



October 15, 2023

## **Go Green Glen Ellyn Annual Report - Go Green is 2!!**

Happy Birthday to us! We launched this group two years ago with a mission to make it easier for Glen Ellyn residents and businesses to be greener through education, advocacy and volunteering. We aimed to do this by serving as a hub of information for local environmental resources as well as a catalyst for community activation and volunteerism.

2023 saw our official incorporation as a 501(c)(3) recognized not-for-profit organization. This is exciting because it gives us flexibility to financially award community organizations and local businesses who are pursuing goals or projects that make Glen Ellyn greener. We launched our "Green Grants" application process and are working towards awarding our first recipient!

We are proud of all we've done this year and continue to look for ways to share things we can learn and do to make Glen Ellyn a greener place. We have SO many things we want to do - but we are a small team of 3 people with modest funds. If the work Go Green Glen Ellyn is doing inspires you, [we'd love it if you'd consider a financial donation](#), or even better, donate your time to volunteer to help us extend our work in our community.

**Below is a look back at our second year! Spoiler alert - this is going to be a longer read, so we highlighted some favorites in green!**

### **Learn - Educational outreach via our newsletter, social media, and speaking in the community**

Education is one of our pillars - we love being out in the community and sharing information about how to make Glen Ellyn greener. We gave presentations this year to many different ages and audiences, including:

- A "Trash Talk" to the Glen Ellyn Newcomers Community Connections group on recycling tips, tricks, dos and don'ts
- Presented as part of "Plastic Pollution and Community Solutions," to 200 attendees across in person and zoom on plastics and their impact on human and environmental health, as part of the League of Women Voters Civic Awareness Series on April 12, 2023
- This presentation on plastics was repeated by request for the DuPage County Board's Environmental Committee on June 6, 2023

- Presented several times at Abraham Lincoln Elementary School to over 180 students total on ways to reduce waste in school lunches, what we can recycle and not, making planters from upcycled egg cartons, and even presenting to the 3rd grade Spanish classes to supplement their curriculum on ways to "Cuidar La Planeta" (care for the planet) by talking about composting!
- First Congregational Church of Glen Ellyn's social justice group on environmental challenges in Glen Ellyn and what individuals can do at home and as a church community

We also strive to provide timely and practical environmental information via our newsletters, website, and social media presence. This year we:

- Sent 47 newsletters - nearly one each week - sharing information on how to learn, do, and participate in ways to make Glen Ellyn a greener, healthier place
- Our mailing list grew by over 50%, to 325 subscribers (as of today!)
- Our newsletter average open rate also grew, from a solid 60% to a flattering 70%! Wow! We are so glad that you enjoy reading about ways to make Glen Ellyn greener. So, we will keep sending them!
- Our followers on Instagram and Facebook combined are now 985, an increase of 63% from last year
- We also had over 4,600 visits to our website, up 70% from last year!

Go Green Glen Ellyn exists to serve the residents of Glen Ellyn. So please continue to tell your friends and neighbors about us - we welcome everyone's ideas on how we can make Glen Ellyn greener!

### **Do - Community building through education and volunteerism at local events**

One of our main goals in establishing Go Green Glen Ellyn was to actually be out and about in our community. We love doing events where we can meet new and old friends, learn something new, and have fun!

We hosted different events with something for everyone:

- Mini recycling event for batteries, paint, textiles, and styrofoam, and pumpkin composting with the Environmental Commission and Glen Ellyn Park District on Nov 5, 2022
- Stylish and Sustainable Holidays with Diana Laufenberg and Glen Ellyn Moms Village on Nov 14, 2022
- A winter solstice morning celebration and tea at Newton Park on December 21, 2022
- Sport Swap 3 on March 12, 2023 that swapped over 130 pairs of cleats & sport specific shoes, 160 balls, 130 "things that hit stuff" and more
- "Grounded" event that featured native and organic veggie plants, yoga, compost, free coffee in reusable mugs and community conversation on June 10, 2023
- Dark Skies Night Hike with the Glen Ellyn Park District and Dark Sky Chicago on July 7, 2023

- Sport Swap 4 on July 23, which kept additional sports items out of the landfill! They were either recirculated in the community or donated to local organizations like Soccer for Zambia and the Glen Ellyn Children's Resource Center
- Our second free and educational Illinois Solar Tour on September 30, the largest solar tour in the western suburbs, in cooperation with the Illinois Solar Education Association
- Two nature themed storytimes with the Glen Ellyn Public Library as part of their Storytime in the Parks: Friends Edition on October 10 and 11 for 50 participants
- Organized OAKtober events with the village and the GE Park District. And although OAKtoberfest was canceled, we forged strong relationships with the many organizations during the planning which are sure to further blossom.

**Participate - Team up with other area organizations, schools and non-profits to amplify the good work being done in our community**

We also love to give back to the community and promote other awesome organizations in the area! So in the last year, we...

- Collaborated with the Illinois Green Schools Alliance and Gilbane Building Company for the "Illinois Green Schools" project, culminating in a presentation on water conservation to the 5th grade classes at Forest Glen and Churchill, and the 3rd grade classes at Ben Franklin and Abraham Lincoln - over 330 students!
- Created a zero waste table celebrating women environmentalists as part of a the Celebration of Tables Fundraiser for the Glen Ellyn food pantry on March 12, 2023
- Worked with the Glen Ellyn Chamber of Commerce and the Village of Glen Ellyn to lead aluminum can recycling efforts at the 2023 Taste of Glen Ellyn, where we funded the materials and brought the people power needed to recycle nearly 12,000 aluminum cans
- Also volunteered during the Taste of Glen Ellyn to serve beverages to thirsty residents!
- Worked with the 5 District 41 PTAs to include 5 family-friendly tips for Earth Week in April PTA communications that were sent out at all schools.
- Staffed a green informational table in the Glen Ellyn Park District Bike Rodeo
- Collected local election signs for recycling through DuPage County
- Sponsored a collection at Abraham Lincoln School for leggings to be donated to Soccer for Zambia. This organization is one of the recipients of our leftover sport swap gear. Girls in Zambia must cover from the knee up in order to join soccer games. Leggings are the #1 tool for empowering girls — girls who play soccer are more likely to get into school, and less likely to become a child bride. We collected 90 pairs of leggings to be donated, the most Soccer for Zambia has received!
- Created a Green Up Your Summer display at the GE Public Library
- Worked with the Abraham Lincoln School art department to collect 25 lbs. of non-working markers and writing utensils for recycling
- Volunteered at events such as the Village of Glen Ellyn recycling extravaganza and Glen Ellyn Park District's native tree and shrub sale
- We even moderated the Naperville Environmental Sustainability Task Force (NEST) Environmental Forum for the 11 candidates for the Naperville City Council!

- Collaborated with a number of local organizations and small businesses including: The Glen Ellyn Park District, Glen Ellyn Chamber of Commerce, the League of Women Voters (Glen Ellyn and Illinois chapters), the Glen Ellyn Garden Club, the Village of Glen Ellyn Environmental Commission, Prairie Food Co-op, Glen Ellyn Public Library, Friends of the East DuPage River Bike Trail, the Glenbard West Eco Club, SCARCE, the DuPage County Forest Preserve, The Conservation Foundation, Coalition for Plastic Reduction, Dark Sky Chicago, Glen Ellyn Newcomers, Glen Ellyn Moms Village, String Theory/473, Prairie Wind Native Plants, Homegrown Gardens, and other Go Green groups in Wilmette, Winnetka, Highland Park, Downers Grove, Vernon Hills and more
- Raised nearly \$1,000 to the Friends of the Glen Ellyn Park District Scholarship Fund through our own donations as well as funds raised during the SportSwap

### **Advocacy - Speaking up to make Glen Ellyn and our world greener**

Finally, we researched, shared information, and generated community support for several local environmental initiatives:

We reached out to all candidates for the Village Board of Trustees about their environmental initiatives and what they would do to make Glen Ellyn greener and published this information to our website, ahead of the 2022/23 Trustee elections, for residents to “vote green” if they desired!

We traveled to Springfield with the Coalition for Plastic Reduction to advocate for a foam foodware ban in Illinois. We also created a petition asking for resident support for a ban and shared over 100 signatures with State Senator Laura Ellman and State Representative Terra Costa Howard. Together, we successfully advocated for passage of IL SB58, which bans state agencies from using foam foodware containers beginning 2025

**This one made us really proud:** We spoke up at Village Board meetings regarding the lack of sustainability language in the proposed Village Comprehensive plan. We were invited to submit content after our remarks. After working with the Environmental Commission, we provided a joint goal and objectives for sustainability. Go Green also provided 6 additional objectives to be included in areas of the comprehensive plan. **All of our suggestions** were adopted by the Village Board on August 28, 2023, when the comprehensive plan was approved. [You can read what was submitted here!](#)

### **Awards and People!**

Not to toot our own horns, but we were also recognized for our impact in the community during our first two-ish years!

- Recognized at the Glen Ellyn Chamber Awards as the Park District Volunteer of the Year on March 14, 2023
- Recognized with the Phyllis B. Renfro Community Service Award by the Glen Ellyn League of Women Voters on April 27, 2023

**Most exciting is that we added Angela Powell, Director of Operations, to our team!** Angela has been a wonderful addition to help keep us organized as we continue to grow, and to further extend our network in the community. Plus she is passionate about healthy eating and always has good snacks for our meetings :)

### **What's next for Go Green Glen Ellyn?**

Our advocacy work is not done. We will continue working with the Coalition for Plastic Reduction to advocate for a foam foodware ban in Illinois restaurants.

Locally, we are participating in discussions on the Downtown Event Park with the Park District and Village Board, in order to advocate to make this proposed greenspace truly “green.”

We are also working with several Glen Ellyn businesses to pilot programs such as composting and drop off specialty recycling. We will be hosting a candy wrapper recycling collection during the Halloween parade in a couple weeks!

We are working with community groups to make Glen Ellyn greener as well. We are working with the League of Women voters on an anti-idling campaign to encourage residents to turn cars off and reduce emissions around schools and parks. We will also be working with the Glen Ellyn Public Library to create their seed library in 2024.

We are so thankful of the professional mentorship we've received from other Go Green Illinois groups and environmental leaders in the Glen Ellyn community, as well as the support we've received from all of our members. We are incredibly proud of all we have accomplished and look forward to a new year of making Glen Ellyn a more healthy, more beautiful, and more environmentally friendly place for all.



Jac Casazza & Karin Daly,  
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Angela Powell,  
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