



ANNUAL REPORT FY2024

*Celebrating 50 years of Keeping
Charlotte Beautiful*



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KCB @ 50



Dear Friends and Supporters,

The Clean Streets Committee was launched in 1974 as one of the first affiliates of Keep America Beautiful. The purpose of the committee was to take part in a nationwide experiment in using grassroots community programming to address litter and beautify communities.

Five decades later, the residents of Charlotte continue to be the heart of the program's success. This year marks the first time in Keep Charlotte Beautiful's history that volunteers have contributed more than 10,000 hours towards beautifying their community. This effort not only helps the environment; it saves taxpayers over \$300,000 each year in litter abatement. We truly appreciate the amazing work everyday citizens make towards keeping the city clean.

As Keep Charlotte Beautiful celebrates 50 years of programming in 2024, we hope this annual report shows where we have come and where we are going as a program. From new partnerships through Bee City to new opportunities through Friends of Keep Charlotte Beautiful, we look forward to what the future holds.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Keep Charlotte Beautiful's Board & Staff

1974

The Clean Streets Committee is established in Charlotte, North Carolina.

1978

Charlotte wins national recognition for its Clean Streets model

1982

The Adopt-a-City-Street (AACS) program is launched.

2002

The Clean Streets Committee changes its name to Keep Charlotte Beautiful.

2023

Keep Charlotte spearheads the Bee City Initiative - Charlotte becomes a Bee City affiliate.

2024

Friends of Keep Charlotte Beautiful (FoKCB) is established.



INTRODUCTION

The Keep Charlotte Beautiful (KCB) Committee, a volunteer-based affiliate of Keep America Beautiful (KAB), was established in 1974 to:

1. Promote partnerships between residents, non-profit groups, businesses, and local government agencies to maintain a clean, safe, and healthy environment for all.
2. Sponsor and host community service events and projects, directed towards bringing communities together to beautify shared spaces.
3. Represent neighborhoods and residents in matters related to the above-stated purposes.
4. Enhance public awareness of litter control ordinances.
5. Promote the importance of recycling in our current waste-management system.

The committee has twenty members: 13 appointed by Charlotte City Council and 7 by the Mayor. They meet the first Tuesday of every other month and conduct various subcommittee meetings in the interim. The committee currently contains three subcommittees that support the programming of Keep Charlotte Beautiful: the Great American Cleanup & Beautification Grant Committee, Clean Streets Committee, and Adopt a City Street Committee.

Committee members at the end of Fiscal Year 2024 (June 30, 2024) were:

ROLE(S)	NAME(S)
City Staff	Jonathan Hill (Executive Director) Tanya Balaji (AmeriCorps Service Member)
Chair	Edebierto Torres
Vice Chair	Michael David Davis
Secretary	Vacant
Committee Members	Priscilla Ashe, Casey Brewer, Suzanna Brand, Martin Doss, Christopher Estes, Grace Few, Diane Langevin, Charlie Lunan, Nasif Majeed, Robert Martin, Nicole Mendes, Kelsey Shuster-Dutcher, Ashel Sommermann, Chris Stack, Dale Stoller, Jacqueline Roseboro, Christa Youtz, Elizabeth Winebarger



ANNUAL PROGRAMS

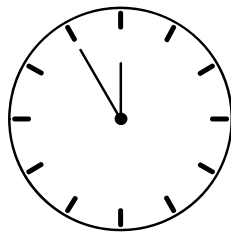
ADOPT A CITY STREET (AACS) PROGRAM

The Adopt-a-City-Street program is an opportunity for businesses, neighborhoods, and community members to adopt one mile or more street sections to supplement the City's litter collection efforts.

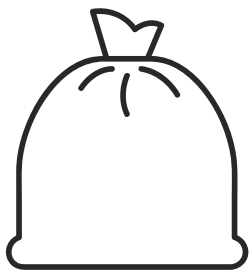
Program participants commit to clean their adopted section(s) at least three times per year. In return, participants receive two signs displaying their organization name along the adopted route, litter cleanup supplies on a lending basis, and recognition through volunteer events and social media.



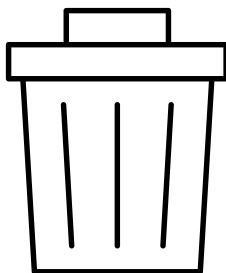
550+ cleanups



10,000+ volunteer hours



4,700+ bags of litter



94,000+ lbs of litter

In FY 2024, 452 groups contributed 10,024 hours to collect 4,716 bags of litter throughout the city. 71 of these groups were new. This is the largest amount of volunteer hours and trash picked up in the history of the program.



ADOPT A BUS STOP (AABS) PROGRAM

Launched in May 2023, the Adopt-a-Bus-Stop (AABS) program is an innovative initiative in partnership with the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS). The program offers community organizations, businesses, non-profit organizations, and residents an opportunity to adopt bus stops along the Corridors of Opportunity.

Participants in the AABS program conduct cleanups at their bus stop at least twice a month. In exchange for their service, the groups receive free transit passes and a personalized sign at their bus stop following three months of active participation.

This year, seven groups adopted 15 bus stops along Albemarle Road, Beatties Ford Road, Central Avenue, Tryon Street, Wilkinson Boulevard, and West Boulevard. These groups have contributed 174 hours towards picking up 49 bags of trash this year.

By removing graffiti, reporting vandalism, and collecting litter, our participants have helped promote accessible and safe public transport use for residents across Charlotte.



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

In June, Keep Charlotte Beautiful hosted a volunteer appreciation event for its Adopt-a-City-Street volunteers at Cordelia Park Pavilion. At the ceremony, board members and staff presented the following awards:

- The Dashing Debut Award went to the Four Seasons HOA for most cleanups completed as a new group.
- The Bag Chaser Award went to the Bahais of Charlotte for most bags picked up.
- The Heavy Lifter Award went to Emmie Faison for the most pounds per person collected.
- The Golden Grabber Award went to Renzo McColley & Friends for best all-around group.



COMMUNITY APPEARANCE INDEX (LITTER INDEX)

Once per year, trained KCB Committee members and volunteers visit 70 predetermined locations throughout the city to measure the presence of roadside litter, rating each street section on the following scale:

1	2
Minimal or no litter, easily collected by one individual	Slightly littered, may take an individual a few hours to clean
3	4
Littered, organized effort needed for complete litter removal	Extremely littered, continuous amount of litter that may need to be professionally removed

Litter index results are used as a tool to communicate the city’s success in preventing visual blight through litter prevention efforts to City officials, Solid Waste Services and interested residents.

LITTER INDEX COMPARISONS BY DISTRICT, 2017-2023									
Year	Dist. 1	Dist. 2	Dist. 3	Dist. 4	Dist. 5	Dist. 6	Dist. 7	Total Overall	% Change
2019	1.9	2.15	1.95	2.3	1.9	1.4	1.23	1.82	1.1%
2020	1.9	1.85	1.3	2.0	2.3	1.85	1.5	1.81	-0.24%
2021	1.77	2.35	1.85	2.0	2.15	1.3	1.45	1.81	-0.24%
2022	1.35	1.55	1.15	2.05	1.55	1.25	1.3	1.46	-20.75%
2023	1.25	1.70	1.2	1.45	2.1	1.33	1.27	1.47	0.98%
2024	1.53	1.65	2.27	1.65	2.05	1.30	1.10	1.65	12.4%
% Change 2023-24	+ 22.4%	-2.94%	+89.17%	+13.79%	-2.38%	-2.26%	-13.39%	+12.4%	

COMMUNITY GRANTS



KCB Beautification Grant

Each Fall, KCB awards up to \$5,000 to neighborhoods, schools, and/or non-profit organizations for community beautification projects. In FY24, KCB received 28 Letters of Intent (LOI's).

This year's grant went to Lincoln Heights Montessori, which used the grant to install pollinator gardens and outdoor seating for students to enjoy local wildlife.



CLEAN STREETS CLEANUPS

This year, Keep Charlotte Beautiful's Clean Streets Board Committee, along with the City's Corridors of Opportunity team, organized quarterly cleanups along the Corridors. In August, December, February, and April, 78 volunteers removed more than 3890 pounds of litter along Wilkinson Blvd., N. Tryon St., Beatties Ford Rd., and West Sugar Creek Rd.

Through these cleanups, staff and board members connected residents and local organizations with city resources while establishing long-term partnerships that will assist in tackling litter pollution in each area.



AMERICA RECYCLES DAY

America Recycles Day is an annual celebration dedicated to raising awareness about the impact of recycling across the US. This year, KCB's AmeriCorps service member hosted two events. The first was a "Let's Talk Trash" themed trivia night at Free Range Brewery in partnership with Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation.

The second event was a recycled art workshop in partnership with Upcycle Arts, a non-profit working to divert art supplies from landfills. Participants made festive holiday hoops using re-purposed embroidery hoops, fabric, buttons, and other accessories.



GREAT AMERICAN CLEANUP

The Great American Cleanup (GAC) is a national initiative by Keep America Beautiful which encourages affiliates to conduct beautification and cleanup events annually from March to May. This year, KCB's GAC committee organized a raised-bed maintenance project and mural installation at Statesville Road Elementary, a Title 1 school located in a historically underserved neighborhood of northwest Charlotte.

The school held an art contest where each grade level competed to create an Earth-themed art piece of their choice. The best art piece from each grade was made into a sidewalk panel outside the school, with the assistance of local artist Zuleyma Castrejon.

The project was a success thanks in large part to the support of KCB's partners. City of Charlotte's Landscape Management Division donated several dozen pollinator plants, Starbucks donated breakfast and coffee for the event, and Lowe's provided \$1,000 in Lowe's Gift Cards for supplies and equipment.

KCB hopes that the mural and garden will bring the community together and help inspire the next generation of environment and community stewards at Statesville Road Elementary.





FISCAL YEAR 2024 HIGHLIGHTS



INTERGOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS



Keep Charlotte Beautiful partnered with various governmental agencies this year, including Charlotte-Mecklenburg Stormwater Services, Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation, the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department's Animal Care & Control unit, Solid Waste Services, and the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS).

Together, these collaborations facilitated 10 joint cleanups across streets, streams, and parks, where volunteers dedicated over 600 hours and collected more than 650 bags of trash. Notably, the annual Creek Week events, held March 16-23, mobilized over 150 volunteers to tackle litter across our community's vital areas.



Through the biannual Pick up with Pups events, 57 volunteers got a chance to meet and walk 10 adoptable and adorable pups, all while helping remove 60+ bags of litter from our greenways.

Keep Charlotte Beautiful also continued its partnership with CMPD's Hickory Grove Division to conduct railroad cleanups in their jurisdiction. 26 volunteers removed 2,000+ pounds of litter along the NoDa and Hickory Grove sections of the rail line, with support from staff at the Aberdeen Carolina & Western Railway (ACWR) Company.



BEE CITY INITIATIVES

This year, Keep Charlotte Beautiful spearheaded numerous initiatives as part of Charlotte's commitment to protect pollinators. In September, Keep Charlotte Beautiful participated in the Charlotte Monarch Festival at the Reedy Creek Nature Preserve. Keep Charlotte Beautiful staff and board members gave away pollinator plant seed packets and set up a pollinator-themed face painting booth for festival-goers.



Throughout the year, Keep Charlotte Beautiful tabled at various venues, such as Charlotte's Patagonia store, allowing residents to build their own pollinator pot, using soil, seeds, and re-purposed toilet paper rolls.



Lowe's generously donated \$10,000 in April to install pollinator gardens along the Corridors of Opportunity. With assistance from volunteers and staff from Code Enforcement and the Landscape Management division, KCB was able to plant pollinator gardens in five underserved Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools within the Corridors of Opportunity: Druid Hills Academy, Esperanza Global Academy, Hidden Valley Elementary, Reid Park Elementary, and West Charlotte High School. In total, volunteers planted over 4,000 plants this fiscal year.



NEW INITIATIVES

LITTER STUDY

In April 2024, Keep Charlotte Beautiful began a year-long litter study in partnership with UNC Charlotte. This study will analyze the composition and distribution of litter among 250 roads across all seven council districts in Charlotte. The goal for the study is to generate an estimate of the amount of litter found in Charlotte, spurring action towards waste reduction in the city. This is the first scientific study undertaken by KCB.

During the sampling period in April 2024, KCB's AmeriCorps service member trained 43 citizen scientists on how to sample roads and sub-categorize the collected litter into various categories. The volunteers collected over 1,200 pounds of litter during the initial sampling period. The study consists of four sampling periods, with the next three coming up in August 2024, November 2024, and January 2025.



FRIENDS OF KEEP CHARLOTTE BEAUTIFUL

In June 2024, residents and KCB board members established Friends of Keep Charlotte Beautiful (FoKCB) as the nonprofit fundraising arm of Keep Charlotte Beautiful. The mission of FoKCB is to provide essential financial support to KCB, enabling it to expand its vital work in litter prevention, waste reduction, community beautification, and environmental stewardship throughout Charlotte. By mobilizing resources and fostering community partnerships, FoKCB empowers KCB to implement innovative programs, engage more volunteers, and create lasting positive impact in our neighborhoods.

In 2025, the board will enhance its fundraising efforts to support the exciting and innovative projects undertaken by Keep Charlotte Beautiful.



AMERICORPS MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS



2023-24 SERVICE MEMBER: TANYA BALAJI

Each year, Keep Charlotte Beautiful hosts an AmeriCorps service member. This person is brought on to serve their community, while improving the capacity of the organizations in which they serve.

During Tanya's service term from September 2023- July 2024, she helped Keep Charlotte Beautiful:

- Launch a litter study in partnership with UNC Charlotte, and helped train 50+ citizen scientists.
- Remove ~11,000 lbs of litter through staff-led litter cleanups, with assistance from volunteers.
- Educate 450+ K-5 students about litter prevention, recycling, composting, and how they can be leaders in the community.
- Host two America Recycles Day events, and 8+ events, where she shared ways residents can get involved, recycle right, and help create safer and healthier communities.
- Facilitate the Neighborhood Board Retreat, providing residents with resources that help communities effectively tackle litter pollution.
- Impact 1,000+ community members, inspiring action towards tackling litter pollution.



JOIN THE EFFORT

This report highlights many of the achievements of Keep Charlotte Beautiful's board and staff in FY24. To learn more about how everyday residents can be a part of KCB programming, contact kcb@charlottenc.gov. Keep Charlotte Beautiful is also on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/keepcharlottebeautiful) (@keepcharlottebeautiful), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/kcb_clt) (kcb_clt), and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/kcb_clt) (@kcb_clt).