

»» NEWSLETTER ««

KEEP GASTONIA BEAUTIFUL

Keep Gastonia Beautiful educates and inspires residents to take everyday actions that create a cleaner, greener, and more beautiful community.



TOP NEWS OF THE MONTH

**THE GREATEST AMERICAN CLEANUP WRAPPED FOR 2026!!
2,075 POUNDS COLLECTED FROM OVER 40 GROUPS**

The Greatest American Cleanup wrapped on June 20th! Citizens, City Employees, and Volunteers banded together to pick up over 2,075 Pounds! We had a lot of new organizations and groups join us this year and we are so thankful to everyone who helped make Gastonia a cleaner and greener city!

Keep reading to learn what's buzzing in KGB!

LITTLE WAYS TO SUPPORT KGB

»»» MISSION MOMENT

We love starting our Board Meetings with a message from one of our Board Members on how they promote the mission. Whether you are passionate about gardening, sustainability, art, or anything else green, we'd love to hear from you. We are currently looking for mission moments for July, September, and November. Email Juliann if you are interested.



»»» WEAR YOUR KGB T-SHIRT

A great way to spread the word about KGB is to wear your t-shirt. Wear it to the grocery store, to volunteer, to the farmers market, or even on date night. It makes the perfect outfit! We'd love to give you one if you don't already have a shirt.

»»» RAIN BARREL SALE

Fun Fact: A 1,000-square-foot roof can collect over 600 gallons of rainwater from just 1 inch of rainfall! That's free water for your landscape while helping protect our local streams.

Keep Gastonia Beautiful, in partnership with the City of Gastonia Stormwater Division, is excited to offer discounted rain barrels this summer. Made in North Carolina from 100% recycled plastic, these barrels help conserve water, reduce stormwater runoff, and naturally water your lawn and garden.

Pickup will be available at the Gastonia Farmers Market on Saturday, July 18th

Deadline to place online orders is Monday, July 6
[Please use the link to learn more and reserve your rain barrel.](#)

A black rain barrel is shown outdoors, next to a white downspout. A blue starburst graphic with the price '\$85' is overlaid on the barrel. The barrel has a logo that says 'Ivy'.

Keep Gastonia Beautiful

Rain Barrel Sale

HIGHLIGHTS

- Made in North Carolina
- 100% Recycled Plastic
- 50 gallon capacity
- Mosquito-proof screen
- 6' overflow hose included
- Retail value \$159
- Order today through July 6th
- Pick up event will be held on Saturday, July 18th at the Gastonia Farmers Market

MASTER GARDNERS ON A MONARCH MISSION

>>> BEES, BUTTERFLIES, AND BUGS...OH MY!

Keep Gastonia Beautiful recently teamed up with our incredible Master Gardener Volunteers to give monarch butterflies a helping hand by planting 196 milkweed plants across Gastonia!

- 83 milkweed plants at Martha Rivers Park
- 103 milkweed plants at the Gastonia Farmers Market
- 10 milkweed plants at the Aunt Charlotte Community Garden

Did you know? Milkweed is the only plant where monarch butterflies lay their eggs, making it an essential part of their life cycle. These new pollinator-friendly plantings will provide important habitat and food sources for monarchs, bees, and other beneficial pollinators.

Gastonia Farmers Market

Thanks to Jeffie Hardin for leading the charge and for all the volunteers from the board and beyond who helped fill the beds at the entrance with a colorful mix of pollinator plants and vegetables, demonstrating how beautiful and productive gardens can work together. On the side of the building, you can enjoy our educational area with wildflowers growing! The market is now home to a dedicated milkweed bed, thanks to the determination of the Master Gardener Volunteers. Volunteers planted over 100 milkweeds, providing critical habitat for monarch butterflies.



Martha Rivers Park

The bed at Martha Rivers measures 30x4 feet! Thanks to the Master Gardener Volunteers over 80 milkweed are thriving there. Educational signage was added and we hope to add more pollinators on the edges in the fall.

Lineberger Greenway

This once overgrown and forgotten bed is now a pollinator paradise. Angi Karchmer, who serves on our board and is a Master Gardener started to clean out this bed during our Riversweep in the fall. She brought in Rebecca Edison, who also has a green thumb, and together they worked to create a great pollinator space with plants from their own beds. Every flower planted helps create a healthier ecosystem and a more vibrant community.



LEARNING, LEADING & CLEANING UP

JUNETEENTH

◀◀◀30 STUDENTS REACHED

Keep Gastonia Beautiful partnered with the Gaston County African American Quilt Guild, Juneteenth/Ebony Fest leaders and the Highland Community Art Park to celebrate Juneteenth with local youth. During the event, youth visited the Aunt Charlotte McClee Community Garden, where they learned about the remarkable life and legacy of Aunt Charlotte McClee and discovered what makes a community garden an important gathering place for education, sustainability, and community. We then walked 2 blocks to the Highland Community Art Park where they learned more about the Highland Community and the 3 black mayors (featured in a mural) that helped shape change in the city.

To connect with the history of Juneteenth, participants also explored the important role quilt making and quilt patterns are believed to have played in the Underground Railroad. The hands-on experience combined local history, cultural heritage, and hands on crafts; creating a meaningful learning opportunity for everyone involved. The program was such a success that one participating group has already requested another educational experience—this time at the Gastonia Farmers Market!



Learn more about the 3 Black Mayors Mural [here](#), scroll to #12

LEARNING, LEADING & CLEANING UP



COMMISSIONERS SCHOOL

◀◀ 72 STUDENTS REACHED



Over 4 days from June 8 - June 11, we worked with the Commissioners School of Excellence, rising sophomores from across Gaston County, helped us tackle a variety of community service projects. Students cleaned up the Farmers Market, beautified Sherwood Elementary, and cleaned up greenways and posted our educational Tree Bands around Rankin Lake and the Avon/Catawba Creeks Greenway.

▶▶▶ SUMMER STORYTIME

The Summer Storytime series kicked off with at the Gastonia Farmers Market! We learned about different animals that plant seeds. And then, the decorated their own pots and planted seeds! Our next one is already full!



WAYS TO HELP US GROW KGB

>>> PLASTIC BAG PICKUP

As many of you know, we have been working with several community groups to collect plastic film for Trex, a recycled decking company. Unfortunately, Trex has changed the program and lessened the incentives for groups to collect plastics, so our community groups have dropped out of collecting. We would like to continue collecting plastics to prevent plastic film, a hard to recycle material, from going in the landfill. The lack of community group participation has created a strain on KGB staff time.

We are in desperate need for additional volunteers to pick up plastics from the Duke St and Farmers Market recycling centers and take it to the landfill in Dallas.

[Use link and scroll over to plastic](#) to sign up

>>> HELP US TURN BOTTLE CAPS INTO ART!

Recently, a generous community member gifted Keep Gastonia Beautiful more than 10 trash bags of sorted plastic bottle caps that were originally intended for mural at their farm. Although they were unable to complete their vision, we'd love to honor their generosity by bringing the project to life.

Now we need your help! Are you an artist, maker, or creative thinker? We're looking for someone who would like to help lead this project by designing and creating a recycled masterpiece for the community to enjoy. If you've ever wanted to leave a lasting, colorful mark on Gastonia while promoting recycling and environmental stewardship, we'd love to hear from you!



WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT MONTH?

»»» SUMMER STORYTIME

Our next installment of the Summer Storytime Series has arrived! We have partnered with the **Rotary Community Garden of Gastonia** and the **Gastonia Architecture and History Appreciation Society** for a shape centric storytime, for young learners.

Registration is full!

TRAINS & TOTS

ALL ABOARD FOR SHAPES!
JULY 16TH

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM

ROTARY COMMUNITY GARDEN
406 E FRANKLIN BLVD,
GASTONIA, NC 28054



We are looking for volunteers to ensure a great time for families! Please email Rebecca.Brannon@gastonians.gov if you can help at this event.

»»» VOLUNTEER CLUB

Do you know any middle school or high school students who are looking for volunteer hours this summer? We are looking for teens who want to make a positive impact while racking up community service hours. Come join us on Friday, July 10th at 10:00 a.m. for a community cleanup!

Make sure any teens you invite use this link to sign our [required waiver!](#)

*Join the
KGB Volunteer Club
for Middle and High School Students for a*

COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP

*We'll pick up trash, to make our
streets cleaner and greener.
July 10th 10AM
Location TBD
Bring a water bottle and wear closed
toed shoes.
Please make sure to have your adult
complete the waiver before we start.
Snacks and popsicles provided.*



WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT MONTH?



➤➤➤PREPPING FOR FALL PROGRAMS



KGB is committed to making an impact in Gastonia and Gaston County. Through educational programming, we are able to teach children the importance of creating a clean and green world. We hope to make a difference, not only now but in the future as these children grow into adulthood.



Are you interested in joining us for programming? You do not need any teaching experience, just a willingness to be a helper during our programs. [Sign up here](#) and staff will reach out as programs are booked


During the Summer, we take this season to prepare for the season ahead. The school year promises to be busy and full of learning! Please enjoy this snapshot from the 25/26 School Year!




K 1,566 STUDENTS, 77 CLASSES 
Kindergarteners learned about Super Trees, including the incredible benefits of trees and how to protect them. In the Spring, students read "Duffy's Lucky Escape!" and learned how to protect waterways from harmful litter. 

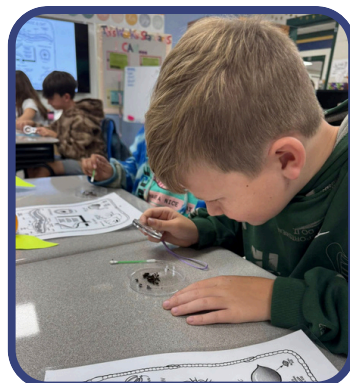
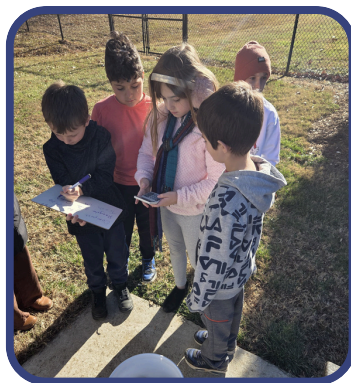
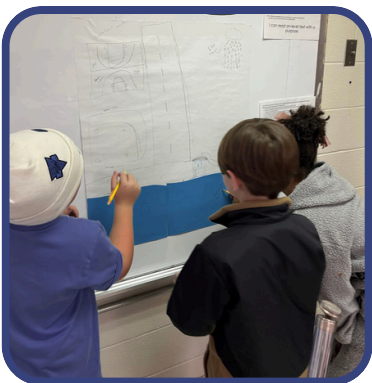
1 1,639 STUDENTS, 83 CLASSES 
In the fall, First Graders learned how to be Busy as a Bee. In the Spring, Earth Magic was on the schedule. Students learned how to protect the essential elements of a habitat. 

2 1,154 STUDENTS, 60 CLASSES 
Second Graders learned to observe during Eyes on Nature in the Fall. In the Spring, they performed music on recycled instruments during Recycle Jams. 

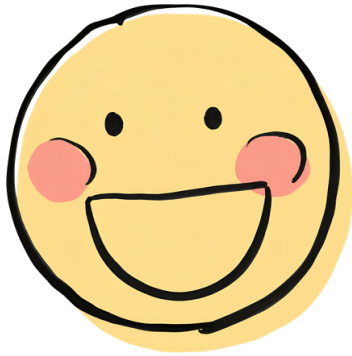
3 368 STUDENTS, 18 CLASSES 
Third Graders learned to be conscious of their trash during Waste Detectives. In the Spring, they learned how pollinators use team work to pollinate our food and the environment during Project Pollination. 

4 771 STUDENTS, 34 CLASSES 
In the Fall, Fourth Graders learned to take ownership over the watershed they reside. And, in the Spring they learned important economic concepts while balancing decisions with eco-friendly options.

5 971 STUDENTS, 41 CLASSES 
Fifth graders had a special two part experience with KGB. In the fall, they started classroom vermicompost bins. Students learned to take care of their bins and in the Spring, they harvested their bins to learn how to reduce their waste. 




MISSION MOVERS



>>> YOUR FACE HERE

Please complete the Board Member Profile. If desired, we will feature you here!!!

[Board Member Profile](#)

>>> A NOTE FROM JULIANN

As we wrap up June, I want to take a moment to thank our incredible volunteers, neighborhood groups, businesses, schools, and community partners who stepped up to help Keep Gastonia Beautiful. Throughout the entire Greatest American Cleanup, we saw strong participation in community cleanups across the city, with residents of all ages coming together to remove litter, improve public spaces, and take pride in their neighborhoods. Then connecting with the Commissioners School of Excellence we saw teens who wanted to help to create a cleaner and greener Gastonia...even when it was extremely HOT!!!

What continues to inspire me most is the growing level of community engagement. Every cleanup, every volunteer hour, and every bag of litter collected represents people who care deeply about the place they call home. These efforts not only make our streets, parks, and waterways cleaner, but they also strengthen connections between neighbors and create a shared sense of responsibility for our community.





WHAT ARE WE PLANNING FOR?

➤➤➤ FALL SHRED DAY

KGB will host another Shred Day in the fall. This will be held at our new location, the parking lot next to the Bradley Bus station (174 E. Main Avenue) on Saturday, November 7, 2026 with our new condensed timeframe: 8-11 a.m.

As always, we love to have volunteers chip in to make the day safe and a success.

➤➤➤ BLACK GOLD

Black gold sales will return in the fall.

Do you people ever ask you “What Is Black Gold?”

Black Gold consists exclusively of ground compost from leaves collected from Gastonia residences and municipal properties.

It contains no dyes, artificial fertilizers, or additives of any kind.

Dates will be determined once the leaves are mulched.
3 Cubic yards is only \$20!

➤➤➤ CATAWBA RIVERSWEEP

The Catawba Riverkeepers will host another Creeksweep on October 3rd. Be on the lookout for more social media! We would love to have some representation from Keep Gastonia Beautiful!

➤➤➤ CHRISTMAS IN THE CITY

We are excited to help host Christmas in the City in partnership with the Gaston County Jaycees! Event will be held on Sunday, December 6th with the parade followed by the tree lighting, more details will come as we get closer.

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