

Keep Houston Beautiful



Visit us on the web at www.houstonbeautiful.org or call 713-839-8855.

Plan to Attend the Keep Texas Beautiful and MS4 Conferences!

Following a productive spring, Keep Houston Beautiful has kicked off the summer by hosting two conferences in June. The 42nd annual Keep Texas Beautiful Conference was held June 8-11 at the Marriot Westchase. Community leaders from across the state came together for an opportunity to network, gain knowledge about environmental issues, and recognize community-wide

beautification and leadership efforts. For more information about Keep Texas Beautiful, please visit ktb.org.

Also this month, the 11th annual Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 MS4 Operators conference will be held June 22-25 at the George R. Brown Convention Center. On the KHB website, houstonbeautiful.com, you can register to attend and

also find the conference brochure, agenda, exhibitor application, and sponsor commitment form. The MS4 conference is being hosted by Texas Department of Transportation, City of Houston, City of Pasadena, Harris County, Harris County Flood Control District, Port of Houston Authority, and Keep Houston Beautiful.

Keep Houston Beautiful Day Marks A Major Success

In April, Keep Houston Beautiful led Houston's participation in the national GREAT AMERICAN CLEANUP™ by partnering with Teach for America and numerous other organizations and sponsors to co-host the annual "Keep Houston Beautiful Day". The goal of KHB Day is to transform adopted areas into cleaner, more environmentally friendly places to live and work. Hundreds of volunteers from around the city lent a hand to service projects at five different locations in an effort to improve our communities.

KHB partnered with Adopt-a-Ditch to work in the Overbrook Community at Bellfort and Northdale to beautify the existing esplanade and establish a healthy draining system. KHB worked with over 365 Teach For America volunteers to landscape the 845 linear foot ditch. In addition to picking up litter and recycling, 4,859 plants and 830 trees were planted. The landscaping architecture was designed by Keji Asakura, Susan Cita, and Devin Christison. The Overbrook Civic Club will provide long-term maintenance of the project. Thank you to sponsors and contributors: Asakura Robison Company LLC, Christison Landscape, TBG Partners, City of Houston employees, Republic Waste Services, Marathon

Oil, AbitibiBowater, Moody-Rambin Interests, Inc., Living Earth Technology, Texas Tree Foundation and Tree Town USA, Harris County Flood Control, Commissioners Carla Wyatt and Bessie Swindle, Houston Police Dept., Bellfort Church of Christ, City of Houston Tree Advocate Gary Woods, Micky Meritt at the Texas Forest Services, Shipley Donuts, Coca Cola, and Frito Lay.

In another project, "Pleasantville Helping Neighbors", 72 volunteers, including many from Teach for America, worked together to paint four senior residents' houses in their community. Ms. Marilyn Lee, Pleasantville community resident, effectively coordinated with KHB, Republic Waste, W.S. Holland Middle School, Baca Christian Center and local



Above: Teach for America volunteers plant trees in an esplanade.

Left: Volunteer Margaret Jenkins sports a Great American Cleanup t-shirt.

Photos courtesy of Jim Olive.



KHB Day Successes Continued...

businesses to execute this project for KHB Day. With many working from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, the Neighbor to Neighbor House Painting Project cost more than \$11,650 and offered residents the opportunity to build “community” and develop partnerships. Ms. Lee expressed, “I think [KHB Day] is very important and necessary. Every neighborhood should be aware of it and find a way to participate.” A special thank you to Commissioner Calvin Wills, Todd Casselman from Republic Waste Services, Theresa Carmouche-Lede, and to all those from the community who volunteered their time.

The third venture of KHB Day was “Graffiti Paint-Out”, a graffiti abatement project coordinated by Councilmember Wanda Adams’ office to clean up graffiti in District D at Cambridge Village Park. Thirty volunteers came out to help with the event and used ten gallons of paint on abandoned buildings at four different sites throughout the Hiram Clarke community. Matala Idi from Council member Wanda Adams’ office said “by primarily removing the blight and unsightliness caused by graffiti, the aesthetic appearance of the community improves.” This is the first graffiti paint-out for the Hiram Clarke community. Idi commented that KHB Day “is a

great idea because it provides an opportunity for those who wish to be active in beautifying the community, but do not have the opportunity for whatever reason, by having this one day to take action.”

“East End Clean-Up Day”, a litter and trash pick-up led by Greater East End Management District, was a major success in the East End community. Martin Chavez from East End Improvement Corp commented that “it was a really good event. All the tools donated from KHB really came in handy. We selected six right-of-way properties to be mowed which really made a difference in the community’s appearance.” On the second annual East End Clean-Up Day, over 50 volunteers came out to pick up litter along ten different streets, separate recycling, and mark storm drains. By the end of the day, the group had filled two large dumpsters with trash. A small group of volunteers also planted small shrubs and flowers throughout the area.

At the fifth location, KIPP Houston High School students dove into KHB Day by coordinating several community wide projects of their own. “KIPP Houston High School Campus Clean Up” included a school grounds, local park, and neighborhood cleanup. Totalling 100 volunteers, this school

wide clean-up day involved 80 students and 20 parents, staff members, and other adults from the community. Student Leadership Advisor at KIPP Houston HS, Seng-Dao Yang said, “The great thing about this project is that it was student initiated and managed. It was the kids who decided what projects they wanted to do, and they made it happen.” In addition to picking up trash, the students sorted recyclable material, painted two community homes that were damaged in Hurricane Ike, did some paint work on their campus building, visited Atria Senior Living Group where they sang, read poetry, did arts and crafts and played board games with senior citizens, and some also participated in the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer and a triathlon at Moody Gardens. “The kids had a great time. In fact, they are begging to do more service events. We can’t keep up with them. The parents were very involved as well. It was just a huge community wide event. It was really, really great!” Yang said.

KIPP high school students repaint a house damaged in Hurricane Ike.



Teach for America volunteers plant flowers and trees in the esplanade located at Belfort and Northdale.



Left: Three volunteers repaint a senior citizen's home on Candy St. in the Pleasantville community.



Trash Bash!

-Daniel Sullenbarger
KHB Commissioner

On May 2, a "Trash Bash" was sponsored by the Houston Bar Association at Mason Park. With 60 volunteers present, several significant improvements were made at the site. These volunteers picked up paper and trash, cleaned leaves and debris along fence lines and around buildings, cleared sidewalks of several inches of dirt and re-established contours along walkways, sanded and painted about 25 park benches, and scraped and painted 8-10 barbecue grills. In addition to the members of the Bar Association and families, there were also members of the Houston Paralegal Association and their families.

Tools were provided by Keep Houston Beautiful, and plenty of food, water, coffee and sodas were available to the volunteers. The gathering kicked off at 8:00 AM and finished up around 12:00 PM after providing sack lunches and a drawing for some prizes for the volunteers.

"It was truly rewarding when an elderly couple came up to me and expressed their appreciation for the work. They said they come to the park everyday to walk, and it was so nice to see all of the improvements that were made. In short, it was a great day and time well spent!"



Houstonians Converge "On the Trail of Trash"



Mayor Bill White thanks "On the Trail of Trash" volunteers.

400 volunteers. 350 planted trees. 160 bags of trash. These figures reflect just how successful March 7's "On the Trail of Trash" was. On the Trail of Trash was a collaborative effort between the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, The Park People, Keep Houston Beautiful, along with other sponsors and volunteers who worked hand in hand to beautify Houston Park trails. It was held on the National Trails Day. The initiative gave volunteers a unique opportunity to engage in a stewardship program that included a crew assignment along a trail to pick-up litter,

the removal of invasive plants, and grading and repairing trails. This year's event covered the section of the Columbia Tap Trail that runs through the campus of Texas Southern University. Volunteers came from Covenant House, Halliburton, TBG, Marathon Oil Corporation, Boy Scouts of America, Lee High School, Memorial Mustangs Outreach Bunch, Mocha Sisters, and University of Houston student organizations. The official sponsors of the event were Shell Oil, ExxonMobil, Apache Foundation, Red Hook ESB, Silver Eagle Distributors, and ZiegenBock Amber.

Comcast Cares Day Enhances Local Elementary School

Beginning in 2001, Comcast has coordinated an annual employee service day across the nation. This year on April 25, 50,000 Comcast employees and family members throughout the country worked on more than 550 project sites. This has become one of the nation's largest single-day corporate volunteer efforts. In Houston, Comcast sponsored a clean-up at Louisa May Alcott Elementary

School. 124 volunteers power-washed the sidewalks, painted the campus' hallways, cleaned the cafeteria, windows, and fans, and mulched the flowerbeds. Congressman Al Green and Houston Clean City Commissioner Bessie Swindle lent their support at the event. Thank you, Comcast volunteers, for all that you did to provide Alcott Elementary students a better learning environment.



Comcast employees and their families spent a whole day cleaning and painting Alcott Elementary School.

District F Volunteers Help Beautify Alief Community



KHB Chairman and General Manager of Republic Waste Services, Todd Casselman weed wacks overgrown grass.

City of Houston officials are doing their part in keeping Houston beautiful by sponsoring community-wide cleanups, like the one Council Member M.J. Khan's office executed in the Alief area on May 23. More than 150 volunteers, including many high school students, were on hand to clean-up trash, tires, and remaining storm debris from esplanades and turning lanes. Attending Boy Scouts de-littered the local parks. Todd Casselman from Republic Waste Services

and his wife Nancy lent their support to the event. Republic Waste Services loaded two pickup trucks with water to pass out to volunteers throughout the day. It also provided donuts in the morning and pizza for lunch. Constituents Services Director at M.J. Khan's office, Dawn Hurd led a team of eight to an empty lot neighboring a senior citizens facility on Dashwood and Acqua, where they weed wacked and picked up an assortment of items. "You wouldn't believe

some of the stuff we found and how much weed wacking we had to do just in this one lot. We picked up five or six tires and a couch besides all the other garbage. When we were done, we had three large piles of trash. We discovered part of a sidewalk when we started weed wacking. By the time we were finished, you could see and walk along the whole thing," Hurd said. Volunteers worked diligently to beautify their community from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

AIM Project Improves Fifth Ward Super Neighborhood

The Houston Department of Health and Human Services hosted the first of six clean-ups in the Greater Fifth Ward Super neighborhood on May 23. These clean-ups are a part of HDHHS' Assessment, Intervention and Mobilization (AIM) project. The mission of AIM is "to work in partnership with the community to promote and protect the health and social well being of Houstonians." Keep Houston Beautiful helped to mobilize community volunteers and made materials for the neighborhood project available. Collaborating with Wheatley High School, 60 volunteers helped to mow 17 lots and remove trash and storm debris. Four tons of illegal trash were loaded in 100 trash bags by the time volunteers were finished. Constituents Services



Representative for the City of Houston Neighborhood Protection Corp., Anthony Freddie said, "The primary purpose of the clean-ups is to inform community residents, community organizations, leaders, businesses, and stakeholders within the Greater Fifth Ward Super Neighborhood of our larger event happening October 7-9, where the Health Department will conduct door-to-door surveys regarding the needs of the community." The next clean-up will take place on June 27 at Atherton Elementary School from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. The others will be held July 18 at Scott Elementary, August 8 at Crawford Elementary, and September 12 at Dogan Elementary. Call Keep Houston Beautiful at 713-839-8855 if you would like to volunteer!

Houston Astros Play Green

The Houston Astros launched the 2009 season-long Play Green campaign on Earth Day, April 22, building on the team's ongoing "green" efforts started in 2008. The Astros' Play Green ambassadors for the 2009 season are Hunter Pence and Geoff Blum. The Astros in Action Foundation held a Play Green Cap Auction. Fans could go online and bid on their favorite Astros player's autographed hat.

All proceeds from the auction were donated to Keep Houston Beautiful.

"Growing up we always recycled items such as cans and plastic milk cartons. We had a garden where we grew our own vegetables. Today, I always unplug charges, turn off lights and recycle things like aluminum cans. I use coffee mugs and dishes vs. disposable cups."

-Hunter Pence

"...Being from California, me and my family are very eco-conscious. We make sure our appliances are turned off. We try to conserve energy and water by doing things like doing the laundry at night, taking quick showers. We turn off the lights when we leave the room. And, we don't use plastic bags at the grocery store, we use shopping bags. We teach our kids to be conscious of living a green lifestyle."

-Geoff Blum



Volunteers Clean Community and Build Partnership

June 6 brought a bundle of success to the Trinity Houston Garden community. The Mayor's Citizens Assistance Office teamed up with Council Members Peter Brown and Jarvis Johnson and their staffs to host a neighborhood clean-up. Over 70 volunteers worked together to remove litter and tree debris from vacant lots around the area. By the end of the day, five lots were cleared and 78 bags of trash were collected. Some of the other groups who contributed to the project were the Houston Urban League, which was where a majority of the volunteers came from, Super Neighborhood 47, Neighborhood Protection Corp., Houston Police Department, Solid Waste Management, and

Kashmere High School. Council Member Brown's office sponsored lunch for those who attended. Community Liaison of the Mayor's Citizens Assistance Office, Rummeka Allen, who organized the event said, "the purpose of the clean-up was to try to get the community involved in sustaining itself. When the neighborhoods surrounding the area need assistance in the future, it will be much easier to work together and take action."