready for North Utica cleanup.



Photo 2: ConMed employees after their Clean-Up 2022



Photo 3: Team cleans up in Remsen, NY