



# **Citizens' Greener Evanston**

## **2017 Annual Report**

Citizens' Greener Evanston works to make Evanston a more environmentally just, sustainable, and resilient community.

Citizens' Greener Evanston  
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## Citizens' Greener Evanston

Act Locally. Breathe Globally.

May 16, 2018

Dear Friends of CGE,

In January 2017 our job as local sustainability champions became even more important. After a period of slow but steady progress on climate action at the federal level, the change in presidential administrations ushered in a period of retrogression on the most pressing issue of our time: the United States has withdrawn from the Paris Climate Agreement, the EPA is rolling back carbon emission regulations, and climate change is dismissed as a hoax.

That's the bad news. The good news is that we're doing something about it. Washington may not be thinking globally but we're acting locally--and Citizens' Greener Evanston is leading the charge.

CGE made sure environmental sustainability was an issue in April's city elections and we were very pleased when our newly elected mayor committed not only to the Paris agreement but also to a 100% clean energy vision. Mayor Haggerty later appointed a Climate Action and Resiliency working group to develop the next version of a climate action plan, an initiative in which CGE will continue to play a vital role.

While environmental justice has been a part of our mission from the beginning, the adoption of the EJ Evanston working group into CGE earlier in the year will greatly enhance our work in this area. Our Edible Evanston program continues to promote local food and our Natural Habitat Evanston group continues to encourage and protect our biodiverse ecosystem.

Financially we continue to make the most of our predominantly all-volunteer organization, essentially breaking even if we factor in grant revenue carried over from the previous year. Streets Alive sponsorships were our most significant source of revenue in 2017. Looking ahead, one of our ongoing challenges will be to ensure that CGE is financially sustainable.

Thank you for your interest in CGE. We look forward to working with you in 2018 and beyond!

*Jonathan*

Jonathan Nieuwsma  
President  
Citizens' Greener Evanston

## CGE Leads the Call for Local Action

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### ***Engaging the City Council***

With local elections occurring in April of 2017, CGE circulated an Environmental Issues questionnaire to all candidates for local office and shared the responses with the community on our website. Although as a 501(c)3 organization CGE cannot endorse candidates, this initiative not only helped inform the voters but, perhaps equally important, raised the profile of environmental sustainability as an important local issue and obligated candidates to develop and articulate their views.

After the election CGE board members met with each council member individually to further educate new aldermen, and to remind those returning, on the critical importance to our climate action goals of electricity aggregation with renewable energy.

### ***Forget Paris? Not so fast! -- Candidate Forum Leads to Mayor's Commitments***

In addition to responding to the environmental issues questionnaire, two final mayoral candidates participated in a CGE environmental issues forum moderated by CGE President Jonathan Nieuwsma. After the election new Mayor Steve Haggerty reconfirmed Evanston's commitment

to the Compact of Mayors, a global coalition of 648 city leaders representing 486 million people worldwide dedicated to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and making their communities more resilient. Mayor Haggerty also followed his predecessor in joining the Mayors National Climate Action Agenda, a network of 92 U.S. mayors who are committed to upholding the commitments of the Paris Climate Accord.



*Engaging mayoral candidates on climate, energy and sustainability*

Mayor Haggerty also signed on to the Sierra Club's 100% Clean Energy campaign and later directed the City to post research from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Climate Change Website, which the Trump administration had had removed from the federal government's websites

### ***Staffing Up?***

Although the City's plans to add a climate and energy specialist were ultimately tabled due to budget constraints, CGE was deeply involved in the recruitment and interviewing process as we had been for the City's previous sustainability coordinator. In May, environmental projects coordinator Kumar Jensen was promoted to the role of sustainability coordinator. We've met regularly with Kumar since his appointment and enjoy a collaborative relationship.

## Climate Action Progress: Act Locally, Breathe Globally!

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### **20% by 2016?**

When we released the 2016 annual report we weren't sure yet whether we had met our target for greenhouse gas reduction. Well, the numbers are in, and based on the original methodology we managed to achieve an 18.8% GHG reduction from a 2005 baseline--very close, but not quite to 20%. But there's a caveat: we'll be revising the calculations using new standard methodology of the Compact of Mayors which will change that number, we believe for the better!

### **Aggregation Continues**

The most significant item in our GHG reduction progress was a 61% reduction in emissions from the generation of electricity for residential customers. This success stems from Evanston's community aggregation program using electricity from renewable sources, which was up for renewal again in the spring of 2017. Unfortunately, market rates in the months leading up to a possible new contract were not necessarily in our favor—aggregated renewable electricity looked like it might not be cheaper than the default Com Ed rate. Since continuing aggregation with renewable energy is critical to our climate action progress, CGE made sure all new and returning aldermen were up to speed on its importance. With persistence and little bit of luck (market rates started to trend in our direction), the City Council unanimously approved another three-year contract. Moving forward we'll be working to increase participation in this program and to explore the possibility of better long-term alternatives.

### **Evanston Climate Action Plan Part 3: What's Next?**

The Livability Plan of 2014 is due for revision. With behind the scenes input from CGE and under the strong leadership of City Sustainability Coordinator Kumar Jensen, Mayor Haggerty appointed a committee of Evanston residents to develop a new Climate Action and Resiliency Plan (CARP). This represents a significant step forward for the community and demonstrates that sustainability considerations are beginning to take permanent hold—whereas CGE was the main force behind the original ECAP in 2008 and the Livability Plan in 2014, this time the City itself is driving progress. CGE remains actively engaged, of course: CGE board member Lauren Marquez-Viso is co-chairing the CARP group which includes several other CGE members. CGE will remain engaged in developing and implementing the new plan which is scheduled for approval in late 2018.



*CGE at the People's Climate March, April 29*

## Making Evanston More Sustainable for Everyone

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### **Environmental Justice Finds a Home at CGE**

Building on our previous efforts to make Evanston sustainable for everyone, CGE welcomed the addition of Environmental Justice Evanston (EJE) as a working group in March 2017. A group of committed advocates which had previously met as a sub-committee of the City's Environment Board, EJE was formed in 2014 with an initial focus on developing an Environmental Justice ordinance. Their focus shifted to the Church Street Waste Transfer Station issue in early 2016. Convening as a CGE working group allows EJE to leverage CGE's assistance, resources, and community support to further EJE's efforts, and bolsters CGE's commitment to environmental justice in our community.

### **Waste Transfer Station Monitoring**

EJE has taken an active role in the Thriving Earth Exchange (TEX), a task force formed to implement an environmental monitoring program around the Waste Transfer Station (WTS) to determine whether any adverse environmental effects exist near its Church St. location. The task force is comprised of city staff, two aldermen, concerned citizens, and three members of EJE. During the year, EJE members worked with the TEX task force to define the project and obtain city council approval of capital budget funds to pay for the needed monitoring equipment.

### **EJE in the Community**

In September 2017, EJE staffed a booth at the Evanston Green Living Festival that was part of Streets Alive to introduce itself to the Evanston community and introduce attendees to environmental justice. Around that same time EJE also started working with the ETHS Emerge group on a project where the students would identify EJ problem locations in Evanston and ultimately make a presentation on their findings.



*Rick Nelson, Jerri Garl, Janet Alexander, Dorothy Head, Tim Eberhart at the Green Living Fest.*

## Engaging and Educating Our Community

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### ***Weatherization Works! Wraps Up***

Finishing up a project launched in 2016 which was funded by a \$50,000 grant from the Illinois Science and Energy Foundation in partnership with Elevate Energy, CGE field organizer (and now board member) Sara Diggs led outreach efforts to highlight the benefits of weatherization and smart meters to underserved communities in Evanston. The numbers for 2017: 36 events --including one-on-one meetings, community meetings, tabling events, house parties—which reached over 2500 people. Including the work which began in 2016 we met or exceeded all the goals of the grant.

*See where that draft is coming in?*

### ***Another Successful Streets Alive!***

“Open Streets, Open Communities” was the tagline for CGE’s Streets Alive event this year, and a sunny September afternoon saw thousands of Evanstonians doing just that: walking, cycling, scootering, dancing, skating, hula hooping, singing and dancing! Streets Alive was combined once again with the Evanston Green Living Festival in collaboration with our friends at the Evanston Environmental Association and the City of Evanston. In addition to promoting sustainability and safe practices for all means of transportation on our shared roadways, Streets Alive is a great celebration of active living, public spaces and community.



*Streets Alive Photos by Genie Lemieux/Evanston Photographic Studios Inc.*

## **Sharing Information at Community Events**

CGE members staffed tables at a series of community events during the year, engaging visitors in conversation about everything from solar energy to butterfly gardens to environmental justice.

Community events in 2017 included:

- Going Green Matters green fair (Wilmette)
- Evanston Green Ball
- Custer Street Fair
- Indoor Farmers Market
- Farmers Market Nonprofit Day
- Streets Alive!



*Board member Sara Diggs at the Indoor Farmers Market*



*Board members Leslie Shad, Jerry Herst and Chuck Wasserburg at Going Green Matters, March 2017*

## **Green Drinks: Informative and Social**

CGE's regular education and networking events featured speakers on a wide range of sustainability topics. Issues addressed in 2017 included:

- Environmental Justice
- Food Forests
- Climate Reality Project
- Our Urban Forest
- Green Investing



## Edible Evanston

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### ***Growing Gardens, Growing Gardeners***

In their second year as part of CGE, Edible Evanston continued to provide opportunities for individuals to expand their knowledge of nutrition, growing food, and composting and to experience the benefits of Evanston-raised produce for themselves. Edible Evanston held eight educational workshops and practical classes about urban agriculture and gardening throughout the year. The annual Seed Swap (and free seed give-away) was held in spring in conjunction with the Evanston Community Gardener lottery.

### ***New Gardener Mentoring***

In 2017 Edible Evanston assisted a number of Evanston residents in getting started with their first gardens by providing materials for raised bed gardens, soil, and some initial plants and seeds. Personal garden mentors provided one-on-one individualized support, and workshops offer additional learning opportunities. Financial assistance was provided for several low-income residents.



*New garden, new gardeners*



### ***Food Sharing Initiatives***

Edible Evanston volunteers team up with the Evanston Community Garden program to get excess produce to those in need. Since 2012 Edible Evanston has delivered thousands of pounds of fresh local vegetables and herbs each year to three Evanston food pantries, with weekly pick-ups from June through October at four community gardens throughout Evanston.

*Fresh vegetable delivery to Hillside Pantry*

### ***Eggleston Anniversary Food Forest***

The Eggleston Anniversary Food Forest and Orchard is a diverse planting of trees, shrubs, and small plants which uses permaculture principles to mimic the natural balance of a forest. Supported partially by a \$2,400 rolling grant from the Evanston Community Foundation, Edible Evanston volunteers installed a drainage system and three rain gardens at the Food Forest in 2017 and hosted monthly *Work and Learn* days from March through November. The third Annual Fall Festival, a family-oriented event, which included fresh cider and food as well as tours of the food forest, was held in October.



*Work and Learn Day at the Eggleston Food Forest*

## Natural Habitat Evanston

### **Community Wildlife Habitat**

With the muscle, work and the support of about a dozen partners, Natural Habitat Evanston (NHE) is leading a community effort to obtain certification of Evanston as a National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Community Wildlife Habitat. The work this year included supporting the North Shore Channel Habitat and Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary restorations, mapping Chicago Living Corridors, and extending outreach and education to schools and places of worship as well as enhancing their gardens.

With 25 more properties certifying their gardens this year--including Evanston

Township High School's nature center, Oakton Elementary School, Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary and Eggleston Orchard--Evanston is 75% of the way to NWF Community Habitat certification, with about 100 gardens yet to certify.



*NHE member's newly certified garden*



### **Planting Gardens**

With grants from Highland Garden Club of Evanston and Lincolnwood Garden Club, NHE donated hundreds of plants to Chiaravalle Montessori School, Evanston Township High School, Orrington Elementary, and Washington Elementary School. Signs depicting the benefits of milkweed, asters and other natural features were designed and posted at Chiaravalle, Orrington, and Washington schools and Lake Street Church and St. Nicholas parish. School signs were designed and mostly funded with the support of Highland Garden Club of Evanston.

*Demonstration garden at Washington School.*

### **Flocking Together for Wildlife**

The Festival for our Birds, an event organized by NHE, was a standout among dozens of other 2017 events NHE joined. Displays from 35 presenters from local birding, garden and stewardship groups, landscapers, and Chicago's Field Museum shared environmental expertise with about 110 attendees, including three city aldermen. The scavenger hunt and face painting were hits.



*Festival for our Birds*



### ***Flocking Together (continued)***

Thanks to the NWF Trees for Wildlife program, NHE distributed 500 seedlings to schools, places of worship and city lands. Evanston Treekeepers, a program of the nonprofit Openlands, managed the sapling distribution, and provided tree care instructions.

*Preparing seedlings for the Festival*

### ***From the Birds to the Bees***

With the support of NHE, the City of Evanston passed a resolution encouraging the State of Illinois to allow local governments to regulate pesticides such as neonicotinoids which are harmful to bees and other pollinators. Currently, the state legislature controls the regulation of pesticides under the Illinois Pesticide Act, which preempts local measures. The City resolution requests the Illinois General Assembly to reverse the state pre-emption of local government regulation contained in the Illinois Pesticide Act.

### ***Are Milkweeds Weeds?***

NHE initiated an effort to update Evanston’s weed ordinance to remove prohibitions against milkweed, decorative grasses and other native plants, and to allow the City to remove non-native invasive species. With leadership from the Evanston Environment Board, the ordinance was approved in September.



*Springtime at Isabella Woods*

### ***Speaking for the Trees***

Against all expectations, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District voted to protect Isabella Woods, a rare stand of remnant oak in north Evanston. The woods were threatened with development by an adjacent property owner, who wanted a road easement to increase the value of his property. NHE organized input and speakers at the MWRD meeting, turning what was expected to be a pro forma vote of approval for the road into to a rejection of the proposal.

## An Evolving Organization

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### ***Mission to Vision to Strategy to Action***

We concluded an in-depth strategic planning process in late 2017 with the adoption of revised mission and vision statements and comprehensive strategic plan.

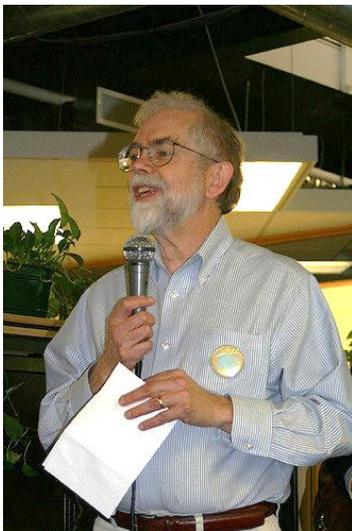
Our new mission statement reflects our commitment to making Evanston sustainable for everyone as we continue to confront climate change:

*Citizens' Greener Evanston works to make Evanston a more environmentally just, sustainable, and resilient community.*

Our vision statement attempts to paint a picture of our ideal future Evanston:

*Evanston is recognized as one of the most environmentally sustainable cities in the country. We have achieved carbon neutrality through community-wide adoption of renewable energy, efficiency improvements and behavior change. We are adapting to the effects of climate change, limiting its impact on our community. Our natural environment is a healthy, thriving and biodiverse ecosystem. Our watershed provides clean drinking water and is supported by conservation practices and green infrastructure that mitigate pollution and flooding. We prioritize walking, riding and taking public transportation. We grow and share as much of our own food as we can. The costs and benefits of this progress are equitably distributed, and our thriving community remains economically and socially diverse.*

### **Recognizing a Leader: CGE Founder Steve Perkins Retires**



Steve Perkins, the driving force behind the movement which led to the formation of CGE and a board member since our inception, announced his retirement in late 2017. Back in 2000, Steve convened the Network for Evanston's Future, an umbrella group of organizations working on various aspects of sustainability and climate change, and prodded City Council to sign the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement in 2006. Steve then proposed the city-community collaboration which developed Evanston's first Climate Action Plan 2008. CGE evolved from that group to work with the City to implement the plan, and Steve was an original board member. CGE would not exist without Steve's humble leadership, passion for environmental sustainability, and commitment to social justice. We'll miss him.

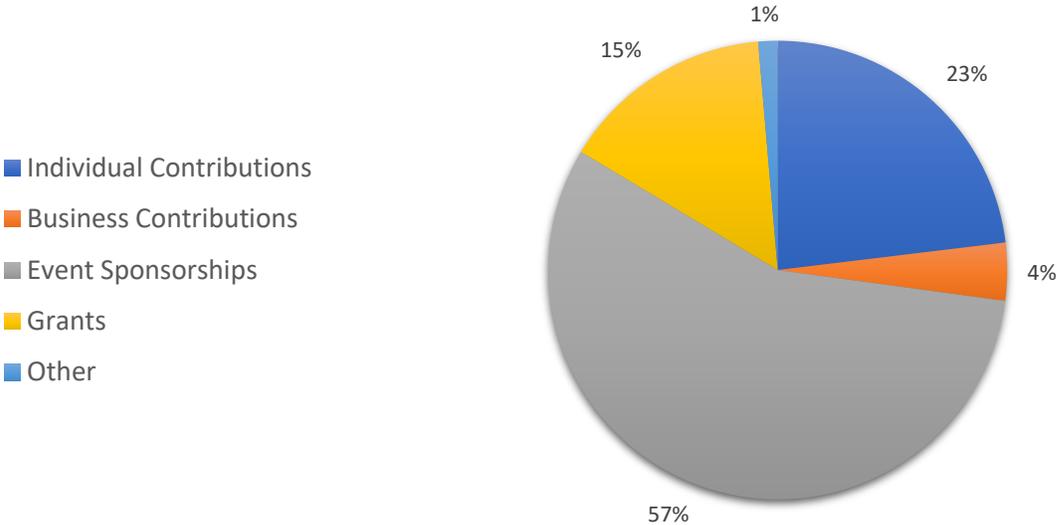
Thank you, Steve!

# Financial Statement

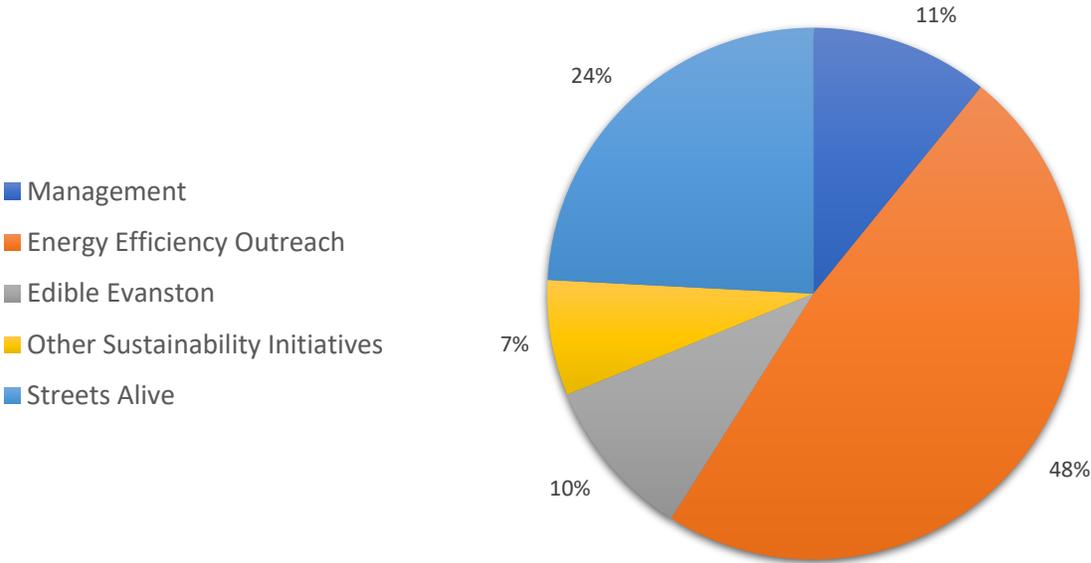
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*Fiscal year ending December 31, 2017*

## FY 2017 Revenue



## FY 2017 Expenses



## Thank You to Our 2017 Donors and Supporters

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