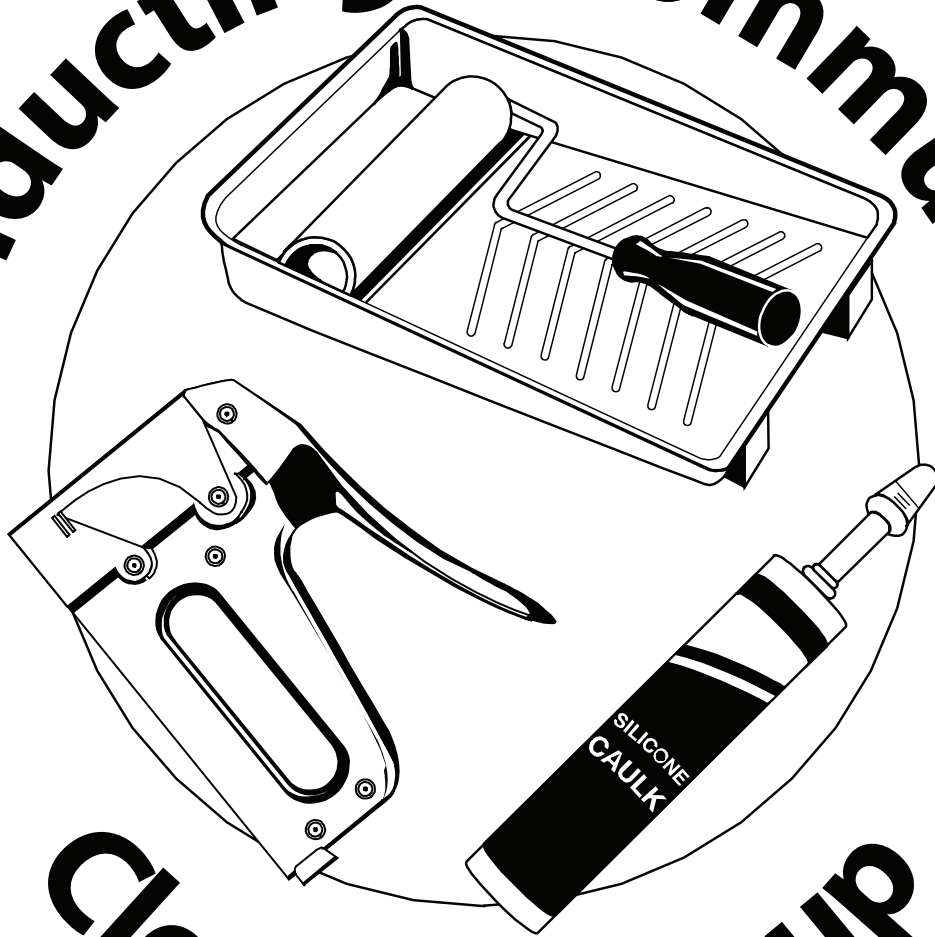


Conducting a Community



Clean-up Fix-up

Campaign

This publication is designed to be used as a resource guide by local community improvement groups, or neighborhood organizations planning a clean-up initiative. This publication provides guidance in five areas important to a successful and sustainable community clean-up effort. These areas are: organizing for success; establishing clear goals and plans; advertising your event; tips for effective project execution; and sustaining a clean-up effort. By investing effort in these five planning areas, community clean-up efforts will be successful and sustainable.

The Importance of Hosting a Community Clean-up

There are many good reasons to conduct a community clean-up effort. A well implemented clean-up campaign can improve the physical community, as well as create opportunities for social fellowship and for individual investment and pride in the community. Cleaning up the community not only creates a more pleasant place to live, but also creates a good impression on prospective employers, professionals, and others who visit your community. Additionally, clean-up efforts may provide community health benefits such as the elimination of mosquito breeding sites to reduce the spread of West Nile Virus.

Cleaning up a community (and keeping it clean) may also have positive results corresponding to the reduction of crime. Research indicates that keeping a neighborhood clean can reduce crime, fear, and feelings of helplessness in urban settings (Kelling & Coles 1996). Research also indicates there are many positive links between the environment and how we feel about ourselves. In comparing neighborhoods with varying levels of vegetation, researchers found positive associations with green neighborhoods, including results that indicate:

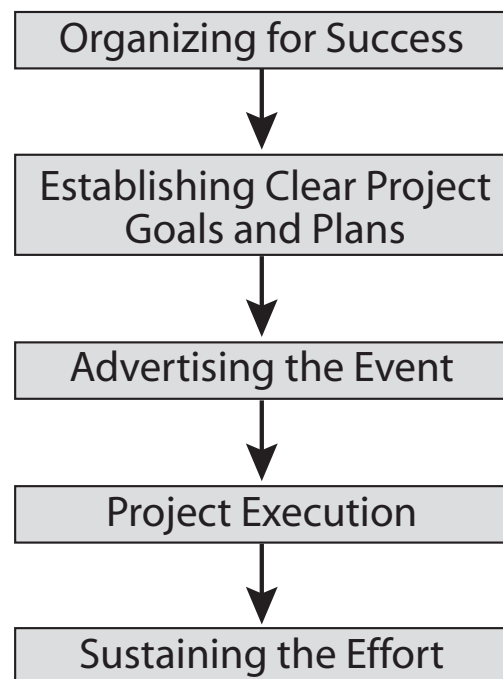
- Reduced symptoms of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in children (Kuo & Faber Taylor, 2004)
- Greater effectiveness and less procrastination in dealing with major life issues (Faber Taylor, Kuo, & Sullivan 2002).
- Reduced acts of domestic violence (Faber Taylor, Kuo, & Sullivan 2002)

- Reduced occurrences of crime against people and property (Kuo & Sullivan 2001), and
- Increased feelings of safety and community (Kuo, Sullivan, Coley, & Brunson, 1998)

Community clean-up campaigns provide many opportunities for citizens to get involved in community improvement. The value of these opportunities should not be underestimated. A clean-up project can provide a great opportunity to introduce new community members, have fun, and build social connections.

Organizing for Success

A clean-up effort should begin with some creative planning and organizing. Start by identifying key individuals to involve in the core planning committee. It is often helpful to work through a “stakeholder identification” exercise. (See sample group member identification exercise see page 6.) This brainstorming exercise will help identify key individuals, business, or organizational representatives to invite into the planning effort.



A successful clean-up effort will probably require the participation of city representatives, local media, businesses, and other organizational support from your community. The mayor, city council, or community

improvement/ PRIDE committee can take the initiative to create a clean-up/fix-up committee. Give thoughtful consideration of whom to involve on this committee to make it successful. Take the time to identify those in the community that have an interest or investment in a clean community. The core planning committee list might include realtors, health care professionals, parents, economic development organizations, K-State Research and Extension, or chamber of commerce representatives. Make certain that these people and organizations are contacted and invited to participate in the planning and execution of this project.

The clean-up effort will likely involve many people and will effect the entire community. When planning clean-up activities, make certain that a large number of people can be involved to actively participate. Shared leadership and involvement is vital for a successful effort. Consider how others will share responsibilities in this effort. As with any group endeavor, leaders will be needed that are skilled in organizing publicity, equipment, transportation, communications, and volunteer coordination. Invite leaders from community organizations such as civic and service clubs, 4-H, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, or church groups to join the team to coordinate work on the clean-up day.

For additional helpful information on organizing a community group, order K-State Research and Extension Publication MF-2569, *Working in Groups for Community Improvement*.

Most community improvement activities involve public property. Some involve private property. In either case, you will need to check with the owners or officials responsible for the property before you plan the project.

Establishing Clear Project Goals and Plans

Your committee should contact other groups in the community, including city officials, that are currently involved in beautification. Make a list of the projects those groups plan for the year, and identify collaborative opportunities. In addition to other planned activities, identify any other clean-up efforts to be included. Using the “Clean-up and Beautification Checklist” found on page 4 of this guide, make a list of suggested projects. It may be necessary to take a tour of the city to determine the situation and set priorities.

Setting Project Goals and Measuring Success

Once the checklist and project lists have been reviewed, focus on the projects that are a priority for the community. Consider ranking projects based on health concern, visual impact, safety, resources available, or by the likelihood for successful completion. All of these aspects will be important to discuss in your planning.

Project Planning Date: _____

GOAL: _____

PROJECT: _____

PROJECTED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE: _____

Strategies	Persons Responsible	Resources Needed	Target Date	Proposed Budget	Follow-up Required
1.				\$	
2.				\$	
3.				\$	
4.				\$	



As the planning committee determines projects to address, it is important to identify specific clean-up goals. Keep the project scope within achievable, measurable parameters. For example, if the project group states it is going to include home fix-up, painting, and/or demolition as a part of the clean-up project, people may be disappointed if resources do not allow all the potential houses to be worked on. However, if the committee sets attainable goals for clean-up day and creates a waiting list for other projects — the project success can be measured. Setting specific, achievable goals will help the planning group to focus resources, and to show clear results.

Developing a Plan

Develop a detailed plan that includes details of what will be done, when, how, and by whom. If costs are involved, draw up a budget and possible methods of financing or raising money. It may be helpful to utilize a project planning sheet. The planning sheet in the diagram on the previous page can be easily reproduced, or is available through K-State Research and Extension PRIDE Program.

Advertising the Event

After you are assured that everyone involved approves the projects, it is time to start the publicity phase. Along with recruiting participants, a good publicity program will demonstrate to the public that people are concerned about city beautification and show why a clean-up effort is important.

Here are some tips:

- Take plenty of pictures of the project areas to show the need (these can also be used to show the effect of “before” and “after”) or pictures of your committee members mapping plans for the campaign.
- Announce the endorsement of the effort by public figures such as the mayor, civic club leaders, and others prior to the campaign.
- Prepare a leaflet or flyer explaining the projects with a map. Distribute the leaflet widely.
- Contact local media and encourage them to carry public service announcements or stories several days before the event.
- Prepare posters and place them in conspicuous places in the community.

Clean-Up and Beautification Checklist

The clean-up committee or other leaders may find it helpful to use the following checklist before deciding who and what to include in the campaign plan. Other ideas not listed may be included.

Are the Following Adequate?

Yes / No

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Signs at edges of town are attractive. | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. Waste receptacles conveniently located in all business districts and emptied regularly. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Highway entrances landscaped, mowed, and maintained. | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 12. Dead trees properly removed from parks, streets, and private property. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Automobile graveyards removed or screened from view. | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 13. Cemeteries attractive and well maintained. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Church grounds attractively landscaped with trees and shrubs and well maintained. | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 14. Vacant lots and unoccupied areas mowed and kept free of weeds and litter. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Public buildings and areas attractively landscaped with trees and shrubs and grounds mowed and maintained. | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 15. Elderly or handicapped homeowners given assistance in their property improvement and maintenance efforts. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Dilapidated houses removed or plans made for improvement. | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 16. Tree board or committee identifies diseased trees and encourages planting of trees and shrubs in the community. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Parks and playgrounds attractively landscaped with trees and shrubs and well maintained. | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 17. Storefronts attractive. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Streets cleaned. | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 18. Business and residential sidewalks in good repair. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. Railway right-of-way through city mowed and maintained. | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 19. Parking lots screened with trees or shrubs. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. Refuse containers adequate and refuse areas clean and well kept. | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 20. Equipment in parks and playgrounds in good repair. |

Other noted project possibilities: _____

Project Execution

Recruiting Volunteers

Send leaflets about the campaign to leaders of community organizations and others and follow up with a telephone call asking for help. Be prepared to accommodate individuals who hear about the projects and show up to assist. Make them feel welcome and give them a job to do.

Ask appropriate local businesses to furnish transportation, gloves or tools, soft drinks, and snacks. City officials, farmers, or others may provide trucks or other equipment. Ask the workers to bring tools that may be needed for the job.

Tips for Effective Project Execution;

Carrying Out the Clean-Up

If your plans have been well laid and your preparations are in order, the actual clean-up is the easiest part of your job.

Make arrangements to keep volunteers safe and healthy. If working in warm weather, have water or drinks available. If working near highways or busy streets, road signs and orange vests should be used. Encourage workers to come dressed appropriately and to wear sturdy shoes and gloves. Have first-aid kits available for cuts or scrapes.

Establish a central base of communication, or clean-up headquarters. As groups report to headquarters, provide team captains maps showing assigned areas to clean. Suggest project team activities for youth and adult groups, service organizations, garden clubs, and individual homeowners.

Make certain each team knows where to bring the litter collected. Recycle paper, glass, and cans whenever possible to conserve landfill space and protect the environment. In some areas, recycling may also generate income. Information is available on recycling from your local K-State Research and Extension office or through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, *Don't Spoil It* program.

Household hazardous wastes such as oil-based paints and stains, gasoline or other fuels, used oil, antifreeze, pesticides, and fertilizers must be kept separate from regular household trash. These wastes can only be disposed of at an authorized household hazardous wastes facility and should never be disposed in the environment. To find your local household hazardous wastes collection facility, call your local county government's general information line or contact the Kansas *Don't Spoil It* office through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to request a listing of Kansas household hazardous wastes collection centers.

Stay on schedule to carry out the effort while interest and enthusiasm are high. After the event, coordinate a gathering of volunteers to celebrate their work. If the area and facilities are suitable, conclude the project with a picnic supper or block party. A band or local entertainer will help reward the volunteers.

Sustaining a Clean-up Effort.

When the project is done, your community will look perfect – for awhile. For lasting effect, it is important to sustain the clean up effort. Remember that community clean-up projects serve more purposes than just physical “picking up.” Because clean-up projects also create opportunities for fellowship and investment in the community; on-going efforts can capitalize on the fellowship and sense of pride that are generated by the event. These can all be sustained but will require planning and on-going supervision and support.

Project sustainability can begin with the original clean-up project. Conclude the clean-up by reporting the project successes. Using the same means used to advertise the event, report back to the community the project success as measured against the goals that were established. Use the “before” and “after” photos to make sure the community sees the effect.

Make certain that everyone involved in the project is publicly thanked and recognized. Thank cooperating businesses that loaned equipment or donated refreshments; volunteers that participated; and representatives of the media who gave assistance or free publicity. Use every means available to recognize those that participated – media, thank-you cards, certificates, or public mention. The recognition of participants will bring current volunteers back, and may attract new volunteers for next time.

Identify methods for continued maintenance of the physical environment. Establishing dates, times, and responsibilities for ongoing clean-up and maintenance efforts can help provide structure to sustain efforts. You may also wish to establish an ongoing recognition/award program to sustain the “clean community” effort. Community groups that recognize the “Yard of the Week,” “Most improved Property,” or “Recycling Volunteer of the Month” find that ongoing, structured recognition can help sustain the efforts. Your community may wish to establish codes or policies through your local government relating to community appearances and upkeep.

Like the pioneer barn raising that drew people together a century ago, a volunteer campaign can be an outstanding example of community cooperation and one that should bring pride to every participant.

Stakeholder Mapping Exercise for Community Clean-up

This Stakeholder Mapping Exercise is best used in a group setting to identify key individuals and resource organizations to contact or involve when organizing or planning a clean-up project. *

Step 1: Project Identification

Identify the specific project your group is going to address and write it in the center of a large newsprint or paper. Circle it.

Step 2: Identify local individuals

Ask the group to identify local *individuals* that might have an interest or investment in the project listed. Ask the group, “Who might benefit from this project?” and “Who may be negatively impacted?” Using a different colored marker, write these names on newsprint circling the issue.

Step 3: Map local business, organizations or groups

Ask the group to identify local *organizations or groups* that might have an interest or investment in the listed project. Ask the same questions from step 2. Using a different colored marker, write these names on newsprint in a ring around the individuals.

Step 4: Map Agencies and Institutions

Ask the group to identify state or federal *agencies or institutions* that might have resources or information on the project listed. Highlight organizations that have key decision-making roles related to addressing the project. Using a different colored marker, write these in a ring around the groups and organizations from step 3.

Step 5: Map individuals associated with the institutions

Ask the group, “For each of the listed institutions, who has resources or decision-making authority relevant to our project?” Using another color marker, write the names of the identified individuals associated with each of those institutions next to the institution. These individuals may or may not be people your group members know personally.

Step 6: Map associations with these individuals

Everyone in the group should think about people they know personally who have a connection to the people identified in step 5. This will help identify access to the individuals or institutions by tapping into existing relationships between the planning group and identified individuals. Ask the group, “Does anyone in the group know any of the individuals listed in step 5?” “Who do you know that might know them?” Write the contact name and group members’ initials next to the people listed in step 5.

Step 7: Target priority relationships

Analyze the relationships and connections. Ask the group to identify the people/institutions that will be critical to contact, and those that will be important to contact.

Step 8: Make a plan

Consider your avenues to contact each person. Ask the group, “Who, from the planning group should be involved with contacting the individuals? What friendships, family networks, co-worker relationships, etc. provide helpful links to access the individual? Who would be the most influential connection? Would multiple contacts be desirable?” Create a plan for who/how to follow-up and contact these key individuals to seek their support.

* Note: The same exercise may be used initially with “Community Clean-up” as a subject, or again with more specific projects such as “tire collection.”
Condensed and adapted by Dan Kahl, K-State Research and Extension, from: Idealist.org Action Without Borders. Power Mapping: A Tool for Utilizing Networks and Relationships. www.idealists.org/ioc/learn/curriculum/pdf/Power-Mapping.pdf

Task List for Conducting a Community Clean-up

Date Completed

1. Core committee members identified and contacted _____
2. Secure permission and support from city and property owners. _____
3. Seek donations of equipment and supplies _____
4. Waste pick-up arrangements coordinated with waste haulers and/or landfill. _____
5. Advertise clean-up event date, time, and meeting locations for volunteers _____
6. Appreciation activities planned _____
7. Photographer identified and “Before” pictures taken _____
8. Needed supplies ready _____
9. Event photographer takes photos _____
10. “Headquarters” location established _____
11. Clean-up team leadership identified and briefed on clean-up plans and how to document success measurement. _____
12. Communications plans established and shared _____
13. First aid supplies ready and provided to team leader _____
14. Water coolers/cups located where they will be needed _____
15. Photos taken of project success _____
16. Project reporting/publicity follow-up _____
17. All volunteers thanked _____

Notes:

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- Iowa State University, *Roadside Design in Communities Planting Guidelines for Community Beautification* www.extension.iastate.edu/store/ItemDetail.aspx?ProductID=12034&SeriesCode=&CategoryID=12&Keyword=
- Mitrofanova, Yelena. *TIPS for Organizing a Successful Neighborhood Cleanup* (April 2005 NEBLINE Newsletter.) University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension in Lancaster County. Lincoln, NE. lancaster.unl.edu/community/articles/organizecleanup.shtml
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- Walker, Katey, et.al. *LEADS Curriculum Notebook: Leadership Excellence and Dynamic Solutions*, K-State Research and Extension, Publications, Manhattan, Ks. June 2002. Pub Number: S137
- Willingham, Judy M., Powell, G. Morgan, Kahl, Daniel W. *Working in Groups for Community Improvement* K-State Research and Extension, Publications, Manhattan, Ks. May 2004. Pub Number: MF2569
- For more resources on community models for sustained community improvement projects including "Yard of the Week" models, contact the Kansas PRIDE Program at K-State Research and Extension.

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