



# **Citizens' Greener Evanston**

## **2016 Annual Report**

Citizens' Greener Evanston works to make Evanston a more sustainable community--environmentally, economically and socially-- and to address climate change by dramatically reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

Citizens' Greener Evanston  
P.O. Box 1748,  
Evanston, IL 60204-1748  
[greenerivanston.org](http://greenerivanston.org)



# Citizens' Greener Evanston

Act Locally. Breathe Globally.

May 17, 2017

Dear Friends of CGE,

Citizens' Greener Evanston enjoyed a busy and productive 2016, continuing our efforts to reduce our community's carbon footprint while expanding our work into other areas — economic and social sustainability — that have also been part of our mission from the beginning.

CGE started the year by welcoming Edible Evanston into our organization. The arrangement brought in several hundred new members and allowed Edible Evanston to focus on their efforts to grow and share local food under CGE's existing organizational structure.

An exciting development this year was CGE's environmental justice work. Our biannual Earth Month Event focused on economic development, gun violence, and affordable housing. We took the lead in organizing a 5<sup>th</sup> Ward Festival against gun violence. Our Weatherization Works program specifically targeted hard to reach communities.

As a community, Evanston was again at the forefront of sustainability. Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl in January signed on the Global Compact of Mayors, a coalition of city leaders dedicated to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and making their communities more resilient to climate change. With CGE's vigorous support, a new Energy Efficiency and Water Use benchmarking ordinance was passed later in the year.

We're hopeful that we met the 20% GHG by 2016 reduction target of the Livability Plan. We were on target at the start of the year, though with the loss of Sustainability Manager Catherine Hurley the final numbers haven't yet been tallied.

Despite losing the generous financial support of the Civil Society Institute which discontinued its grant program, CGE managed to do well financially in 2016. A \$50,000 grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation funded the Weatherization Works program. In addition, the Edible Evanston program is generally self-sustaining, and our two big events this year, Streets Alive and the 5<sup>th</sup> Ward Festival, were funded by sponsorships. Nonetheless, one of our challenges moving forward will be to ensure that CGE is financially sustainable.

Thank you for your interest in CGE. We look forward to working with you in 2017 and beyond!

*Jonathan*

Jonathan Nieuwsma  
President  
Citizens' Greener Evanston

# Climate Action Progress: Act Locally, Breathe Globally!

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## **20% by 2016—Did We Make It?**

A 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by the end of 2016 was the goal of the Evanston Livability Plan, passed unanimously by the Evanston City Council in 2014.

So did we make it? We know that at the start of the year we were at 18.6% reduction, so we were on track for 20%. However, with the loss of Catherine Hurley, the City's former Sustainability Coordinator, in the fall of 2016, the final year-end numbers haven't yet been tallied. The final score for 2016 will be tallied by Catherine's replacement. At the invitation of the City Manager, CGE was invited to assist in interviewing candidates to fill the vacancy, which we expect will be filled soon.



## **Benchmarking Ordinance Passes**

Evanston joined a dozen other communities around the country when we passed an Energy and Water Use Benchmarking ordinance in December, thanks in part to coordinated advocacy and a strong show of support from CGE members. The ordinance requires property owners to report their buildings' energy and water usage and allows them to compare their buildings with similar buildings throughout the country. We expect that this ordinance will lead to measureable reductions to the carbon footprint of Evanston's commercial and multifamily residential buildings--the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions in our community.



## Making Evanston More Sustainable for Everyone

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### ***Earth Month Event—Sustainability for Everyone***

With its April 24 Earth Month event CGE expanded the definition of sustainability to encompass environmental quality, economic strength, and social justice/quality of life. That Sunday afternoon, nearly 100 attendees at the Fleetwood-Jourdain Community Center heard a galvanizing call to action from Veronica Kyle of Faith in Place, then participated in three breakout groups to discuss the challenges, opportunities, possible solutions, and next steps related to three of the most pressing issues facing our community: economic opportunity, gun violence, and affordable housing. The groups were charged with not only defining the challenges, but also with providing suggestions on how the community can make a difference.



Veronica Kyle of [Faith in Place](#)



### ***Meet our Community: 5<sup>th</sup> Ward Festival Against Gun Violence***

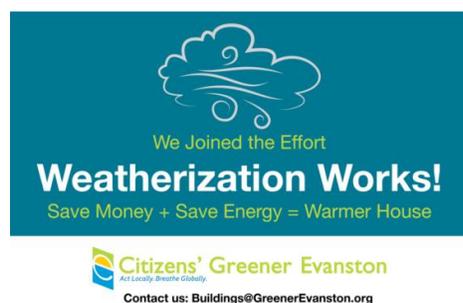
Building on the discussion from the Earth Month Event, CGE took the lead in organizing a unique Meet our Community festival against gun violence in Evanston's underserved 5<sup>th</sup> Ward on August 27. Local musicians Kweku Collins, Manwolves and Chainsaw Dupont provided entertainment. Resources on jobs, internships, civic engagement, and mental health were available. Theater, art and other groups enhanced the fun. The idea was to give young people and their families the chance to connect and learn about resources to reduce gun violence. The event was supported by 5<sup>th</sup> Ward residents in collaboration with Dear Evanston and The James B. Moran Center for Youth Advocacy.



## Engaging and Educating Our Community

### ***Weatherization Works!***

Drafty old house? Utility bills too high? Questions about your new Smart Meter? CGE was there to help. Thanks to a \$50,000 grant from Illinois Science and Energy Foundation and in partnership with Elevate Energy, CGE's "Weatherization Works" program targeted hard-to-reach communities. CGE led several DIY weather sealing workshops. Field organizers Robin Simmons and Sara Diggs spread the word to various church groups and block clubs, organized house parties, and performed energy assessments with CGE's new blower door and infrared camera.



### ***Streets Alive Takes Off***

What started as a small event a few years ago has become one of Evanston's most popular community activities. With the Evanston Environmental Association and The City of Evanston as co-sponsors, Evanston opened a full mile of Main Street for outdoor fun and education on Sunday afternoon, August 14, with the goal of promoting healthy transportation, sustainable living, and community spirit.

The Evanston Environmental Association again presented the Evanston Green Living Festival as a featured part of Streets Alive.



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

CGE's regular education and networking events featured speakers on a wide range of sustainability topics. Issues addressed in 2016 included:

- What does the Paris Climate Agreement Mean for Evanston?
- Evanston's Transportation Future
- Pests, Pesticides, and People
- Food Waste



### ***CGE Shares Practical Energy-Saving Information at Community Events***

Members "staffed" a CGE table at a series of community events during the year. They engaged visitors in conversation about ways to save energy and described what CGE is doing to reduce Evanston's carbon footprint.

Community events in 2017 included:

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

## A Growing Organization

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### ***CGE Welcomes Edible Evanston!***

In early 2016 we welcomed the addition of Edible Evanston to the CGE organization. Edible Evanston, which was selected as one of the “Ten Ideas for the Future” as part of the Evanston150 Celebration, encourages Evanston residents to grow and share locally grown food. Edible Evanston provides opportunities for individuals to expand their knowledge of nutrition, growing food, and composting and to experience the benefits of Evanston-raised produce for themselves.



### ***Growing New Gardeners***

Edible Evanston assisted 18 Evanston residents in getting started with their first gardens, providing material for raised bed gardens, soil, and some initial plants and seeds. Personal garden mentors provide one-on-one individualized support, and workshops offer additional learning opportunities. Financial assistance for low-income residents was available thanks to other generous gardeners and the start-up grant from the Evanston Community Foundation.

### ***Celebrating Harvest Season at OrchardFest***

The second annual Orchard Fest, a family-oriented event, included tours of Eggleston orchard, an observation bee-hive, discussions of the orchard’s planned

conversion to a permaculture food forest, and, of course, cider and great conversation.



### ***Seed Money--Edible Evanston Receives Grant***

Edible Evanston received a \$5,725 grant from the Green Communities Fund and Redbud Fund of the Evanston Community Foundation to transform the Eggleston Anniversary Orchard at McCormick and Bridge St. into a demonstration permaculture food forest as a community resource with educational opportunity for residents.

### ***Seed Swap***

Natural Habitat Evanston and Edible Evanston hosted a seed swap at the Ecology Center, offering participants the opportunity to select from hundreds of packets of free vegetable, fruit (and some flower) seeds, and share their extra seeds with local gardeners. Participants were encouraged to save and share seeds from native plants to encourage pollinator habitats throughout Evanston. A panel discussion and Q&A session on preventing diseases and pests and organic solutions to common problems was led by Kim Ellson of the Illinois Extension Service.

## Creating Hospitable Habitat

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### ***Natural Habitat Evanston Advocates for Local and State Policies***

Coordinated advocacy by CGE's Natural Habitat Evanston group prompted several actions by the City of Evanston:

- Proclamation to conserve the monarch butterfly, plus 17 City action steps.
- Pesticide Resolution: press the State of Illinois to permit local regulation of pesticides.
- Encouraging healthy compost practices, not citing all bins simply because they connect with the soil.

### ***Halfway to Habitat Certification***

CGE's Natural Habitat Evanston program is leading the charge to certify local habitats as pollinator friendly. Progress in 2016 included 100 homes, five schools and nine public properties certified as National Wildlife Federation habitat.



### ***Evanston Takes the First Step Toward Local Regulation of Pesticides***

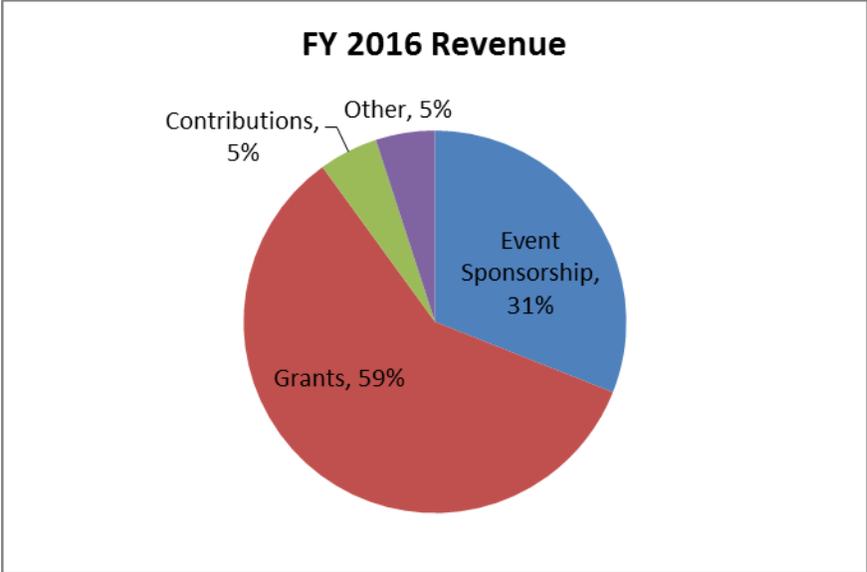
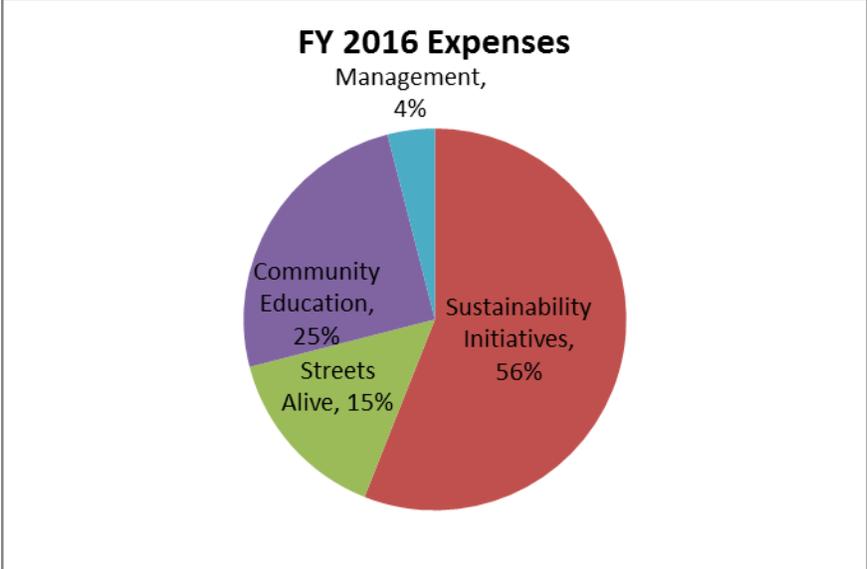
The Evanston City Council has endorsed a Natural Habitat Evanston effort that would let Evanston have a voice in regulating pesticides. Currently, only the state can regulate pesticides and it has not proposed any such legislation. In response, Oak Park residents initiated this local effort at legislation, and other north shore communities are considering joining in. This is just the first step toward asking Illinois legislators to repeal state control of pesticide regulation.



# Statement of Financial Position

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*Fiscal year ending December 31, 2016*



## With appreciation to our 2016 donors and supporters

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