



Nurturing Neighborhoods, Building Community

COMMUNITY CLEANUP

Resource Guide



ABOUT HANDS ON NEIGHBORHOODS

A program developed by the Chautauqua County Land Bank Corporation, our goal is to empower community members in building a sense of pride in place; to leverage resources, and work together towards strengthening neighborhoods while building community, both on the block, and through-out the city.

Find out more about us at www.chqlandbank.org/handson,
or connect with us through social media
(Facebook: @HandsOnNeighborhoods or @CHQLandBank;
Instagram: @chqlandbank).

This is meant to be a living document, and as such, Hands On Neighborhoods will continue to revise it as necessary. Please contact us with feedback or questions at www.chqlandbank.org/contact-us.



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Step 1: HAVE A PLAN!

Before you can organize a successful volunteer event in your neighborhood, you need to have a plan! Here are some questions we find helpful to think about when we plan our events...

What would make the greatest impact in your community, while still being doable and relatively easy to execute?

Can you plan your event around an already existing community event?

How will you identify block captains?

How many individuals (volunteers, teams, and team leaders) do you think you will need to plan and carry out your project successfully?

Are there groups or organizations you can think of who would want to partner?

Do you have an area of focus for the cleanup??

Can you make your event a "zero waste" event by ensuring materials utilized or produced are recycled or composted, or by cutting down on the use of disposable items?

Who is your target volunteer base?

Will you need permission from property owners or your local village/town/city via permits to complete your project? If so, build that need into your planning timeline!

Will you need a maintenance plan?
After you've beautified a piece of your community, how will you keep it that way?

If this is your first time planning a community cleanup, you can ask residents or local organizations what areas to target. Did you ask them what they need help with the most?

Step 2: **PICK THE RIGHT DATE(S)!**

To make the biggest impact possible, consider hosting your event as part of one of the following citywide or national days of service. (And if you choose not to, try and ensure the date you settle on doesn't conflict with any other events that potential volunteers might want to attend.)

Global Recycling Day

On March 18th, we are encouraged to look at our trash in a new light -- reducing the energy we use, enhancing water and air quality, and combatting climate change.

Keep America Beautiful Month

The entire month of April is dedicated to keeping our country beautiful, often shown by improving public spaces through action and education.

Earth Day

Every April 22nd, communities across the globe plan events geared towards environmental awareness, protection, and action.

World Environment Day

Happening June 5th, this day encourages worldwide activism on everything from littering to climate change.

Arbor Day

The last Friday in April every year, Arbor Day celebrates the importance of trees and tree planting all over the world!

Step 3: **PROCURE SUPPLIES**

Your volunteers will likely need supplies that you will be responsible to provide for them. Check with your local municipality and see if they have any kind of tool lending program, and as always, you can contact the Chautauqua County Land Bank and request use of our Tool Trailer for your event.

For any event:

- Registration table
- Sign-in sheet
- Liability/photo waivers
- Scissors, markers, pens, tape
- Snacks/water
- First Aid kit

Litter Cleanup:

- Gloves
- Rakes, shovels, brooms,
- Trash grabbers
- Bags for trash
- Bags for recycling
- Sharps container

Painting:

- Paint and openers
- Brushes/rollers
- Paint stirrer
- Drop cloths
- Gloves
- Rags
- Buckets for water

Weeding & Planting:

- Plants
- Mulch
- Wheelbarrow
- Gloves
- Shovels
- Rakes
- Pruners/trimmers
- Weed/root removers

Step 4:

YOUR PRE-CLEANUP CHECKLIST

- ☐ Paperwork
- ☐ Meeting Location
- ☐ Volunteer Recruitment
- ☐ Schedule of Events
- ☐ Volunteer Tasks
- ☐ Supply List
- ☐ Trash Pickup
- ☐ Restroom Facilities
- ☐ Media Outreach

Step 4:

YOUR PRE-CLEANUP CHECKLIST

Paperwork



Before diving deep into planning, check with the proper authority to see if you need any sort of permit(s) or permission to host your event when and where you would like to (this could be the local town/city government, property owners, business owners, etc.).

Don't forget: From liability to photo releases, you want to make sure all your bases are covered whenever you host an event like this.

See pages 33-34 for a fillable sample waiver!

Meeting Location



Choose a specific meeting location that will be easy for your volunteers to find. Provide them with a clear address, directions using public transportation or car, parking instructions, and easily recognizable landmarks. If you are planning a cleanup in a park, for instance, give volunteers the address as well as a clear marker for where to find you. Tell volunteers ahead of time where they can expect to find parking and registration once they arrive -- and use a visual if possible.

Helpful Hint: Place signs around the site to direct volunteers on the day of the event, if needed.

Step 4:

YOUR PRE-CLEANUP CHECKLIST

Volunteer Recruitment

Tell neighbors, friends, local businesses, schools, churches, media outlets, and community-based organizations (such as Community Development Corporations, Business Improvement Districts, or civic/neighborhood associations)!

Local law enforcement is a great resource, too; see if they may be willing to make drive-bys throughout your event or participate in some other way! Reach out to past volunteers and make contact with groups or individuals who you know may be looking for volunteer opportunities, including agencies and schools that work with individuals in need of community service hours. Post flyers in busy public spaces in your target cleanup neighborhood, as well (just be sure to ask permission and don't post items on utility poles)! Social media platforms are a great way to quickly and easily share information among the masses, so be sure to post about your event there, too!

Pro-tip: Make your event more visible on the day of, such as having brightly colored tee-shirts for all the volunteers to wear. Passersby will be more likely to stop and ask questions, and maybe even volunteer the next time around!



Step 4:

YOUR PRE-CLEANUP CHECKLIST

Volunteer Tasks

Have clear tasks for all volunteers. If you are splitting volunteers into teams, make sure each group has a designated team leader.

If the volunteer site is large, provide your team leaders and volunteers with a site map (complete with bathrooms if possible, and where to leave trash bags at the end of the day) as well as contact information for you and any fellow event organizers. It is helpful to provide team leaders and volunteers with written instructions on completing the task they are assigned, along with a designated organizer's phone number to contact if any issues or questions arise during the event. You may also want to consider a pre-event site visit and walkthrough with all of your team leaders.

Helpful Hint: Consider having back-up projects and plans, in case a team finishes their work earlier than expected. And try to ensure, to the best of your ability, that the projects you undertake can be completed given the number of volunteers you recruit and the length of your event!

Schedule of Events

Prepare a desired schedule for the day, and share that with your team leaders and/or planning committee. This schedule should include time for any tasks that need to be completed after the service portion of the event is finished (washing paint brushes, collecting and storing of supplies, registrations area cleanup/teardown, event sign removal, etc). Try to plan so your volunteers can help with event breakdown.

Bonus points if you include pre-event tasks on your schedule, too!

Step 4:

YOUR PRE-CLEANUP CHECKLIST

Supply List

Have an estimate of how many volunteers to expect so you have more than enough supplies. Prepare a list of supplies needed for each project (including for post-event cleanup/teardown), assign pre-registered volunteers to each project, and make sure you have enough of each supply for every volunteer. Have some extras on hand, too, and don't forget the gloves!

Ready, set, go! Designate a specific event organizer or volunteer to be a "runner" for the day, responsible for handling any last-minute or unexpected needs directly before or even during the event.

Trash Pick-up

Try to coordinate a special trash pick-up through your local village/town/city. If that is not possible, have a plan for storing the trash/debris you have collected until the regular collection day.

For extra safety tips when it comes to trash collection...

See page 20 - Take the Hazard Out of It!

Restroom Facilities

Determine if there are restrooms the volunteers can use on the day of your event, and be sure to let them know if there will NOT be any bathroom access on site.

Step 4:

YOUR PRE-CLEANUP CHECKLIST

Media Outreach

Think about contacting the media! Does your community have a local newspaper or blog? Invite them to cover the event! And if they do, send a thank you note.

It is also worth trying to secure a local community or government leader to make an appearance at your event so it can be publicized, both by the media and on your social media accounts!



Step 5:

YOUR CLEANUP DAY CHECKLIST

- ☐ Registration
- ☐ Volunteer Instructions
- ☐ Keep it Fun!
- ☐ Keep it Social!
- ☐ Cleanup the Cleanup!
- ☐ Record Your Impact

Step 5:

YOUR CLEANUP DAY CHECKLIST

Registration

Make each volunteer register with you when they arrive, so you can keep in touch and invite them to other volunteer opportunities! If appropriate, give each volunteer a brochure or handout about your efforts and how to stay involved, as well as resources they may find useful. Depending on the scope of your cleanup, you may also want to have each volunteer sign a waiver releasing you from any liability should an accident or emergency occur and allowing you to use their image in promotional materials or on social media. You may also find it worthwhile to ask volunteers how they heard about your event, to help guide your future outreach and volunteer recruiting strategies.

Volunteer Instructions

Gather your volunteers at the start of your event to thank them for spending their time giving back to the community, and to explain the flow of events for the day, the tasks they will be performing, and general safety rules. Notify volunteers where to leave full trash bags for pickup, and to point out the location of restrooms (if possible). Ask volunteers to return to the registration table at the end of the day with their supplies, and to thank them again and formally wrap up the event. Be sure to thank any partner organizations or sponsors, as well!

Step 5:

YOUR CLEANUP DAY CHECKLIST

Keep it Fun!

Make the day fun! Play music, run a contest, have a photo booth, spice it up! Consider providing snacks or lunch for volunteers after the tasks are finished - and see if you can get local businesses to donate the food and drinks, not just participate in the cleaning fun.

Keep it Social!

Take pictures and post updates throughout the event on social media!
Learn more about social media best practices on page 23!

Cleanup The Cleanup!

Have you returned all of your supplies to their permanent home?
Is your registration table packed up and put away?
Have you washed your paint brushes?

Record Your Impact

Determined and record your impact! How many bags of trash/debris did your volunteers collect? How many trees or flowers did you plant? How many volunteers did you engage? Think about including some kind of visual element during the event, such as a sign where you keep track of these metrics for all to see.

Step 6:

YOUR POST-CLEANUP CHECKLIST

- ☐ Thank you
- ☐ Volunteer Tracking
- ☐ Supplies Tracking
- ☐ Social Media

Step 6:

YOUR POST-CLEANUP CHECKLIST

Thank you! 

Thank all of your volunteers, partner organizations, and sponsors either via email or through a written letter. Make sure to share the results of your event and photos with them, as well as resources and concrete ways to keep involved with your efforts.

Volunteer Tracking 

Add contact information for your volunteers into a list or spreadsheet, so you can easily notify them of future opportunities.

Supplies Tracking 

Were all of your borrowed supplies returned to their owners? If the supplies belonged to your organization, did you receive all the supplies back from your volunteers? Did any of it break during use or need to be replaced? Keeping track of these things now can save time and stress before future events!

Social Media 

Continue to post pictures and/or videos to social media for a little while after the event is over. If you choose to host any sort of wrap-up/thank you event for your volunteers and sponsors, you could post pictures and/or videos from that as well.

WE'D LOVE TO HELP YOU!



**The Chautauqua County Land Bank
can happily assist with
the following:**



Volunteer recruitment
and event promotion



Workshops about the importance
of community beautification and the
resources available to neighborhoods
and individuals to help keep
their community clean



Identifying, contacting, and coordinating
with potential partner organizations
and municipalities



Help in organizing the logistics
of your event and procuring supplies



Team leader recruitment



TIPS & TRICKS

TAKE THE HAZARD OUT OF IT

There is a chance you may come across biohazard waste during your cleanup. Here's how to deal with it:

- Necessary tools: Biohazard containers or other hard, thick, plastic containers (ex: laundry detergent bottles work great!); tongs; needle stick proof gloves (optional but highly recommended); closed toe shoes.
- Designate one person or team of people for biohazard pickup. Have them enter all areas to be cleaned before other group members.
- Ensure all volunteers have the phone number for the biohazard person (or team) so if they discover a biohazardous item during cleanup, it can be safely and properly handled.
- NEVER use hands to pick up syringes unless you are wearing needle stick proof gloves.
- Pick up one syringe at a time.
- Always bring the biohazard container to the syringe, NEVER the other way around. Try to limit movement of syringes outside of containers as much as possible.
- When picking up syringes, keep points facing down.
- NEVER put biohazard waste in with regular trash.
- If someone is accidentally stuck, have them go immediately to the nearest hospital.

RECYCLING AWARENESS TIPS

KEEP IN
your recycling bin

Cardboard

Paper

Cartons

Metal

Plastics

Glass Bottles & Jars

**make sure your recyclables
are as clean as possible**

KEEP OUT OF
your recycling bin

Plastic Bags

Straws

Styrofoam

Food Products/Liquids

Tissues/Napkins/Paper Towels

Electronics

Window Glass

Fabrics

But remember - when in doubt, throw it out!

ZERO-WASTE EVENT TIPS

Community beautification events can create a lot of unnecessary waste, too much of which ends up in landfills. Here are some tips for making your event a zero waste day!

Donate or Keep Your Items

We know all too well that sometimes it can seem easier to throw used supplies away at the end of an event rather than donate, clean, or store them. Have a plan before your event to make sure any reusable supplies doesn't end up in a landfill.

Emphasize Reusable Items

As you are gathering supplies for the big day, think through whether you can utilize reusable items rather than disposable ones. Bring a water cooler instead of plastic water bottles, for instance! This will end up saving you money in the long run, too!

Separate Your Trash & Recycling

Ask your volunteers to place trash and recycling in separate bags for proper disposal. And if possible, think through whether you'll be collecting compostable materials - and where you can drop those materials off to be composted.

Spread The Word

Make sure to tell your volunteers that this is a zero-waste event - it is a great opportunity to educate and lead by example!

SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES

Capture It

Have a designated volunteer or event organizer to take pictures throughout the day so you can post as the event takes place (and you can use the footage from your past/current events when advertising for future events, too!)

Tag It

Consider using a hashtag for your event! Once you create a hashtag and your post is published, the hashtag becomes a clickable link that makes it discoverable to others. Keep it simple, easy to understand, and use it consistently.

Worth It ✨

Be sure to post content worth engaging with! Take the time to make the picture(s) you are posting look nice, everyone is smiling (or they are candid photos), and that the subject matter makes sense to the viewer. How about before and after pictures of your cleanup areas? Or pictures of each volunteer group with big smiles on their faces? You can even record stories/testimonials from volunteers, organizers, and other community members about the event to use for promoting future events!

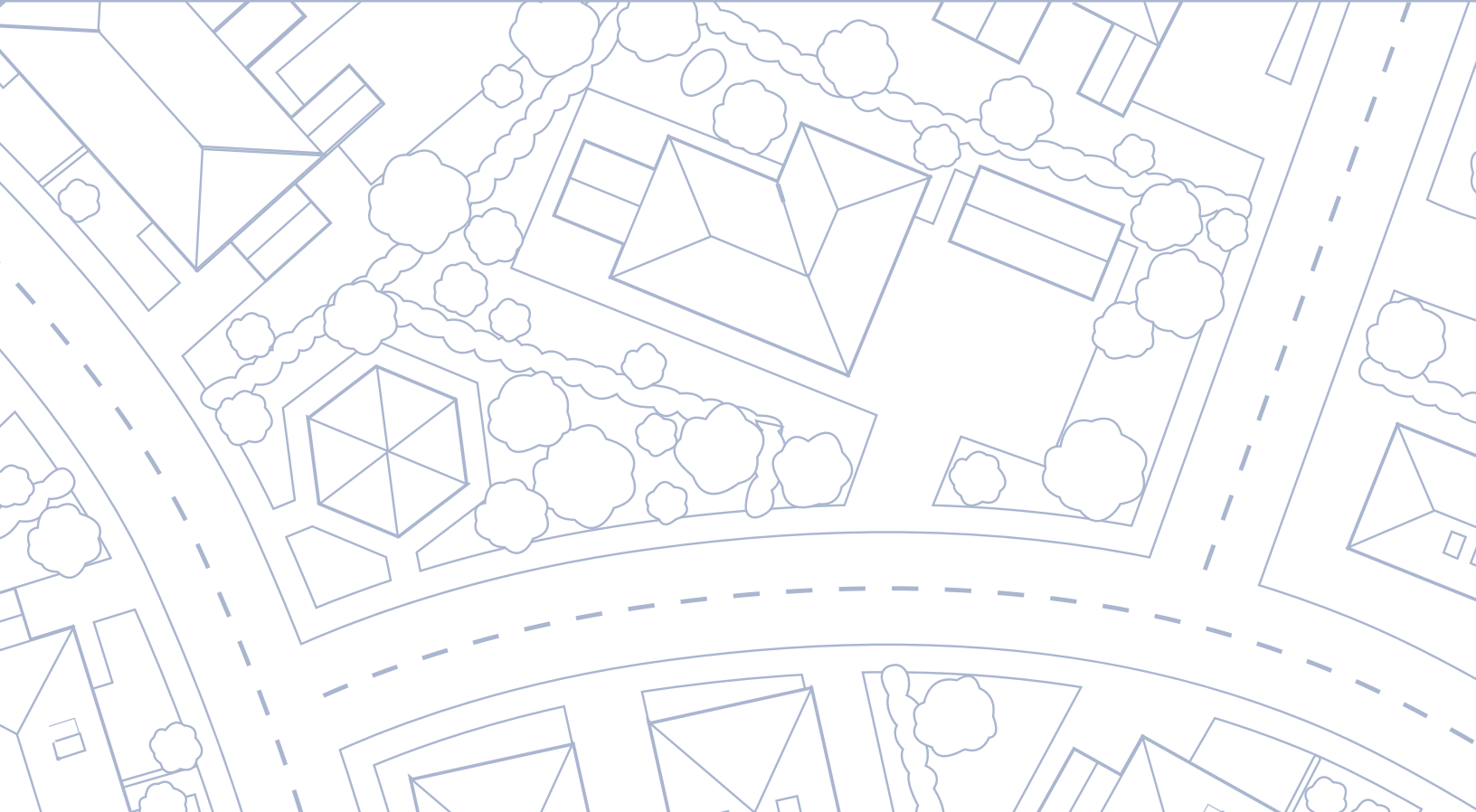
Share It

A great way to increase engagement with posts (and there for your cleanups) is through sharing the post on social media! Add it to your story, connect all your social media platforms so that your post will appear multiple places, and remind volunteers to like, follow, and share, as well!

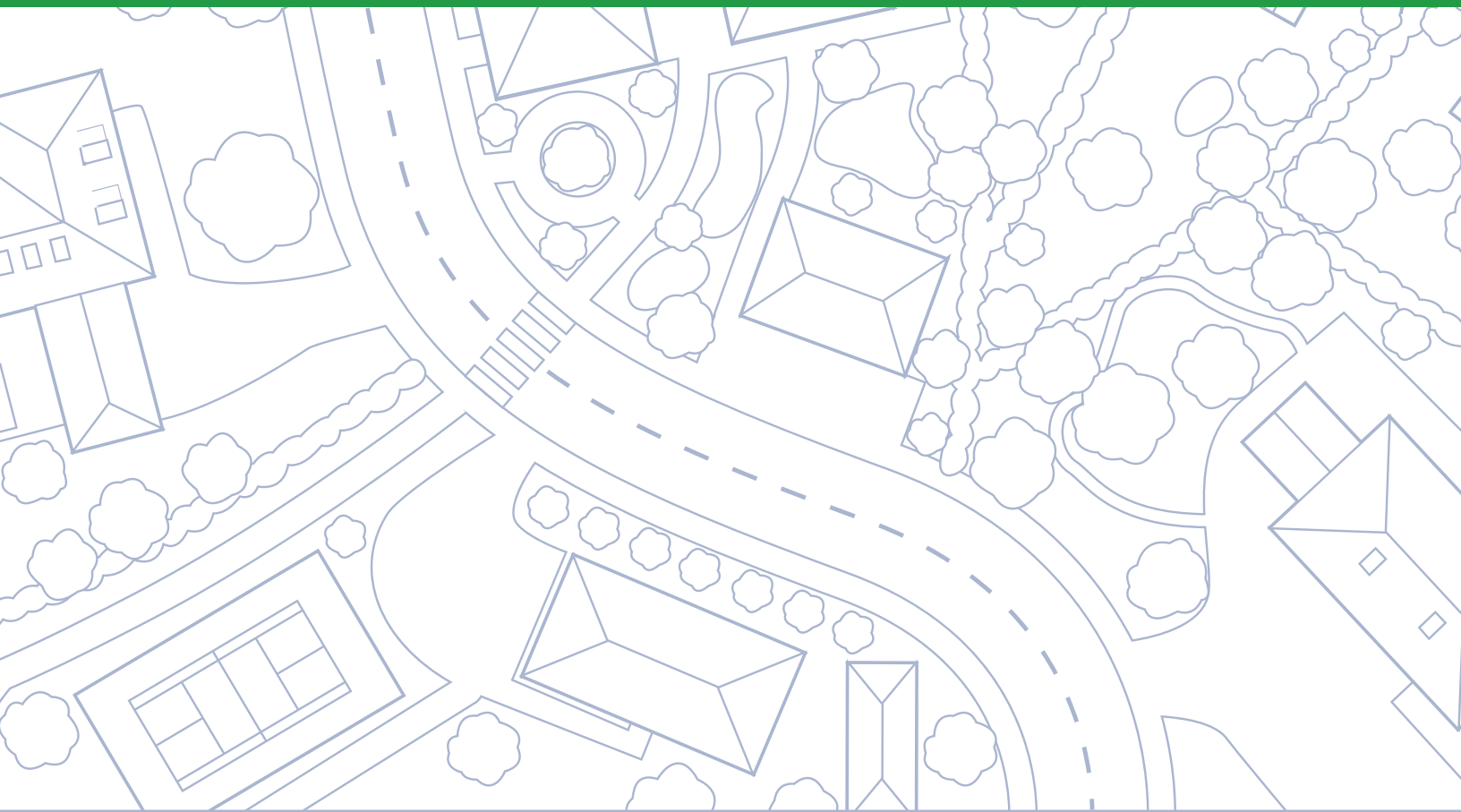
KEEPING YOUR BLOCK CLEAN: A MODEL

*Looking to keep your block clean?
Try these simple steps! Start small, think big!*

- Recruit your neighbors to clean your block once a week - when you notice that the most trash accumulates
- Create a flyer (bonus points if you include your trash collection day on the flyer!) and start a Facebook or email group to keep your neighbors posted and engaged.
- Make it fun (perhaps have a "trash to art" project and snacks) and quick (10-15 minutes!) - and turn it into a competition! And then, you can challenge the blocks nearby to clean up together, too!
- Track and promote your efforts: Let your neighbors and local community groups know about your good work. Keep an eye out for what types of trash you see the most - and where you see it. You can use that data to prevent litter in the first place!



SAMPLES & TEMPLATES



SAMPLE AGENDA: COMMUNITY CLEANUP EVENT

Friday Before Cleanup

- (1) Print and assemble all written materials for cleanup
 - Sign-in sheet and any waivers you need
 - Packets (including instructions) for team leaders
 - Informational materials about your organization and upcoming efforts (if applicable)
- (2) Group supplies by team
- (3) Purchase snacks and water
- (4) Assemble any giveaways for volunteers
- (5) Make reminder phone calls to volunteers
- (6) Meeting or phone call with team leaders

Saturday (Cleanup Day!)

- 8:30am: Organizers arrive and complete set up for attendees
- 9:30am: Team Leaders arrive for last minute instructions
- 10:15am - 10:30am: Attendees arrive
- 10:30am - 10:45am: Event organizers speak about their work, the flow of events for the day, and safety
- 10:45am - 1:15pm: Attendees engage in service projects
- 1:00pm: Event organizers pick up lunch
- 1:15pm - 1:30pm: Projects wrap up and volunteers help to clean up / pack up supplies
- 1:30pm - 2:30pm: Picnic and celebration of our work!

Monday Task List

- (1) Post pictures to social media (remember to "tag" and thank your partners!), and publish a wrap-up blog post
- (2) Thank you notes to organizing partners, sponsors, and volunteers (including photos and blog post!)
- (3) Add contact information for volunteers to "volunteer spreadsheet and newsletter list"

TEMPLATE 1: EVENT BUDGET

Supplies	Item	Price Per Unit	Total Quantity Needed	Total Cost
Team 1				
Team 2				
Volunteer Giveaways				
Food & Beverage				
Grand Total				

Budgeting Pro Tips:

You can ask local vendors if they might consider donating or sponsoring portions of the event that could offset your costs!

Examples: restaurants to provide snacks for the volunteers, hardware stores to provide some tools or equipment, graphic design store to discount promotional materials.

Remember to ask politely, and without expectations.

TEMPLATE 2: REGISTRATION FORM

[illegible]

Encourage volunteers to fill out all of the information on the registration sheet, especially the phone and email address sections: these will likely be your primary way to contact them about future events.

TEMPLATE 3: TEAM LEADER INSTRUCTIONS

Logistics

Date:

Time:

Location: (with google map and details about on-street parking!)

Schedule of Events

Day Before Cleanup:

Day of Cleanup:

Sample General Instructions

- (1) Where all volunteers will assemble, and what instructions / supplies will be provided
- (2) Site map: location of water / refreshments, restrooms, and trash drop off sites
- (3) Instructions in case their team finishes ahead of schedule
- (4) Who to contact (and how to contact them) if extra supplies are needed
- (5) General safety tips, and who to contact in case of an emergency
- (6) Any special instructions needed to complete their project (i.e. any special painting or planting instructions)

Contact Information

The cell phone number of all appropriate event organizers

TEMPLATE 4: WASTE AUDIT

Day of the Week	What did I throw in the trash?	What did I place in my recycling bin?
Sunday		
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		

Individuals can use this to track a family's waste output for a week to increase self-awareness and their own recycling habits in combination with the questions posed on the next page!

TEMPLATE 4: WASTE AUDIT

*So I've done my personal waste audit...
Now what?*

Some Key Follow Up Questions to Ask Yourself:

- What items am I using most each week?

If they are single-use disposal items, can I replace them with reusable options?

- Are there items here that I don't need to use at all?
- Are there items that I'm throwing in the trash that I could recycle, whether in my curbside blue bin or through another program?
- Are there items here that I can reuse / upcycle?
- How can I spread the word to my friends, neighbors, family members about issues of waste and consumption?

Can I get involved in my neighborhood groups to help take action on these issues?

TEMPLATE 5: GOALS

GOAL	How is it SPECIFIC?	How is it MEASURABLE?	How is it ATTAINABLE?	How is it REALISTIC?	What is the TIMELINE?

Defining the goals of your event is critical for measuring it's success and communicating the benefits of the program to future volunteers or sponsors.

WAIVER OF LIABILITY AND HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT

1. In consideration for receiving permission to participate in a volunteer activity in the city/town/village of _____, I hereby release, waive, discharge and covenant not to sue the (*name of organization*) _____, nor the County of Chautauqua, NY, nor city/town/village of _____, New York, their departments, officers, servants, agents, or employees (hereinafter referred to as Releasees) from any and all liability, claims, demands, actions and causes of action whatsoever arising out of or related to any property belonging to me, whether caused by the negligence of the Releasees, or otherwise, while participating in such activity, or while in, on or upon the premises where the activity is being conducted.

2. To the best of my knowledge, I suffer from no physical limitations which would affect my participation in this activity. I am fully aware of risks and hazards connected with such activities, and I hereby elect to voluntarily participate in said activity, and to enter the above-named premises and engage in such activity knowing that the activity may be hazardous to me and my property. I VOLUNTARILY ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY RISKS OF LOSS, PROPERTY DAMAGE OR PERSONAL INJURY, INCLUDING DEATH, that may be sustained by me, or any loss or damage to property owned by me, as a result of being engaged in such activity, WHETHER CAUSED BY THE NEGLIGENCE OF RELEASEES OR OTHERWISE.

3. I further agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Releasees from any loss, liability, damage or costs, including court costs and attorney's fees, that they may incur due to my participation in said activity, whether caused by negligence of Releasees or otherwise.

4. I further release and hold harmless the organizers from any injury, loss, property damage suffered by any minor under my care/supervision during this event. I take full responsibility for the actions, safety and well-being of any children under the age of 18 whom I have accompanied to this event.

5. It is my express intent that this release and hold harmless agreement, shall bind the members of my family and spouse, if I am alive, and my heirs, assign and personal representative, if I am deceased, and shall be deemed as a release waiver of liability and hold harmless agreement and shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New York.

In signing this release, I acknowledge and represent I have read the foregoing waiver of liability and hold harmless agreement, understand it and sign it voluntarily as my own free act and deed; no oral representations, statements, or inducements, apart from the foregoing written agreement, have been made; I am at least eighteen (18) years of age and fully competent; and I execute this release for full, adequate and complete consideration fully intending to be bound by same.

CONTINUED - OTHER SIDE



PHOTO RELEASE

I hereby give permission to the *(name of organization)* _____, and the city/town/village of _____, NY to use my name, likeness, image, voice, and/or appearance, or that of my accompanied minors, as such may be embodied in any pictures, photos, video recordings, audiotapes, digital images, and the like, taken or made on behalf of the *(name of organization)* _____. I consent that the *(name of organization)* _____ has complete ownership of such materials and may use them for any purpose consistent with the *(name of organization)* _____ and its mission. These uses include, but are not limited to illustrations, bulletins, exhibitions, videotapes, reprints, reproductions, publications, advertisements, and any promotional or educational materials in any medium, including the Internet. I acknowledge that I will not receive any compensation for the use of such images and hereby release the *(name of organization)* _____, the city/town/village of _____, its agents, employees, and assigns from any and all claims, demands, and liabilities which arise out of or are in any way connected with such use.

COVID -19 AFFIDAVIT

As of the date written below, I certify the following:

- I have not returned from international travel within the last 10 days (unless you returned 8-10 days ago and took a viral COVID-19 test 3-5 days after your return*).
- I have not recently tested positive for COVID-19, or was directed to quarantine, isolate, or self-monitor at home for COVID-19 by the New York State and/or Chautauqua County Health Department, a doctor, or a medical/health agency.
- I have not recently had close contact with a person testing positive for COVID-19 (unless fully vaccinated or have recently recovered from COVID-19*).
- I do not currently, or in the last 3 days have had, a fever or 100 °F
- I have not had any of the following COVID-19 symptoms in the past 14 days: Fever or chills, cough**, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, unexplained muscle or body aches, headache**, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat**, congestion and/or runny nose**, and/or nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

* If you are covered by this exemption, please be prepared to provide proof COVID-19 test, vaccination, or recent recovery from COVID-19.

** NOT attributable to other sources such as allergies, chronic sinus, smoking, etc.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal on the following date as noted.

Signature (Participant or Guardian)

Date

Printed Name of Participant

Telephone Number



STAY IN TOUCH!



716-969-7843



www.chqlandbank.org/handson



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or @CHQLandBank



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