

Clifton's Clean Communities Program

A Clean City Depends On Cooperation Between Its Citizens And Government

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Call it "the City of cooperation" or "a community that cares," whatever slogan you select — Clifton is one of the cleanest litter free cities in the state.

The City's successful Clean Communities Program and cleanup efforts have been attributed to the efforts and planning of Clifton's Clean Communities Committee, and to the citizens who live and work in Clifton.

The Committee is an 8 member advisory committee which consists of the mayor, a councilman, a liaison to schools — civic associations — and to the business community; a member of the City's Environmental Commission, the superintendent of public works, and the City's recycling and clean communities coordinator.

The City's clean communities committee meets six times during the grant year to review and develop new anti litter programs, and to ensure that all clean community grant funds are spent according to the State's threefold attack on litter: cleanup, education and enforcement.

The amount of each grant awarded to a municipality is determined by the percentage of housing units of each municipality to the total housing units within the state, and to the proportion of road mileage each municipality bears to the total municipal road mileage within the state.

Clifton has participated in the program since 1988, and this year Clifton received \$73,436.00 which will be used towards cleanup, education, out-reach, mini-grants to schools and various volunteer organizations, and enforcement activities.

CLIFTON'S CLEANUP PROGRAM

Clifton's Clean Communities Program is responsible for the collection of over 200 litter containers 2-3 times per week, cleaning various roads and city streets per week, separating and recycling any recyclables mixed with litter, and assisting with special cleanup events.

The City's three fold attack on litter - cleanup, education and enforcement, has

made a significant visible impact on the cleanliness of City streets, parks and neighborhoods. In 1991, a total of 422 tons of litter was collected as compared to 355 tons in 1992, and 23,125.25 lbs of recyclable material was separated and recycled under this program.

Approximately 3,000 miles of city streets and over 175 acres of parkland was cleaned in 1992. This was accomplished by Clean Communities and DPW staff, and with the involvement of over 150 businesses, all parochial and public schools, civic, youth and neighborhood organizations; and the use of inmates or community service workers.

Programs such as Adopt-A-Park, Adopt-A-Road, Adopt-A-Spot, Illegal Dump Cleanup Day, Vacant Lot Cleanup Day, Neighborhood Cleanup Day, Public Lands Cleanup Day, Adopt-A-Storm Drain, Adopt-A-Storefront, and Clean Campus Day are many ways the Committee gets the community involved to protect and improve our environment through the proper han-

WHAT IS CLEAN COMMUNITIES ?

The Clean Communities Act (N.J.S.A. 13:1E-99.1 et seq, as amended by P.L. 1989, C.108) provides grants to municipalities and counties for the New Jersey Clean Communities Program. The money results from a tax on businesses which sell fifteen kinds of products that often end up as litter.

To qualify for grant funding, a municipality or county must propose a litter pickup and removal program which supplements existing litter pickup and removal programs and provides that recyclable litter be recycled. The municipality or county must also adopt a model program by resolution.

Model programs for municipalities vary in complexity according to the amount of money a municipality receives. 80% of the money in the Clean Communities Account goes to municipalities for litter abatement programs.



Citizen group support has been a key factor. Members of the Clifton Adult Opportunity Center have participated in the city's "Adopt-A-Spot" program for three years.

ding of solid waste.

In 1991, at a clean communities awards ceremony, Clifton was recognized along with five other municipalities for its outstanding cleanup efforts. The awards were given to honor those municipalities and coordinators who have exemplified the ideals of the NJ Clean Communities Program. Winners were recognized for their leadership, for their organizational and volunteer involvement, and for the impact their ongoing programs achieved.

EDUCATION

Clifton's Clean Communities Program is a behavioral change program designed to change people's attitude towards litter and littering. The Committee educates the public through advertisements, brochures, posters, fliers, slide show presentations, videos, and by announcements through radio and televised council meetings.

During the 1992/1993 school year, over 5,000 Clifton students participated in a program called Clean Campus Day Cleanup. All parochial and public schools set aside a special day to clean their campus of litter and other debris. The Clean Campus Program is designed to involve school communities in maintaining clean school grounds, but essentially, the program is to teach children the importance of caring about the environment through litter prevention, recycling and source reduction.

All schools were involved in creating posters, banners, making new "recycled" items by reusing old discarded items and they learned about caring for the environment through watching videos on litter prevention and recycling. For their participation in the Clean Communities Program, each school received a mini-grant of \$250.00. The money will be used to fund ongoing environmental and or beautification projects throughout the schools.

In 1992, officials, from the NJDEP Office of Communications came to the City on two separate occasions to present awards and memberships to 24 schools and 8 youth organizations from the city of Clifton into the New Jersey Association of Litter-free Clubs. This Association is an alliance of youth groups dedicated to litter prevention and the proper handling of solid waste. Also in 1992, Clifton was recognized a second time by the DEPPE as having one of the finest litter-free programs within the state.

ENFORCEMENT

The Committee works with the police, health, housing, public works department, merchants, businesses and industry, as well as civic and neighborhood organizations to enforce or report all littering and/or illegal dumping violations.

In 1992, the Police Department submitted to the Committee over 55 Illegal Dumping/Incident Investigating Reports from individuals associated with the Clean Com-



Enforcement is another key factor. Here officials check for any information on illegal dumping.

munities Program. Four of these violators were brought to court and issued a summons.

All reported littering and illegal dumping are inspected by the police or City inspectors in hopes of finding a name or address of where the material may have been generated. In order to get a conviction in court, pictures are taken of the violation and the places where they occurred.

The Committee is continually reviewing and improving existing enforcement procedures, so as to reduce litter which comes from seven main sources: motorists, pedestrians uncovered trucks, overflowing household and commercial garbage, construction sites and loading docks.

The Committee and citizens of Clifton have seen a vast improvement in the area of enforcement by the decrease in illegal dumping and litter collected, and the cleanliness of city streets and roadways. The Committee believes that the most effective enforcement program is through community involvement that brings citizens, businesses, and government into a partnership to promote and maintain a clean and litter free community.

NEW PROGRAMS (ADOPT-A-STOREFRONT)

This year, two new anti-litter programs have been implemented by the Committee. The Adopt-A-Storefront program is a citywide project based on cooperation between government and business to keep storefronts clean and litter-free, and to report any illegal dumping or littering.

To kick-off the program, the City purchased 100 brooms and dustpans which were given to merchants, along with a poster pledge that is placed in the storefront window or some other prominent place within the store.

Last year the Committee conducted a litter survey and met with City officials, businesses and merchant associations. The Committee concluded that most litter in front of businesses wasn't generated from the business, but resulted from various other sources such as: pedestrians, motorists, improper placement of garbage containers and litter which traveled until it was trapped somewhere.

City ordinance requires merchants to clean and pick-up all litter on their premises and to dispose of litter properly. The business sections are heavily traveled by resident and non-resident shoppers, and there are many transients who utilize these sections for public transportation.

Since these sections become easily littered, it is vitally necessary that City officials work with merchants and neighborhood associations in programs that build cooperation and civic pride among its businesses and citizens.

The City's coordinator and Committee members will have ongoing meetings with merchants to compile data, and to listen to suggestions on how to effectively correct littering in different sections. A report will be prepared at the end of this year which will cover the program's effectiveness and the needs of different localities.

To protect New Jersey's waterways from pollution the Clean Communities Program and the City's Environmental Commission have joined forces in another new city-wide anti-litter campaign called Adopt-A-Storm Drain.

The Adopt-A-Storm Drain program is designed to teach citizens the importance of nonpoint source pollution. Nonpoint source pollution is contamination of our waterways by allowing pollutants, includ-

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ing litter, to enter our waterways through storm drains.

Clifton's Environmental Commission has painted over 100 fish on catch basins throughout the city in an effort to alert the public about pollution to our waterways. The Committee and Commission will be purchasing signs, in hopes to alert people to stop littering and dumping toxic chemicals into our most precious resource. These signs will be placed in various locations throughout the City.

The Committee and Commission are working to encourage neighborhood, civic and youth organizations to form water watch groups through the Adopt-A-Storm Drain program. The Committee provides brochures on non-point source pollution along with other environmental information in the main lobby at City Hall and at both branches of the Clifton Library.

CONCLUSION

Clifton's Clean Communities Program has had a tremendous environmental impact on the residents, businesses, schools and government officials in the City of Clifton.

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