



CITIZENS' GREENER EVANSTON

2021 Annual Report



Cover photo by Ted Glasoe

President's Letter

May 15, 2022

Dear Friends of Citizens' Greener Evanston:



As I take stock of the past year of activities and accomplishments, I continue to be struck by the importance and impact of CGE and its programs. As I learned when I attended the United Nations Climate Conference (COP26) with youth board member Lily Aaron, our individual ability to influence global and national climate policy and implementation is limited. But at the local level, we have access to our community leaders and can make a major impact that can be replicated and scaled well beyond the borders of Evanston.

With this in mind, CGE continued to work hard in 2021 for the swift and full implementation of the Evanston Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP), helping to craft and push forward a Climate Emergency Resolution and mobilization plan while simultaneously engaging in the hands-on work of healing the earth. You'll see the impact of this hands-on work in the following pages dedicated to our programs.

We celebrated CGE's 10th anniversary with *Earth Week for Everyone*, with more than 50 presenters and panelists throughout the week. The event included voices new to the CGE conversation, including an environmental justice panel; a green business brainstorm for entrepreneurs of color; and others. This was in addition to our more traditional educational sessions. We closed with a heartening conversation with several elected officials.

With the help of Shorepath Consulting, we sharpened our strategic priorities and crafted a Theory of Change to maximize our impact in the community. Our vision is *to foster a community with a culture of bold climate action and environmental justice leading to a healthy, just, sustainable, and livable planet for all*. Our four strategic priorities are: Evolve Governance; Fundraise for Capacity and Resources; Align and Enhance Resources; and Raise Awareness to Leverage Impact. We are excited to bring this to fruition in the next year.

In the fall we had a wonderful community-building and fundraising event with the North Shore Century Ride where CGE had a team, raising more than \$20,000! We developed our brand promise, *Accelerating climate action throughout Evanston* as part of our rebranding process, with the help of Dan Cox, our wonderful volunteer branding consultant. Stay tuned for the rollout of our new name and rebrand in the coming year!

Throughout these efforts, we have worked to become a more inclusive and welcoming organization, centering equity and environmental justice. Several board members participated in a series offered by Chicago Wilderness and facilitated by Cream City Conservancy that has led to rich conversations, reflection, and renewed commitment at CGE and its programs. This is the work I'm most proud of and most excited about as CGE moves ever forward towards a healthy, livable world for all.

Rachel Rosner

President

Programs and Accomplishments

Beyond Waste

Beyond Waste continued its efforts to help residents, businesses, and institutions reduce the amount of waste they generate, and thereby lower the City's carbon footprint. During 2021 their efforts focused on Evanston Repair Cafes, where residents bring household items to be fixed, have continued to keep items out of landfill and have become a precious part of the Evanston community. They are a valuable activity for many of the volunteers, who enjoy interacting with participants and brainstorming with their colleagues. Sometimes they even take some of the items home to have more time to tinker with them and get them fixed!

The Repair Cafe resumed its in-person events on June 21st, 2021. Since then, it has been operating every two months at the Robert Crown Center, as a co-sponsored event between CGE and the Evanston Public Library (EPL). More than 200 people have participated in all five repair categories (General Repair, Electronics, Sewing/Mending, Jewelry Repair, and Bike repair). In order to provide better service, the cafes are now using a 30-minute time slot sign up system, while providing participants the option to attend as walk-ins. The café has been featured in The Daily Northwestern newspaper as well as on a [CBS news segment](#).

The cost of running the repair cafes has been minimal, with the only expenses being for small supplies such as glue, thread, and snacks for the volunteers. The cafes work

thanks to the support of 15 volunteers, eight of whom regularly attend throughout all the events, including CGE board members Karen Bireta and Bea Echeverria.

Due to high demand, in April 2022 the program started holding cafes on select Tuesdays, where participants get a whole hour of expert time to co-repair their general repair items, such as vacuum cleaners, fans, music boxes, gelato makers, and extension cords.

One of the priorities for the future is to keep the Evanston Repair Cafe as independent as possible and under the sponsorship of CGE.

Energy Task Force

After revitalizing itself in 2020, CGE's Energy program, led by Joel Freeman, emerged strongly from the pandemic in 2021 to foster relationships on energy issues, both locally and statewide:

Two of its members are now ambassadors for the Clean and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA), and in this role will give presentations for the latest energy legislation passed by the State of Illinois. They'll also be tracking program developments that were enabled by the CEJA legislation.

The team is fostering partnerships with District 65 schools and provided technical and advocacy support for D65 Climate Action Teams activities, including support for the new D65 position for sustainability coordinator. In addition, they worked with the Northwestern University student group, Science Policy Outreach Task Force (SPOT), to assist with refining Evanston energy information resources for the CGE website.

Members lobbied to provide input to the City of Evanston for local building code/ energy code updates:

- They worked with the City to promote public education for building decarbonization through electrification; part of this effort included co-hosting a presentation by BlocPower™, City of Ithaca, NY, and the City of Evanston on building electrification.
- They began tracking City energy activities such as the Zero Emissions Strategy and other subjects addressed by the Utilities Commission.
- The team provided input to the Environment Board's CARP Implementation Taskforce (CIT).
- Team members maintain regular and amicable communications with City Staff and elected officials to foster greater City partnerships.

Watershed Collective

This program continued its work to mitigate pollution and urban flooding and to educate the public about water conservation and our aquatic ecosystem. They communicate regularly with City Staff and elected officials to foster greater City partnerships. Among their achievements in 2021:

- Successfully lobbying for implementation of city-wide stormwater action alert (per CARP) to help shift water use from times of heavy rainfall.
- Tracking progress of the City's stormwater modeling project which will enable updates to the City's stormwater management plan (per CARP).
- Tracking lead water service line replacement along with other water supply and stormwater subjects addressed by the Utilities Commission.
- Began developing an "Evanston Water 101" approach to public education that included lobbying the City to produce [a video](#) on the City 's water supply and research for a lakefront signage concept. Additional educational resource materials are planned for the CGE website.
- Fostering a partnership with NU by providing assistance to a student group under Northwestern's School of Education and Social Policy for their development of proposals for funding under Evanston's ARPA allocation.
- Tracking City projects and providing public input to make sure projects include green infrastructure.
- Contributing input to the Environment Board's CARP Implementation Taskforce (CIT) on water.

Environmental Justice Evanston

The Environmental Justice Evanston (EJE) program achieved several important successes in 2021. They defined, prepared, and won City support for an Environmental Equity Investigation (EEI) that is scheduled to start in 2022. The investigation will assess the state of environmental justice in Evanston and then publish its key findings. These findings will provide the basis for an environmental justice mitigation plan that will prescribe actions for the City, residents, and businesses to achieve environmental justice in Evanston.

In late 2020 and early 2021, EJE worked with the City of Evanston to develop a GIS Mapping prototype that would allow Evanston residents, City staff, and other users, to map visual data to better understand the environmental justice issues affecting

Evanston. The team continued updating its Environmental Justice Playbook, a step-by-step guide to help Evanstonians address any EJ issues they are experiencing.

In April of 2021, EJE was invited by a group of neighbors living near the commercial/ industrial area north of Oakton St. and west of Hartrey to see the environmental issues related to the businesses and office buildings in that area. The photos and documentation from EJE and the affected neighbors appeared in an *Evanston RoundTable* article, and ultimately the City took action to address the reported problems. That same month EJE moderated an "Environmental Justice in Evanston" Zoom panel that was part of CGE's 2021 Earth Week program.

That May, EJE was awarded a grant from Northwestern University's Racial Equity and Community Partnership Grant Program. The grant will support EJE's efforts to further develop the GIS Mapping tool and secure \$5,000 in funds to support the project.

EJE applied for \$150,000 in ARPA monies in November to fund a consultant who would participate in the upcoming environmental equity investigation.

In December of 2021, the first of four EJE listening sessions with 2nd and 5th ward residents took place to capture their experiences with environmental justice issues. These sessions were a prologue to the upcoming Investigation and the input captured from the attendees will be valuable in generating the Investigation's deliverables.

Edible Evanston: Growing Gardens, Growing Gardeners

Even with COVID curtailing many activities, Edible Evanston was active in 2021.

The Eggleston Park Food Forest continues to evolve, and many people continued to volunteer to maintain and enhance the Forest. The program expanded to build more annual vegetable beds to support their Food Sharing program and expanded their drip irrigation system. They re-initiated their annual Fall Food Forest Festival in October to the delight of those attending.

The Produce Sharing Program hit a record level, contributing over 2,700 pounds of produce to Evanston Food Pantries. Community gardeners and local residents take their "excess" produce to our coolers each week and Edible Evanston teams deliver to Evanston food pantries.

The annual "Seed Swap" was held twice this year, masked and outside, at which hundreds of packets of vegetable and flower seeds were distributed to local gardeners. Edible Evanston extends its thanks to the donor seed companies who support these

giveaways, and to the local gardeners who saved seeds and brought them to the “swap”.

Education programs were held at the Food Forest during the year for school classes and volunteer workers and included topics such as permaculture overview, mushroom cultivation, and seedling starting.

They also initiated a new “New Gardener Program” during the year.



Seed swap at Earth Day celebration.



Produce sharing had a banner year.



Classes were held at the Food Forest.

Transportation (Go Evanston)

During 2020 Go Evanston joined forces with CGE's long-standing Transportation Task Force to promote a stronger and cohesive climate-friendly mobility movement. The

group also provided input and built awareness on Church Street, Oakton Street, and Chicago Avenue projects.

Natural Habitat Evanston (NHE)

Natural Habitat Evanston was busy outdoors and on Zoom in 2021. Key activities included:

- Planting 30 shade trees (mostly oaks) at Evanston Township High School, and at Nichols, King Arts, and Washington schools.
- The Illinois Clean Energy Foundation and donations to the Channel Habitat Fund greatly enhanced plantings in Ladd Arboretum and Harbert-Payne Park.
- Sharing and planting 15 oaks and shrubs directly to 5th ward residents' back yards.
- Two giveaways in the 5th Ward of 700 host plants for the federally endangered Rusty Patched Bumble Bee.
- Partnering with the C&W ice cream and Evanston Grows Family Focus garden.
- Speaking at more than 30 in-person or virtual events with about 750 people on topics ranging from National Wildlife Federation Community Habitat certification, gardening that matters, changing the culture of lawns, bird-window collisions, native plants, the value of trees and more. Partners included the City of Evanston, D65 Schools and ETHS, Evanston Public Library, the League of Women Voters - Evanston, Rotary Lighthouse, Evanston Grows, C&W Ice Cream, Go Green Wilmette, Evanston Host Plant Initiative, North Park Village/ WiseUp, the Evanston Ecology Center, Purple Line Adventure Play, Southeast Evanston Association, Go Green Illinois, Shirley Heinz Land Trust, Go Green Highland Park, Highland Garden Club of Evanston.
- 100 more people took the pollinator pledge - about half of them donating for yard signs.
- Advocacy efforts, which included speaking out for threatened private trees, parkway gardens, piloting a city meadow at Lovelace Park, regulating mosquito spray contractors, and leaving leaves (reduced leaf blowing).
- Continuing to help a new natural area at Hinman and Main.
- Six listening sessions with 15 people in the 8th ward to hear their take on nature.
- Partnering on a native plant sale with the Evanston Environment Association, which shared out about 1,700 wildflowers, trees and shrubs.
- Spring seed propagation and seed swap among about 15 participants.



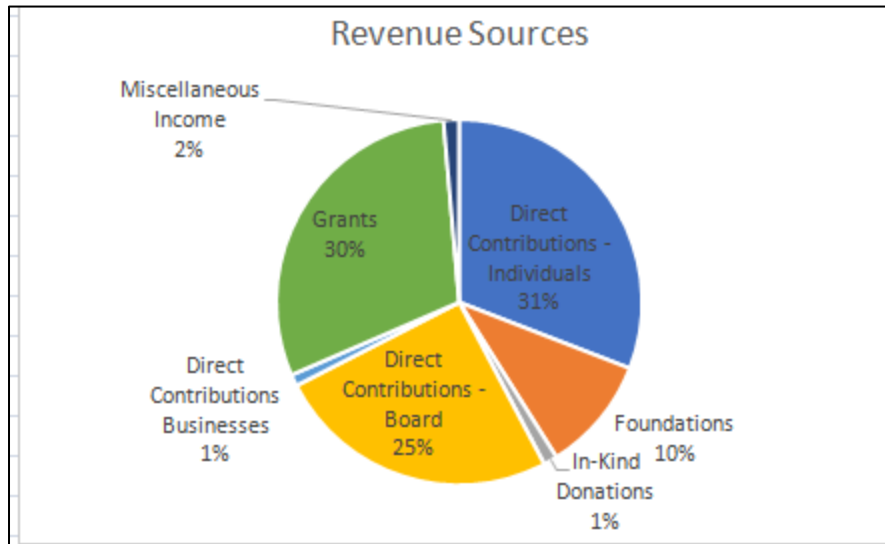
Planting in the 5th Ward.



Rusty Patched Bumblebee Plant Giveaway.

2021 Financial Statement

2021 CGE Income Statement	
Revenues	\$ 89,953.82
Expenses	
Personnel, Subcontractors*	\$ 51,713.76
Programs, Other	26,189.23
Total Expenses	\$ 77,902.99
Surplus	\$ 12,050.83
* Executive Director departed in June, 2022	



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