

CLEAN UP-GIVE BACK

ANNUAL REPORT 2021





“Everybody can be great because everybody can serve.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.

I founded Clean Up-Give Back in 2017 to beautify the environment and create volunteer opportunities in my local community. In four short years, the humble actions of our volunteers grew into a movement across Cook County, Illinois and beyond.

I believe the human spirit thrives when tasked with something bigger than itself. Clean Up-Give Back empowers everyone with flexible service opportunities to create a better environment while building personal connections and advancing socioeconomic justice. Concerned citizens, civic leaders, business owners, clubs, schools, and municipalities – as well as individuals seeking court-ordered service hours – have a home at Clean Up-Give Back to meet their respective goals.

The global pandemic presented Clean Up-Give Back with unprecedented challenges in 2021, including event cancellations due to safety mitigations. Undaunted, we pivoted our outreach strategy and event logistics. We mobilized over one thousand volunteers, doubled the size of our Flexible Service Program, and collected over 40,000 pounds of litter. Clean Up-Give Back also hosted a number of significant community events and increased corporate sponsorships and grants fourfold.

While we are proud of what we achieved in 2021, we have even more exciting goals for 2022. We plan to enhance our commitment to litter prevention, develop our operational capabilities, and grow our diverse team of partners and volunteers.

Sincerely,

Donna Adam
Founder and CEO
Clean Up-Give Back





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OUR MISSION

***“Creating a Clean Environment
Through Community Engagement
and Inclusion”***

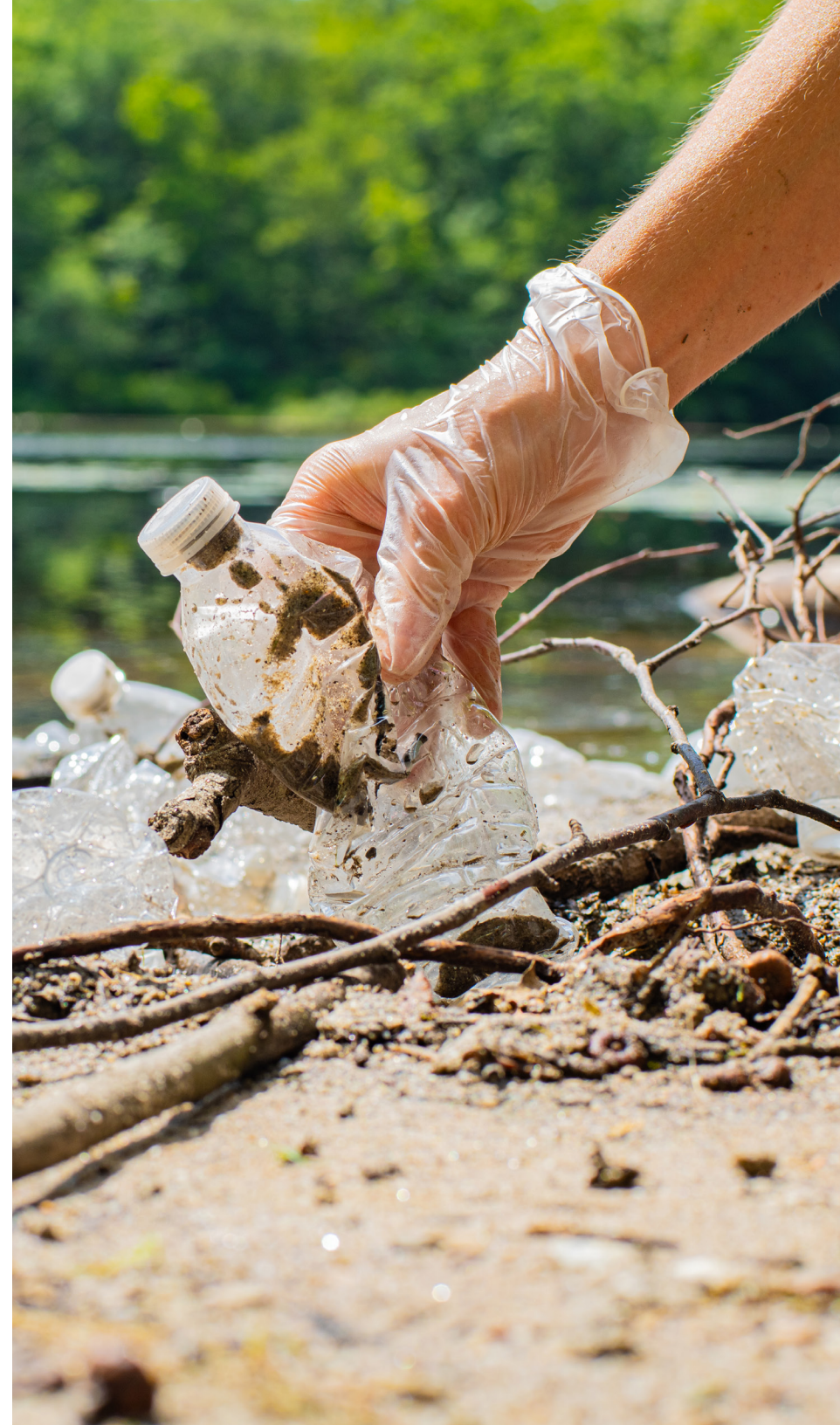




THE LITTER CRISIS TODAY

In 2021, America's litter crisis accelerated due to the global pandemic, adding over 207 million discarded PPE items to our waterways and roadways. Our communities nationwide suffered environmentally and socially with over 2,000 pieces of litter per square mile. 90% of people surveyed now believe that litter is a problem in their state.*

We are on a mission to create a healthy, sustainable and inclusive environment. Our 2021 accomplishments reflect our commitment to this mission.



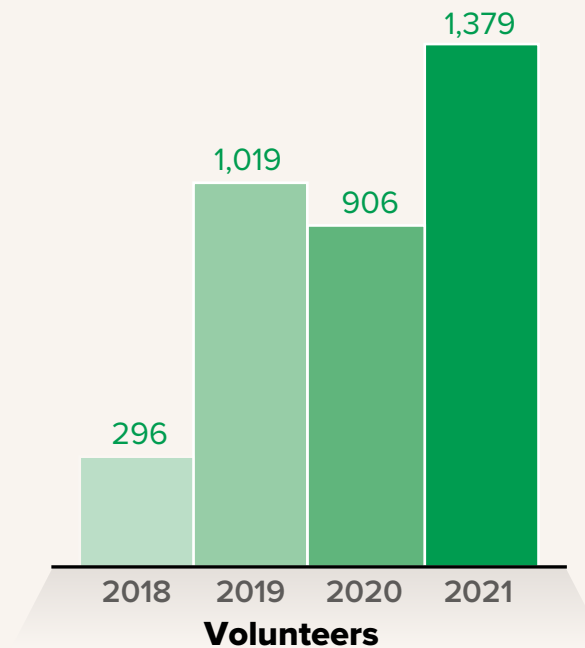
* Keep America Beautiful 2021 Survey



2021 IMPACT

We are humbled by our growing community of volunteers who are the heart and soul of Clean Up-Give Back.

In 2021, we grew by over 50%.

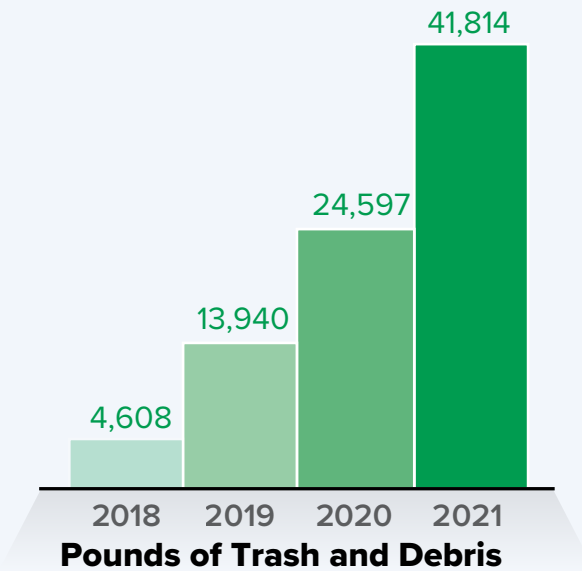
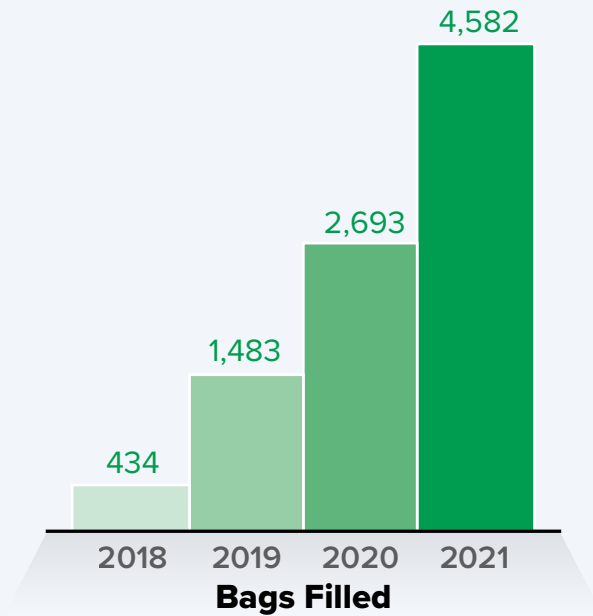
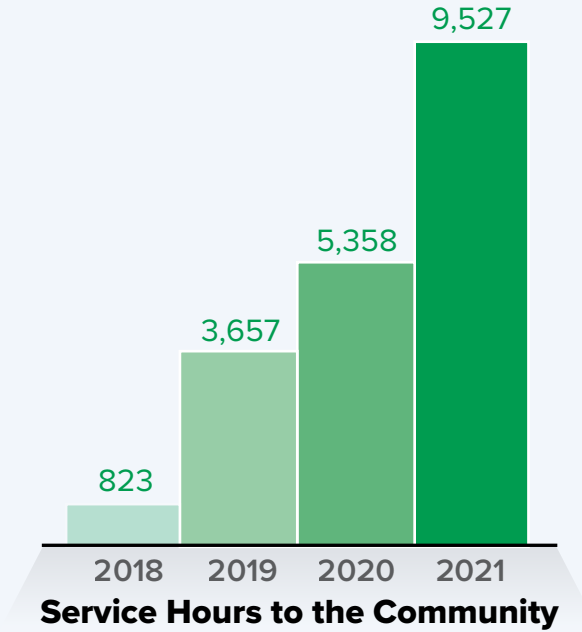


Community cleanups were halted March-May 2020



2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Despite the ongoing pandemic in 2021, we far exceeded our 25% annual growth goals in respect to service hours to the community, the number trash bags filled and total pounds of litter collected. We also established two large new community chapters, one in St. Louis, Missouri and the other in Maine Township, Illinois. The numbers speak for themselves.

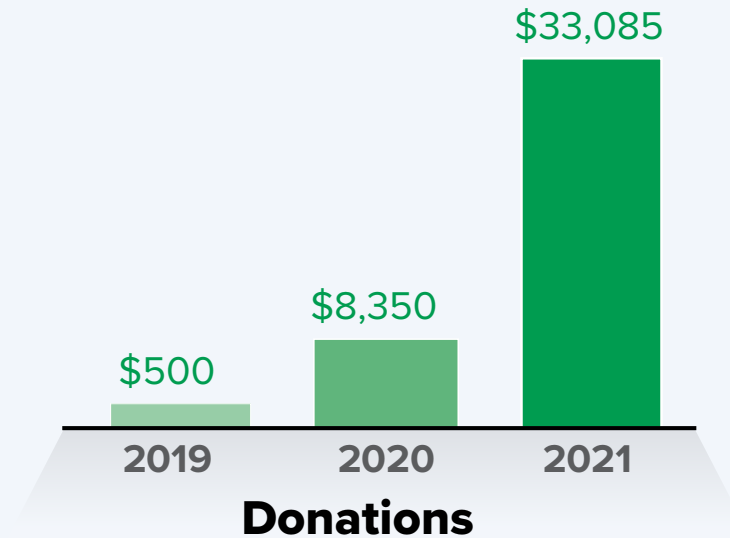




2021 SPONSORS

\$33,085 for Healthy Communities

In spite of a global pandemic, our founding sponsors stayed by our side, and we welcomed ten new sponsors to the Clean Up-Give Back family. We could not have made such an impact in our communities in 2021 without their record-setting level of support.



ArdaghGroup





2021

Service Programming and Highlights

Clean Up–Give Back offers a variety of programs which provide customized service opportunities to groups and individuals to accommodate their unique objectives and time commitments. We continue to build our portfolio of programming to suit anyone who is willing to engage with their local community.





COMMUNITY-WIDE CLEAN-UP EVENTS

Our door is always open to community members who want to get involved. New volunteers who seek out service opportunities often connect with us by ‘dropping in’ on a fun, pre-arranged project to learn more about Clean Up-Give Back. We arrange regular community events to promote our mission and raise awareness for all who may be interested in giving back.

Chicago South Side

In summer 2021, we worked with Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot’s team to identify Chicago communities in need. We arranged 4 separate projects in different areas of East Garfield Park. We also worked with Chicago Alderman Walter Burnett, Jr., who encouraged local community members to don a yellow safety vest and pitch in.

Our work was featured on Chicago’s WGN channel nine. Watch the segment by clicking [here](#).



CHICAGO'S VERY OWN WGN9





COOK COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES

Cook County, Illinois is the second most populated county in the United States and home to over 5 million people. The Forest Preserves are critical in protecting the area's rare ecosystem of prairies, woodlands, and wetlands.

In 2021, we conducted 16 separate events in the Preserves, including Lions Woods, Algonquin Woods, Busse Woods, Catherine Chevalier Woods, Iroquois Woods, Schiller Woods, Labagh Woods, Che-Che-Pin-Qua Woods, Belleau Woods, and Chippewa Woods. This series of events involved 365 unique volunteers, who received over 1,000 service hours all together, and collected over 4,750 pounds of litter.

Clean Up-Give Back was recognized by the Cook County Forest Preserves for its outstanding volunteer hours in 2019-2021 .





ANNUAL DES PLAINES RIVERBANK CLEAN-UP

The Des Plaines River has great historic significance for the Chicago area. The Des Plaines River merges with the Kankakee River, forming a significant tributary of the Mississippi River. In 1673, Marquette and Joliet made their historic voyage by traveling along the Des Plaines River from the Mississippi Valley to the Great Lakes area.

The Annual Des Plaines Riverbank Clean-Up is our “signature” event, held each summer along the banks of the Des Plaines River. We held our 3rd Annual Riverbank Clean-up event in 2021, partnering again with the Izaak Walton League, one of America’s oldest and most successful conservation organizations in the United States. This community-wide clean up event is our largest, and grows in popularity each year, attracting over 100 participants in 2021 who removed over 1,800 bags of litter at 12 different locations.

Many thanks to our friends at Microsoft for providing a picnic lunch to all of our hardworking volunteers.



Microsoft





FLEXIBLE SERVICE

Our Flexible Service Program is popular with students and adults who have difficulty finding the right opportunity to fulfill individual service hour goals. We accommodate the unique needs of each volunteer by empowering the individual to serve in their own neighborhood and on their own work schedule. Clean Up-Give Back equips each volunteer with safety equipment, supplies and guidance to complete their service. We partner with each volunteer to track hours and provide the volunteer with a Clean Up-Give Back letter of completion to celebrate their success.

President's Volunteer Service Award

We are thrilled to report that in 2021, Clean Up-Give Back volunteer Matt Edmondson of Des Plaines, Illinois accumulated over 250 service hours. This incredible volunteer achievement has earned him the President's Volunteer Service Award. This Award was established by the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation in 2003 and is administered by AmeriCorps to "honor individuals whose service positively impacts communities in every corner of the nation and inspires those around them to take action, too."

Our Board honored Matt with this prestigious award in early 2022.





COURT-ORDERED SERVICE HOURS

Our philosophy is that every person deserves access to unlimited and meaningful volunteer opportunities for service hours in their own communities. From its inception, Clean Up-Give Back has offered court-involved individuals a flexible and convenient way to complete mandated service hours locally – especially in areas where such opportunities are hard to find.

CEO Donna Adam meets regularly with Cook County Circuit Court officials to raise awareness regarding our Flexible Service Program and encourage its promotion to those in need of service hours. Court-involved individuals ordered to complete a high number of service hours are often relieved to learn that the Clean Up-Give Back organization can help. The Flexible Service Program permits individuals to work in their local area and accommodates their work or school schedules. Donna works with individuals to develop a project plan, track their hours and obtain a completion of work letter for submission to the Court.

“Striving for social justice is the most valuable thing to do in life.”

– Albert Einstein





LOCAL CHAPTERS

We believe the key to growing our mission, building strong communities and creating a sustainable environment is through the establishment of permanent local chapters. We offer schools, businesses, clubs, and other community groups the required materials to organize a chapter, form a board and plan clean up projects. We also assist chapters in acquiring safety equipment and supplies, as well as the logistical know-how needed for ongoing success.

Takeout 25

The Oak Park and River Forest Chapter of Clean Up–Give Back initiated a partnership with [TAKEOUT 25](#), a non-profit group which empowers communities to support local food businesses while prioritizing sustainability and eliminating food insecurity. TAKEOUT 25 launched in September 2021 to coincide with the area’s annual “Barrie Fest.” The local Clean Up–Give Back Chapter volunteers partnered with TAKEOUT 25 and successfully diverted 50% of recyclable and compostable festival waste from landfills.

The Chapter also celebrated Earth Month in 2021 by conducting a plastic bag drive, collecting over 2,200 pounds of plastic bags. The collected bags were upcycled into a sturdy outdoor park bench which was gifted back to the community and now sits at the Oak Park Library for public enjoyment.





SERVICE LEARNING

Our CEO Donna Adam shares the Clean Up-Give Back mission in local communities through educational presentations. She is a frequent guest speaker for local schools and community groups that seek to develop youth participants into life-long environmental stewards.

Willows Academy

The Willows Academy is an Independent College Prep School for girls in Des Plaines, Illinois with a special emphasis on community service and “making a difference in the world.” In 2021, for the third year in a row, Clean Up-Give Back was invited to participate in the Willows Academy’s in-school Service Day. Our CEO Donna Adam provided a presentation to the students about the impact of litter on the environment. Following the presentation, students broke out into groups by age level and conducted Clean Up projects in ten different areas, including the Des Plaines Library, the City’s “Metro Square” area and several nearby parks.

The Bucket Method

Litter pick-up is a physical challenge made even more difficult when holding a collapsed trash bag in one hand and a grabber device in the other. Clean Up-Give Back Board Member Steve Danemayer solved this problem in 2021 with a custom plastic ring and handle to hold open the trash bag. He calls it the “Bucket Method,” and it enables our volunteers to drop litter into a trash bag without any struggle. This type of innovation is possible when volunteers become engaged with our mission and pair it with meaningful action.





CORPORATE & GROUP VOLUNTEER DAYS

Businesses and community groups often seek opportunities to foster team-building and galvanize their organizations through charity work. In 2021, we were approached by several groups to do just that. We worked with companies, schools, and various community organizations to plan tailored service projects by identifying potential clean up locations and facilitating project logistics.

Earth Month

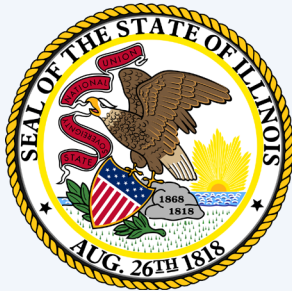
Every April, Earth Month provides us with a tremendous opportunity to encourage participation in initiatives that focus on the urgent need for environmental justice and sustainability. We ramped up our Volunteer Days programming in 2021 in honor of Earth Month by partnering with Jewel-Osco stores. Jewel-Osco awarded Clean Up–Give back a \$2,000 Contribution to facilitate clean up projects and featured us on their [GoGreenWithJewel.com](https://www.jewel-osco.com/go-green-with-jewel) website for community service opportunities. We plan to continue building our partnership with Jewel-Osco during Earth Month in 2022 and beyond.





Environmental

We strive to create a sustainable and healthy environment and are committed to expanding our efforts to enhance our local communities and advance a more just society. The Serve Illinois Commission honored CEO Donna Adam in 2021 with the 2020 Governor’s Service Award for her volunteerism toward these ends.



Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service



Social

We value the diversity and collaboration among our volunteers, partners, and sponsors, and we are dedicated to strengthening those values as we work toward our individual and shared goals. CEO Donna Adam was honored in 2022 with the Cook County Board’s Unsung Heroine Award for her work in 2021.

PEGGY A. MONTES UNSONG HEROINES AWARD



Governance

We follow principles of ethical governance, including transparency, responsibility, accountability, and fairness, while working toward a sustainable and healthy environment. We are particularly proud of our Flexible Service Program which responds to the needs of individuals required to report court-ordered service hours.



6 new board nominees
appointed in last 3 years, **83%** female, **33%** diverse

96%
board attendance

66%
female

16%
racially/ethnically diverse



OPERATIONS

Thanks to the hard work and generosity of our volunteers and sponsors, 2021 resulted in great progress toward our mission. We raised more money, cleaned more communities, and changed more lives for the better.

Every year we work to further develop and improve our business operations as we grow. We remain focused upon fiscal health, administrative capacity, marketing efforts, community support and ESG principles.

We expanded our Board of Directors with six new members with new and diverse skill sets.

We acquired D&O insurance.

We launched an exploratory effort for a mobile application with the University of Colorado.

We also met with a number of new corporate sponsors in 2021 with the goal of obtaining multi-year commitments beginning in 2022.





FINANCIALS

After facing grim predictions at the outset of another pandemic year, we are thrilled that 2021 exceeded our financial expectations.

Highlights

\$98,000 U.S. Government – Safety Gloves

\$25,000 Rivers Casino – Program Grant

These contributions toward project supplies and logistics, along with many other smaller contributions, made it possible to complete 82 total projects in 2021.

We posted positive balances at the year end of 2021, positioning us well for our strategic objectives in 2022.

To view our full consolidated financial statement for 2021, click [here](#).





MARKETING

Strategic marketing initiatives brought new and meaningful brand awareness and civic engagement in 2021.

We launched a monthly digital newsletter to promote our brand and update our stakeholders regarding our monthly events.

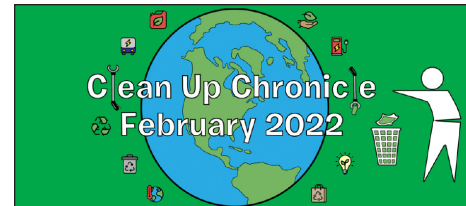
We expanded cross-marketing efforts with Jewel-Osco and TAKEOUT 25 websites.

We commissioned our mascot, lovingly named “Garbaggio,” who is given a prominent place at each clean up project. Garbaggio was created by artist Javier Soler based in Cozumel, Mexico. Soler only uses plastics and other litter to create his sculptures.

We acquired a van for transporting supplies to events and hauling post-event litter to proper disposal locations. The van was ‘wrapped’ in our signature green branding and doubles as a moving advertisement.

We also increased our community networking efforts directed toward donors, sponsors and potential chapter leaders.

Finally, we created our very first Annual Report to show our work and its impact.



This Month in Cleanups

January and February have been FREEZING, but some of our volunteers still wanted to make the community better despite the weather! We had a successful cleanup in January (pictured below) at Wolf & Touhy, and last week with the Maine West Environmental Club on their campus!



We are collecting plastic bags because trash haulers such as Republic, Groot, Lake Shore Recycling, Flood Brothers, and Waste Management are unable to receive plastic bags in their recycling bins: plastic bags harm their machinery. Help us recycle plastic bags for Earth Month by saving your plastic bags!





OUR BOARD

Board of Directors

Donna Adam, Founder and CEO

Tim Burchard

Steve Danemayer

Adrienne Eyer

Charlene Foss-Eggemann

Carol Gliatis

Dr. Robert Phillips

Verneka Smith

Susan Sweeney

Terri Thomas

Monisa Yusra





BOARD MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

The best way to realize the mission of Clean Up-Give Back is through increased engagement of students and young adults. We therefore established a student board member position to gain insight on ways to activate the next generation of volunteers. We are fortunate to have Monisa Yusra serve as our very first student board member.



Monisa Yusra

Student Board Member

“I was attracted to Clean Up-Give Back because it promotes the idea that we are responsible for the world we live in.”



2022 VISION



Prevention

The best way to create a sustainable and healthy environment is through prevention of litter. We will conduct an Earth Month plastic bag drive for communities in northwest Chicagoland with the goal of collecting 2,000 pounds of plastic bags. We will also increase awareness of our brand and mission by expanding marketing efforts, establishing new corporate partnerships for program development, disseminating Clean Up-Give Back's digital newsletter and engaging youth through school projects to develop them into lifelong environmental stewards.

Operations

Our mission can only progress through expanded operational support. To this end, we will establish strong alliances with new and unique stakeholders to increase our impact, work toward the development of an interactive smart phone application to scale up our Flexible Service Program, acquire a facility for administration and storage of supplies, and expand our staff with a full-time Flexible Service Program director and two annual part-time internship positions.



Diversity

We envision a world embracing sustainable living and promoting social justice and inclusion. To achieve that vision, we will adopt expanded board policies, increase our outreach to the courts to promote opportunities for those in need of court-ordered service hours, further diversify our board of directors, promote diversity in hiring, and continue to prioritize clean-up events in socioeconomically diverse areas.



We will not stop until every community is clean.

Four years ago, we set out to enhance volunteerism and build strong communities by cleaning up the environment. We started small, soldiered through a global pandemic, and remained steadfast in our mission. We flourished in 2021, and 2022 is on track to be our best year yet thanks to our extraordinary volunteers, sponsors and community stakeholders who stood with us. We look forward to seeing you soon, with your trash bag and grabber in hand!





cleanupgiveback.org

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