

GREENCARE FOR COMMUNITIES PLAYBOOK



— PROJECT —
EverGreen
Because Green Matters™

WELCOME TO PROJECT EVERGREEN'S GREENCARE FOR COMMUNITIES

Project EverGreen is a national non-profit organization founded in 2003 with a mission of preserving and enhancing green space in our communities for today and future generations.

Project EverGreen is committed to informing the American public about the positive effects of well-maintained green spaces, including residential and commercial lawns and landscapes, sports turf, golf courses, parks and other green spaces.

If consumers and commercial property owners are not interested in maintaining their lawn and landscape, green industry businesses will not have any customers. As consumers become aware of the negative impact of improperly maintained green spaces, such as over-application of pesticides, improper use of water, over fertilization or carbon emissions from outdoor power equipment, public opinion will change.

Without a unified voice to promote the positive impact of green spaces and their responsible maintenance, consumer spending on green industry products and services will decline. Already Canada and cities like Madison, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, St. Paul and Phoenix have begun to regulate their use.

Once public opinion has shifted in one direction and laws are enacted to limit the consumption of green industry products and services, it is very difficult to reverse. The purpose of the formerly named EverGreen Zones (now called GreenCare for Communities where these efforts are undertaken), as one example of a Project EverGreen initiative, is to educate consumers about the economic, environmental and lifestyle benefits of green spaces, and why green industry products and services are necessary for the best managed green spaces.

Consumer vitality of the green industry is dependent upon consumers' interest in maintaining a healthy lawn and drives demand for increasingly more products and services. And we cannot ignore the Do-It-Yourself consumer. Our goal is to help ensure that they do their own maintenance of green spaces as a professional would. Without a voice to promote the positive impact of green spaces and their responsible maintenance, consumer spending on green industry products and services will decline as laws are enacted to limit the consumption of green industry products and services.

GreenCare for Communities provides a medium by which the green industry can communicate education on how to properly and responsibly maintain lawns and landscapes as well as the benefits of such actions.

Concept and Creation of the GreenCare for Communities Initiative

Project EverGreen, a national non-profit organization, originated the concept of an EverGreen Zone, now called GreenCare for Communities, in 2008 in Akron, OH. It added Milwaukee in 2009, while continuing the effort in Akron. It added the area from Raleigh-Durham to Greensboro-Winston Salem in North Carolina in 2010. Budget permitting, ensuing years will add more GreenCare for Communities throughout the U.S.

The goal is to spend three years in a GreenCare for Communities city or area with some financial and personnel support provided by Project EverGreen and then rely on the local landscape and lawn care professionals (and others with a vested interest in maintaining green spaces) to carry the ball after that.

The initial idea was to identify U.S. markets within Project EverGreen's scope of funding and management to implement a marketing communications campaign aimed at communicating the benefits of well-managed green spaces. Project EverGreen provides significant funding the first year in a GreenCare for Communities area and then decreases contributions over the next two years, as planned. As noted earlier, the goal is for the local green industry community to embrace the marketing activities and carry them on by themselves after the first three years. This is the only way that a community can sustain these efforts. The public must see value in them and green industry leaders must be willing to engage in maintaining managed green spaces for the betterment of their community by showing consumers what managed green spaces can mean to them.

Purpose of the GreenCare for Communities Playbook

Because funding limitations prevent Project EverGreen from implementing GreenCare for Communities in every city of America, this “playbook” is designed for local green industry organizations to engage their community in a public education campaign on their own. The playbook outlines how to conduct a GreenCare for Communities campaign from start to finish.

What's in it for green industry businesses?

The green industry and the way you conduct business are changing and will continue to change (some might say evolve). Educating the public about the benefits of green spaces will help you maintain and grow your business through this transition.

One overriding goal in creating and developing a GreenCare for Communities public awareness campaign is to help you increase the number of acres that are professionally maintained by educating local consumers on why they should “hire a professional” for the best managed green spaces. For DIY consumers, the campaign will work towards educating them on how they can manage their own property professionally. The campaign will also strive to increase consumer spending at nurseries and garden centers by promoting the economic, environmental and lifestyle benefits of a properly maintained lawn and landscape.

What's in it for the public, city agencies, non-profits and local organizations?

In a time of shrinking city budgets, the GreenCare for Communities campaign benefits public green spaces by encouraging members of the community to take an active role in maintaining their green spaces by directly connecting the environmental, economic and lifestyle benefits of green spaces to neighborhoods, homes and schools. In the absence of this, parks may be under funded and may become more of a liability to a community. When the public is aware of the benefits of managed green spaces they are more willing to voice their concerns when budgets are cut.

In the short-run, citizens will see tangible improvements in their community through tactics like the renovation of blighted areas and educational events like the children's Art of Green Spaces Competition. In the long-run, improvements to green spaces will decrease crime, increase property values and make the city a more desirable and enjoyable place to live, work and visit.

Objectives

The GreenCare for Communities plans are developed with the following objectives in mind:

- To build target audience awareness of Project EverGreen and the economic, environmental and lifestyle benefits of properly managed green spaces.
- To increase the amount of public and private green spaces that are either being maintained by a professional or more responsibly maintained by do-it-yourself consumers.
- To encourage green industry stakeholders to get involved and participate in promoting the benefits of green spaces on a local level.
- To continue to identify relationships, tools, tactics and programs that may be easily replicated to additional GreenCare for Communities.

Key Consumer Audiences

The messaging of the GreenCare for Communities materials is designed to focus on lawn and landscape enthusiasts regarding all green spaces, whether they are homeowners or renters. Obviously, the immediate focus is on current homeowners. But many renters may someday own their own homes. We do not want to exclude this audience from our messaging. These consumers have a high desire and appreciation for beautifully maintained lawns and landscapes. Among lawn and landscape enthusiasts, there are three consumer subsets:

- Professional and/or affluent households who hire lawn and landscape contractors and maintenance activity, and have a high appreciation for lawns and landscapes primarily for economic and lifestyle reasons.
- Homeowners who employ a combination of do-it-yourself and hired labor to care for their lawn and landscape.
- Avid do-it-yourselfers who have a high appreciation for lawns and landscapes, and feel a significant sense of pride and accomplishment in completing lawn and landscaping projects.

In addition, the GreenCare for Communities tactics are intended to reach these diverse audiences through their community's city planners, building contractors, developers, neighborhoods, universities and schools.

GreenCare for Communities Consumer Messages

Managed green spaces have significant economic, environmental and lifestyle benefits. For existing and prospective Hire-it-Done consumers, the messaging emphasizes the importance of "hiring a professional." For those consumers that are more likely to maintain their own green spaces, the messaging emphasizes the importance of "being a professional" and properly and responsibly maintaining green spaces.

Timing

GreenCare for Communities public activities begin in April, when consumers are beginning to think green. But the work should begin in late fall the previous year and early in the new year.

Activities should peak in May and June, when landscaping is top of mind. Events and programs continue from July through August, and should be wrapped up generally in September when consumer focus is shifting to fall and other priorities. In all cases, a thorough analysis of what worked and what did not must be done to ensure that future GreenCare for Communities are successful. Additionally, it is important that a "pre" and "post" analysis be done to gain insight into how the campaign has done and where gaps in awareness have been closed. It is also helpful, if budget permits, to do pre- and post-market research to see if, from the beginning of the effort until the end, consumers did notice that the messages and tactics implemented during the spring, summer and fall had an impact in consumer attitudes.

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PRE-GREENCARE FOR COMMUNITIES TACTICS

Green Industry Outreach

Identify all green-related associations and organizations such as landscape groups, garden clubs, and city officials involved in parks and environmental initiatives.

By creating a master spreadsheet or database, which identifies information for the primary contact(s) of all the groups, you will begin to identify the resources you will draw upon to execute various projects. You will want this database in electronic form so that you can send e-mails and mailings to the green industry to keep them informed, involved and excited about the GreenCare for Communities campaign.

Care must be taken to ensure that all relevant regulations regarding e-mail are maintained. This includes ensuring that “opt-in and opt-out” language is included and followed. Conducting a “pre” campaign survey focused on gaining consumer awareness benchmarks is critical, as noted earlier. In the absence of this, anything looks like it is working and you will have only anecdotal information to share with your stakeholders.

Target associations and organizations, including local chapters or local leaders of:

- PLANET
- Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA)
- Irrigation Association
- Turfgrass Producers International
- Outdoor Power Equipment Institute
- Keep America Beautiful (local chapter)
- Master Gardeners’ Association
- America in Bloom
- Golf Course Superintendents Association of America
- Professional Grounds Maintenance Society
- Sports Turf Managers Association
- National Christmas Tree Association, and
- Other national Green Industry groups as appropriate

Target city government agencies, including:

- Mayor’s Office
- Public Schools
- Department of Environment (or likewise named group)
- Parks and Recreation

GreenCare for Communities Point Person

Hire a part-time local public relations and events planning specialist as the local go-to-person representing the GreenCare for Communities program. This person serves as the official point person and oversees all events and activities. This is a critical step as this person plays a role similar to a Project Manager and maintains the campaign throughout its planning, execution, etc.

A single point person is the best choice. If that's not possible, investigate local marketing communications agencies to see if they are interested in completing the tasks in a combination of a fee and pro-bono arrangement.

Our experience suggests that the point person be compensated through a flat monthly retainer of \$1,500 - \$3,000, from late January through early September, depending on the amount of activity during each month, and the current economic climate. Specifically, the point person will coordinate all e-mail alerts, street team volunteers, materials distribution and general public relations.

In the difficult economy of 2009 and 2010, however, it was discovered that an individual or an agency could be retained for between \$7,500 and \$10,000 for the project. Included in that time was the realization by the local specialist that some work would be done on a pro-bono basis.

Pre-Event Kick-Off Meeting

If possible, host a kick-off planning meeting for local green industry businesses to explain what the GreenCare for Communities public education campaign is, why it is vital to the continued success of their business, and how they can get involved. Attendees must be 100 percent clear how they can add value and participate. They cannot leave believing that someone else will manage on their behalf. "If it is to be, it is up to me!" so the saying goes. This is not about Project EverGreen or the GreenCare for Communities program finding business for a professional, but rather communicating and demonstrating the value of their end product.

Ideally, this meeting should be held in January or February before the spring season kicks into high gear. This gives companies enough time to plan how they will participate/volunteer before the growing season begins.

Identify Blighted Areas for Renovation

By coordinating the renovation of one or more public blighted areas, the GreenCare for Communities program lifetime is extended in a tangible demonstration to the public of the benefits of green spaces and the importance of green industry products and services to the community.

Examples of successful GreenCare for Communities blighted area renovations that have been executed include:

- The renovation of Lock 3 Park in Akron, Ohio.
- The overseeding and fertilizing of 26 community ball fields in Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- Teaming with the Junior League of Akron to renovate the Howe House.
- The proposed renovation of the entrance to The Domes in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
- Teaming with Arysta LifeScience and the United Way to renovate Second Round Outreach Center in North Carolina.

At this stage, it is best to send out e-mails and make phone calls to participating organizations, city government officials and green industry companies to get their input on areas needing renovation. Areas should be selected based on their visibility to the public that have the greatest possible benefit to the community.

Specifically, complete the following tasks (and use local stakeholders as appropriate in many of these tasks as volunteers):

- Draw up plans for renovation and a timeline for project completion.
- Identify materials to be donated and volunteer services needed.
- Solicit commitments to help by additional green industry firms.

The renovation should include a public dedication and news conference upon completion to make sure the contributors are recognized and the public is aware of the significance of the project to the community.



Before and after photos of Canal Park in Akron, 2008 Blighted Area Renovation Project

Street Teams

Much of the success of the GreenCare for Communities campaign relies on one-on-one contact with the public. The street teams are groups of volunteers wearing Project EverGreen t-shirts who distribute educational literature and promotional materials at public events.

The groups have the most effect when there are at least four or five volunteers standing together or moving through a crowd distributing materials. Public events are the perfect place to display the yard signs and posters extolling the benefits of green spaces that have been created in the past for use. At this time, the point person should contact event organizers and request permission for the street team volunteers to attend events such as:

- Farmers markets
- Winter garden shows
- Street festivals and dances like German Fest, Downtown Days and Jazz in the Park
- Community garden tours
- Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day events
- Elementary, middle and high school sports fields with multiple events being held at once (Little League, soccer fields, etc.)
- County and state fairs

You will need an outline of planned events in order to effectively recruit street team volunteers. Don't try to do too many of these events. It's better to do an excellent job at two or three key events, than try to do too much with too little support.



Kohl's Soccer Tournaments, Milwaukee 2009
Distributed 150 water bottles, pocket guides and quizzes
Approximately 100 teams played in the tournament

Street Team Volunteers

At least 25 volunteers will be needed during the course of the GreenCare for Communities campaign to hand out educational materials to the public at local events. The best groups to partner with are high-school organizations that need to volunteer their time and are passionate about green spaces. Approach the leaders of organizations such as: FFA, 4-H and Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

Let us be clear that this is not an easy thing to do. In today's environment, getting commitments from school and community organizations is a challenge. You must be persistent and show them how it will benefit them personally and appeal to them that we are a non-profit organization interested in the environment.

Volunteers should be provided with t-shirts, certificates of appreciation and of course, promotional materials like water bottles, seed packets and Project EverGreen Green Space IQ quizzes to distribute to the public. Take many pictures that can later be used to demonstrate community involvement and dedication. This can't be underestimated. Of course your budget will determine how much you can spend on these items.



Party for the Planet
Celebration of Earth Day and
Migratory Bird Day in Milwaukee

Implementing Yard Sign and Poster Installations

Depending on your budget (and that of the Project EverGreen home office), there are two sets of yard signs - those with an educational theme (there are educational posters too) and those with a promotional theme. Both should be set up as a series in green spaces where people are walking, similar to the famous Burma Shave signs of the fifties and sixties.

The educational yard signs and posters should be placed in green spaces at events attended by street teams and at the blighted area renovations. They should also be placed in local parks and at ball fields throughout the city. Coordinate these placements with your parks and rec contact. These must be coordinated with those departments to ensure they are placed correctly and do not interfere with maintenance activities (such as mowing) of the city crews.

Your point person should arrange for volunteers to put up and take down the signs in accordance with the department of parks and recreation's mowing schedule. Ideally, the signs will be in place for at least the entire month of May. If possible, it is fantastic if you can arrange for the signs to stay up for the entire summer.

The promotional yard signs are designed for green industry firms to display in the yards of their businesses. If the business is located in a strip mall or commercial area, the yard signs should be placed in parking lot islands and flower beds along the buildings.



Implementing
Yard Signs
and Posters

Marketing Communications (Advertising, Public Relations, etc.) Opportunities

Your point person should set up meetings with the sales departments and editorial departments of local media. At these meetings, a GreenCare for Communities representative and the point person should bring GreenCare for Communities materials and discuss the goals of the public education campaign and how the local media can help. If any of the green industry firms participating in the GreenCare for Communities program advertise, it is good to bring them with you to the meeting. We need to ensure that we have a plan for how we can do a quid pro quo here: (i.e.; we will communicate as widely as we can who contributed what to as many people as we can).

Specifically, set up meetings with the parent companies of local billboards (Lamar, Clear Channel, etc.), bus signs, TV and radio stations, newspapers, magazine publishers, cable companies and online media.

At these meetings, offer to coordinate additional ways for the media to participate in the GreenCare for Communities program's philanthropic efforts. For example,

- The media may want to be a sponsor of the blighted area renovation and provide in-kind support such as coverage and volunteers.
- Media companies can donate unsold space and inventory to promote the educational, environmental and lifestyle benefits of green space. Keep in mind, these ads will have to be educational rather than promotions of specific green industry products and services.
- Run regular columns or interviews educating the public about the proper way to care for their lawn and landscape, such as conserving water, maintaining outdoor power equipment, fertilizing and seeding, etc.
- Allow the GreenCare for Communities street team to distribute educational literature at events the media company is sponsoring.
- Donate booth space to the GreenCare for Communities program at expos and conferences like kids' festivals and home shows the media company may be sponsoring.

The point person should prepare his/her list of the reporters, editors and producers to send news releases to both before and after events.



Cleveland Magazine ad,
Akron 2009 EverGreen Zone



Bus Signs and Billboards in Akron
EverGreen Zone, 2008

Compile a List of Green Industry Newsletter/Magazine Editors

Ask green industry newsletter/magazine editors to include an overview of the GreenCare for Communities program in their January and February editions. Request that they cover GreenCare for Communities activities every month and be sure that the point person sends the newsletter editors the same mainstream news releases sent to consumer media both before and after events.

Send Details to Project EverGreen for Your GreenCare for Communities Website Landing Page

Because the call to action of the GreenCare for Communities consumer materials is to visit the website for more information about maintaining your lawn and landscape, your city needs to have a landing page on our website. Please send us the following information on a regular basis:

- News releases
- Street team events
- Blighted area renovation updates
- Because Green Matters Awards
- Art of Green Spaces participation information and photos
- List of participating companies and organizations

Please note: One item a local group might consider is to break up the major GreenCare for Communities activities into opportunities for companies to sponsor. For example, you might have a company sponsor the yard signs, or one of the other materials, similar to sponsoring a hole at a golf tournament. This has not been attempted yet, but might be a worthwhile opportunity to pursue.

Art of Green Spaces Competition

Reaching school-age children with messages on the importance of maintained green spaces is of high importance. Set up a meeting with the person in charge of science or environmental curriculum and the person in charge of art curriculum at the department of public schools or private schools to propose an Art of Green Spaces Competition.

The GreenCare for Communities committee will provide the materials, judges and prizes for the competition and the students will provide the entries. In Akron and Milwaukee these have proven to be very successful.

Specifically, young artists from kindergarten through twelfth grade will be asked to express, through art, music, writing, dance or drama, how important green spaces, such as well-managed lawns and landscapes, gardens, parks, sports fields, and golf courses, are to the environment, the economy, and the overall quality of life.

The GreenCare for Communities committee provides teachers with the Art of Green Spaces Handbooks and entry forms for them to photocopy for their students. The teachers simply incorporate the competition into their curriculum or assign the competition as an extra-credit project. This can be as simple as a one-day project in the classroom.

After the entries are submitted to the GreenCare for Communities committee, they are judged and awards are presented to the students at a news conference. The entries are then displayed in public at a children's museum, shopping mall or other public areas.

Prizes are generally plaques for the winners (along with a small cash prize) and ribbons for other high finishers.

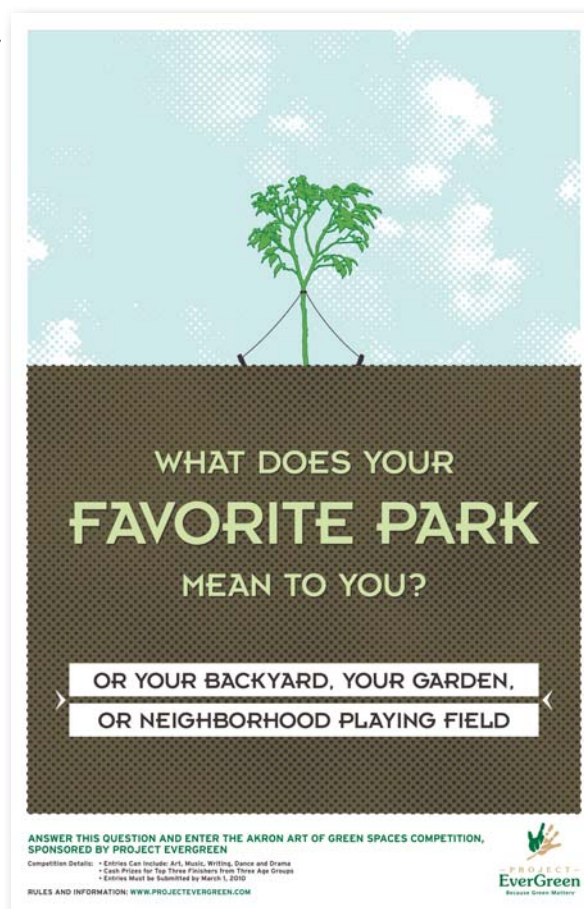
The calendar for the Art of Green Spaces competition should look like this:

- January/February (or previous fall, if possible): Contact person in charge of science curriculum and the person in charge of art curriculum at the department of public schools
- January/February: Contact local children's museum, shopping malls, etc. and book length and details of display and news conference
- January/February: Order Art of Green Spaces Competition materials from Project EverGreen
- February: Check with school contacts to make sure Art of Green Spaces Competition materials have been distributed and explained to teachers
- May 1: Contest deadline
- Mid-May: Judge entries
- Late May: Host news conference and announce winners
- June to August (if possible): Display entries

Art of green space competition poster, student handbook and entry forms



*Please note, the Art of Green Spaces Competition can be implemented any time within the school year.



Because Green Matters Award

The GreenCare for Communities committee should use your personal and professional contacts to identify local businesses that are already making a positive impact on the community's green spaces. Use your contacts to find out if these businesses have any news conferences, special events or announcements planned for the spring and summer at which you can present them with a Because Green Matters Award.

The purpose of the Because Green Matters Award is to publicly thank and recognize the business for their environmental efforts, while using planned events as another platform to draw public attention to the economic, environmental and lifestyle benefits of green spaces.

For example, in Milwaukee the program recognized Aurora Public Health Systems for its opening of a healing garden at a news conference.

"Project EverGreen Month" Proclamation

By requesting a proclamation by the city that "May is Project EverGreen Month," you create a formal launch date for the GreenCare for Communities program.

Using the "May is Project EverGreen Month" hook, your point person can build an introductory press release as the first of his/her series of press releases. The proclamation can also serve as a focal point for participating green industry businesses to distribute statement stuffers about the benefits of green spaces to their customers, put out their yard signs, etc.

To obtain the proclamation, contact the Mayor's office for application instructions. In most cases, there is a communications person in the Mayor's office who is in charge of public relations and messaging for the office of Mayor. Start there.

In many cases, the city will allow you to write the first draft of the proclamation or they already have a standard form. You can ask if you can provide the proclamation as a draft. Following please find a sample proclamation to use when drafting your city's proclamation:

To The People of Akron:

Whereas: Achieving ecological sustainability in Akron begins with our green spaces; and

Whereas: The City of Akron is proud to recognize the impact green spaces have - locally, nationally and globally - on the environment, economic development and our lifestyles; and

Whereas: The benefits of trees, turf and landscape are so comprehensive and interconnected, simply maintaining and creating more green space within Akron will improve the urban environment.

Whereas: It is proper to observe Project EverGreen Month in Akron so that all our citizens may work together to manage our green spaces to help improve our lifestyles, economy and environment.

Now, Therefore: I, Donald L. Plusquellic, Mayor of the City of Akron, Ohio, do hereby proclaim, the month of May 2009, as:

"PROJECT EVERGREEN MONTH" in the City of Akron.

In Witness Whereof: I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Akron to be affixed hereto this 1st of May, 2009.

A proclamation template is included on page 36.

GreenCare for Troops

GreenCare for Troops is a nationwide outreach program coordinated by Project EverGreen that connects local green industry professionals with men and women serving our country in the armed forces away from home.

GreenCare for Troops is in the process of helping thousands of volunteers provide free lawn and landscape services for thousands of military families nationwide. The cost to manage the GreenCare for Troops Program is underwritten by Cub Cadet Commercial.

To get involved, local green industry companies simply fill out an application form at www.projectevergreen.com/gcft and submit it to Project EverGreen to order a free "MissionKit." The MissionKit includes marketing and promotional materials, military family application forms and an easy-to-implement business blueprint for promoting the company's involvement in the program.

Once a company is signed up, they will be matched with a military family in need in their area. Companies may volunteer for as many families as they would like - it is completely up to them. Most volunteers 'adopt' one or two families.

The GreenCare for Communities committee may help coordinate the official launch of the GreenCare for Troops program in their city. Two relevant holidays to tie the launch to are Armed Forces Day (the third Saturday in May) and Memorial Day (the last Monday of May).

At the launch, the committee may hold a news conference at a local military family's house that is being helped by the program or other TV-friendly location, and put out an open call for military families in need. The committee does not have to match the families with volunteers, Project EverGreen will do that for you. However, we do need your help to make sure a sufficient number of firms have volunteered to meet the demand.

This program has garnered national attention, including national publicity on NBC *Nightly News* and on the Discovery Channel.



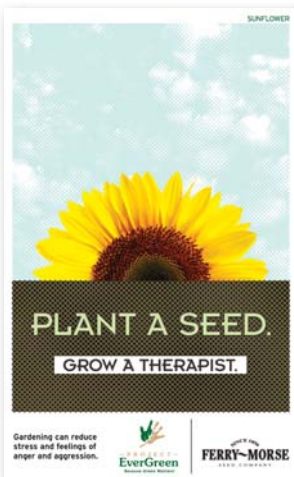
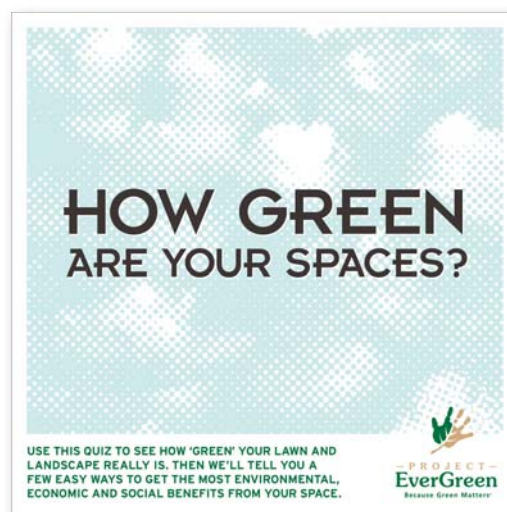
Major Aaron Filter, Wisconsin National Guard, didn't get the chance to finish landscaping the front of the house he, his wife Kristi and their three children share when he was deployed overseas to Afghanistan. Chris Williams, owner of K & W Greenery in Janesville, Wisconsin deployed his own landscape design and installation crew to finish the job.

Ordering Materials from Project EverGreen

Once you have outlined your calendar using the recommended events, you will have a good idea of the materials you need to order. Plan on distributing a minimum of 200 promotional items at each event.

Use the form in the Resource section of this playbook to place your order for the following items by March 15 (availability of items will depend on budget):

- Seed packets
- Water bottles
- Statement stuffers
- Pocket reference guides
- "How Green Are Your Spaces?" quizzes
- Stickers
- Buttons and t-shirts for street teams
- Magnets



GREENCARE FOR COMMUNITIES TACTICS

Street Team Event Execution

By April, the point person should have identified the groups volunteering for each event and obtain the contact information for each street team member. As volunteers are sometimes notorious for not showing up, be sure to schedule at least seven or eight volunteers per event to make sure five or six are in attendance.

Mail each organization release forms to sign and return to the point person and Benefits of Green Spaces fact sheets. Contact the Project EverGreen office for sample release forms. The fact sheets should be distributed to the volunteers so that they are familiar with the basic concepts and what Project EverGreen is all about.

Two weeks prior to each event, the point person should send the street team volunteers a reminder by e-mail with links to the benefits of green spaces, followed by a phone call one week prior. Provide the volunteers with a meeting location and ask them to be there 15 minutes before the event starts.

The point person will need to meet the volunteers at the event and give them their t-shirts and promotional materials for giveaway.

- Request that the street team members work the crowd as a group for maximum impact.
- Ask the street team members to help you put out the yard signs and posters.
- Review the basic benefits of green spaces with the street team.
- Give them a quick line to say as they hand out materials such as, "Here's a sunflower seed packet with information about how to care for your green space," or "Here's a quiz to test your green space IQ."
- Take photos of the street team in action.
- Let the street team know where the extra promotional materials are stored.
- Give the street team members instructions on what to do when they run out of materials. They may want to stay and enjoy the event or call their parents and go home.
- The point person does not need to stay for the entire event unless it is an event of special significance.

Because Green Matters Award News Conferences and Presentations

Depending on the type of businesses and organizations you are recognizing, they may or may not have events planned that you can present the awards at. For example, in Milwaukee the Downtown Business Association has a full week of lunchtime events and concerts in a park during the summer culminating in a ceremony with the mayor. Project EverGreen worked with the Downtown Business Association to have street teams hand out seed packets and quizzes all week, and presented the association with a Because Green Matters Award at the closing ceremony.

Another way to present the awards is to give multiple awards at one news conference. The media wants more of a photo opportunity than just talking heads, so you will increase your chances for coverage if you present them in conjunction with a charitable event.

For example, in Akron we presented the Junior League a Because Green Matters award at their Designer Showhouse, a historical home open to the public that Project EverGreen also recruited volunteers to work on renovating the landscape. We also had literature and giveaways to hand out to the public touring the house during its opening week and at the black-tie gala the Junior League held for sponsors.

Press release schedule:

Two weeks prior - send news release announcing award and presentation

One week prior - send reminder news release

Two days prior - send media alert

Day after event - send summary of event with photos

These are all common tactics engaged by public relations professionals. Your local Project EverGreen point person will be familiar with this process and the Project EverGreen headquarters can also provide insight in this effort.



Junior League Designer Showhouse historical home renovation in Akron, Recipient of 2009 Akron EverGreen Zone Because Green Matters Award

Blighted Area Renovations

Timing: You may decide to do the blighted area renovations later in the summer (August and September), when green industry firms' busiest months are over. The general public is still thinking "green" and green industry firms will have more time to participate and promote the renovations internally and to their customers.

Keep in mind that these suggestions are general in nature. Adjustments should be made depending on the region of the country as to typical planting, seeding, installation and maintenance months, which could vary significantly in the south or west.

Renovation: In order to maximize media coverage of the renovation, try to accomplish as much as possible in one day. Schedule the jobs back to back - grade the dirt and prepare the soil, install hardscaping and sod, plant the trees, bushes and flowers, etc. Each situation will be different, but focus on the day when the most activity is occurring.

News conference and dedication: Schedule your news conference at a good time for the media - about 10 a.m. or 2 p.m. Try to get as many volunteers there at that time as possible and have them be completing some of the finishing touches so that there are good photo opportunities for the press.

Keep the news conference and dedication to 15-20 minutes in length. Allow the most significant speaker (like a city official) to go first, followed by sponsors and green industry association representatives. The fewer the speakers, the better.

Press release schedule:

- Two weeks prior - send news release announcing renovation, news conference and dedication

- One week prior - send reminder news release

- Two days prior - send media alert

- Day after event - send summary of event with photos

POST- GREENCARE FOR COMMUNITIES TACTICS

Compile Photos and Summary of Events

Write a summary of how many pieces of educational literature and giveaways were handed out, what blighted areas were renovated, the number of children participating in the Art of Green Spaces Competition and Because Green Matters awards presented - everything that was done to promote the economic, environmental and lifestyle benefits of green spaces.

One idea is to keep a running summary and tally of events as you go while the event(s) is fresh in your mind.

Use the summary as the basis of:

- A wrap-up news release to send to the media
- An article for local, regional and national green industry trade publications
- Website copy explaining everything that happened
- Thank you letters to sponsors and volunteers
- Requests for help next year

Thank Participating Firms and Organizations

Of course, it is always good manners to say thank you. Be sure to send a formal thank-you to all participating firms and organizations with an overview of everything that was accomplished in your GreenCare for Communities city. Include references to how you helped improve their bottom line, public image, goodwill and reputation - be specific about how helping the GreenCare for Communities effort helped them.

A thank-you note and a brief recap of the successes will help you keep and grow the GreenCare for Communities program in your community.

RESOURCES

Project EverGreen Contact Information

Project EverGreen

120 W. Main St.
P.O. Box 156
New Prague, MN 56071

www.projectevergreen.com
952-758-9135
Toll-Free: 877-758-4835

Den Gardner, Executive Director

dengardner@projectevergreen.com

Barb Ulschmid, Associate Director

barbulschmid@projectevergreen.com

Joy Westenberg, GreenCare for Troops Manager

joywestenberg@projectevergreen.com
Phone: 218-732-9100

Elizabeth Neiderhiser, Director of Strategic Partnerships

elizabethneiderhiser@projectevergreen.com

Project EverGreen Canada

7856 Fifth Line
South Milton, Ontario Canada L9T 2X8
888-401-3875

Alan White, President

alan.white@projectevergreen.ca

GreenCare for Communities Timeline and Checklist

January-February

- ☐ Create database of all green-related associations and organizations
- ☐ Hire GreenCare for Communities point person
- ☐ Host kick-off meeting
- ☐ Identify blighted areas for renovation
- ☐ Outline street team events
- ☐ Solicit street team volunteers
- ☐ Set up meetings with the parent companies of local billboards, bus signs, TV and radio stations, newspapers, magazine publishers, cable companies and online media
- ☐ Prepare list of the reporters, editors and producers to send news releases to both before and after events.
- ☐ Compile list of green industry newsletter/magazine editors
- ☐ Ask green industry newsletter/magazine editors to include an overview of the GreenCare for Communities program in their January and February editions
- ☐ Set up a meeting with the person in charge of science or environmental curriculum and the person in charge of art curriculum at the department of public schools or private schools to propose an Art of Green Spaces Competition.
- ☐ Plan yard sign and posters installations
- ☐ Send details to Project EverGreen for your GreenCare for Communities website landing page

March-April

- ☐ Draw up plans for blighted area renovation and a timeline for project completion
- ☐ Identify materials to be donated and volunteer services needed
- ☐ Solicit commitments to help by additional green industry firms
- ☐ Break up the major GreenCare for Communities activities into opportunities for companies to sponsor
- ☐ Identify businesses to present Because Green Matters Awards to
- ☐ Contact Mayor's office to request "May is Project EverGreen Month" proclamation
- ☐ Solicit Volunteers for GreenCare for Troops
- ☐ Plan launch of the GreenCare for Troops program
- ☐ Order materials from Project EverGreen
- ☐ Obtain the contact information for each street team member
- ☐ Mail each organization release forms to sign and return to the point person and Benefits of Green Spaces fact sheets
- ☐ Conduct consumer awareness research
- ☐ Send details to Project EverGreen for your GreenCare for Communities website landing page

GreenCare for Communities Timeline and Checklist (continued)

May

- ☐ Schedule at least seven or eight volunteers per event to make sure five or six are in attendance
- ☐ Send update to green industry newsletter/magazine editors
- ☐ Send proclamation news release consumer media
- ☐ Host GreenCare for Communities kick-off news conference
- ☐ Street team events begin
- ☐ Place yard signs
- ☐ Advertising placements are concentrated in this month
- ☐ Send details to Project EverGreen for your GreenCare for Communities website landing page

June-September

- ☐ Present Because Green Matters and Art of Green Spaces Awards
- ☐ Street team events continue
- ☐ Maintain yard signs
- ☐ Blighted area renovation occurs (August or September)
- ☐ Send update to green industry newsletter/magazine editors
- ☐ Conduct consumer awareness research (August or September)
- ☐ Send details to Project EverGreen for your GreenCare for Communities website landing page

October-December

- ☐ Present results of pre- and post-consumer research to all audiences
- ☐ Send update to green industry newsletter/magazine editors
- ☐ Send details to Project EverGreen for your GreenCare for Communities website landing page
- ☐ Compile photos and summary of events
- ☐ Thank participating firms and organizations
- ☐ Solicit volunteers and contributors for next year
- ☐ Evaluate most and least successful tactics and plan for improvement

EVERGREEN ZONE PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS ORDER FORM

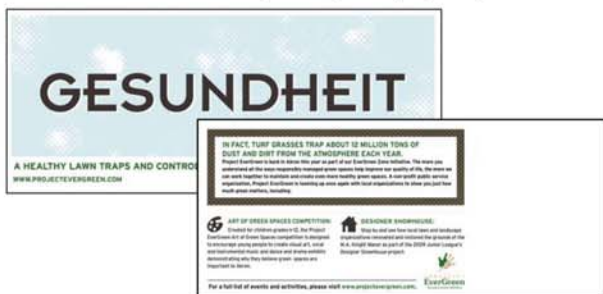
Item 1: "Hire a Pro" Yard Signs (set of 3)



Item 2: "How Green Are Your Spaces" Quiz (5 copies)



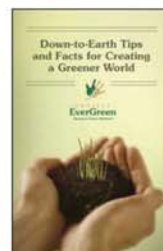
Item 3: Customer Handouts/Invoice Stuffers (set of 100) One side has a blank space for your company stamp or sticker



Item 4: Project EverGreen Gardening Set (includes 10 seed packets, t-shirt and water bottle)



Item 5: Pocket Reference Guide (100 copies)



Item 6: "Benefits of Green Spaces" Yard Signs (set of 5)



To order your EverGreen Zone Materials, simply mark the quantity of each item desired along with your contact name and shipping address. While there is no limit to the number of items that you may order, we do ask that you order no more than you intend to use. While these items are available to you at no cost, we would sincerely appreciate a nominal donation so that we can continue bringing you these valuable programs. A suggested donation amount per item is listed below. Thank you for supporting Project EverGreen!

Item 1) "Hire a Pro" Yard Signs (set of 3)	Suggested donation: \$15	Quantity: _____	Donation: _____
Item 2) "How Green Are Your Spaces" Quiz (5 copies)	Suggested donation: \$1	Quantity: _____	Donation: _____
Item 3) Handouts/Statement Stuffers (set of 100)	Suggested donation: \$13	Quantity: _____	Donation: _____
Item 4) Gardening Set	Suggested donation: \$10	Quantity: _____	Donation: _____
Item 5) Pocket Reference Guide (100 copies)	Suggested donation: \$13	Quantity: _____	Donation: _____
Item 6) "Benefits of Green Space" Yard Signs (set of 5)	Suggested donation: \$30	Quantity: _____	Donation: _____

TOTAL DONATION: \$ _____

SHIPPING & CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name _____ Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ E-mail Address _____

RETURN THIS FORM AND ANY DONATIONS TO:

Project EverGreen
 Attn: Elizabeth Neiderhiser,
 120 W. Main St., P.O. Box 156
 New Prague, MN 56071

Fax: 952.758.5813
 e-mail: elizabethneiderhiser@projectevergreen.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**MEDIA CONTACT:****Jeff Salem****402-437-6409****jeffs@swansonrussell.com****Advocacy Through Art: Art of Green Spaces Competition Listens to Student Voices**

Akron, Ohio. - May 11, 2009 --- What does your neighborhood park, backyard or favorite tree mean to you? Project EverGreen, a national non-profit, service organization, invites the creative youth of Akron to answer that question by entering the Art of Green Spaces Competition. In conjunction with Akron Public Schools, the goal of the competition is to inspire young people from kindergarten through twelfth grade to think about why beautiful green spaces matter to them.

Specifically, these young artists are asked to express through art, music, writing, dance or drama how important green spaces, such as well managed lawns and landscapes, gardens, parks, sports fields and golf courses are to the environment, the economy, and the overall quality of life.

"Unfortunately, most adults take these vital green spaces for granted," says Den Gardner, executive director of Project EverGreen. "Our goal with the Art of Green Spaces Competition is to bridge this knowledge gap by providing a venue in which young artists can creatively express their feelings as to why green spaces are so important to people," Gardner says.

He specifically notes that the goal of the competition is to encourage talented young artists to use the power of art to tell adults and fellow Akron youth why it is imperative to create and care for green spaces at home, work, and play. Each art project must help answer the question, "Why are green spaces - lawns, landscapes, gardens, parks, sports fields and golf courses - important to you?"

Prizes will be awarded in as many as four categories: Art (painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, etc.), Music (vocal and instrumental audiotapes or videotapes), Writing (poetry, stories, articles, etc.), and Dance and Drama (videotapes). Prizes for each category will be allocated to elementary, middle, and high school ages, with \$100/blue ribbon for first, \$75/red ribbon for second, and \$50/yellow ribbon for third places. All artists will receive a green participation ribbon.

To qualify, project entries along with completed and appropriately signed entry forms should be delivered to the Art of Green Spaces Competition, c/o Jacquie Mazziotta, 1941 Thorndale Ave, Stowe, OH 44224.

Deadline for entry is May 29, 2009. All eligible entries will be judged by a panel of Akron artists, teachers, and representatives of the green industry based on esthetic excellence as well as scientific or technical interest. Winners will be notified by June 15, 2009, and winning entries will be on public display in various locations throughout the Akron area.

For complete entry guidelines and entry forms, call Project EverGreen at 1-877-758-4835 or visit www.projectevergreen.com/akron.

About Project EverGreen

Headquartered in New Prague, Minn., Project EverGreen is a national non-profit organization representing green industry service providers, associations, suppliers/distributors, media companies and other organizations. Project EverGreen's mission is to preserve and enhance green space in our communities for today and future generations. Project EverGreen is committed to informing the American public about the positive effects of well-maintained green spaces, including lawns and landscapes, sports turf, golf courses and parks. We want to inspire you to get involved and get passionate about green spaces! For more information, visit www.projectevergreen.com.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT:

Jeff Salem

402-437-6409

jeffs@swansonrussell.com

Akron Art of Green Spaces Competition Award Winners Announced

Winning entries on display at the Akron Public Library throughout July

Akron, Ohio - July 2, 2009 --- Project EverGreen, a national non-profit service organization, was proud to award twenty Akron area students with Art of Green Space Competition awards. Award winners were announced on Wednesday, July 1, 2009, at the Akron Public Library. Winning entries will be on display at the library throughout the month of July. A list of winning students and their entries are included below.

Young artists from kindergarten through twelfth grade expressed through art, music, writing, dance or drama on how important green spaces are to the environment, the economy, and the overall quality of life.

"For the second year, we had a great response from students from all over the Akron area," said Den Gardner, executive director of Project EverGreen. "We were delighted to partner with the Akron Public Schools and hope to continue this partnership again next year."

Twenty students received awards in the following categories: Art (painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, etc.), Writing (poetry, stories, articles, etc.), and Dance and Drama (videotapes). Prizes for each category were allocated to elementary, middle, and high school ages, with \$100 and a blue ribbon for first, \$75 and a red ribbon for second, and \$50 and a yellow ribbon for third place. Thirty-one students participated in the contest and all participants received a green ribbon.

Winning entries:

Art - Elementary School - Individual

First Place - Evelyn Nyerges; Entry title: Shhh...Listen to Nature

Second Place - Mikaela Lane; Entry Title: Clean Air

Third Place - Stevie Mazziotta; Entry Title: My Baseball Field

Art - Middle School - Individual

First Place - Karla Dawson; Entry Title: Forever Green...

Second Place - Zana Phairr; No entry title given

Third Place - Anesa Harris; Entry title: Look What Happened When I Lost My Green Space

Art- High School - Individual

First Place - Andrew Scott; Entry Title: Mother Earth

Second Place - Emily Petz; Entry Title: Beauty After Death

Third Place - Zach Herring; Entry Title: Trip to Wasteland

Art - Middle School - Team

First place - Myah Dozier and Tiara Thornton; Entry Title: Better Environment

Second Place - Lucien Milford and Amanda Lang; Time To Draw The Line

Drama - Middle School

Winning Team: Hallie Heffernan, Erin Seigferth, Alexis Hanson, Tailashay Thorton, Kierra Dunkley

Entry Title: From Nature's Point of View

Writing - Elementary School - Individual

First Place - Ally Mazziotta; Entry title: My Backyard

Writing - Middle School - Individual

First Place - Haley R. Calhoun; Entry title: Saving the National Park - A Screen Play

For more information about Project EverGreen, call 1-877-758-4835 or visit www.projectevergreen.com/akron.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT:

Jeff Salem

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Local Lawn and Landscape Companies Come Together
to Renovate Ball Fields Across Greater Milwaukee on November 7

Efforts Part of "EverGreen Zone" Initiative to Raise Awareness
about the Benefits of Green Spaces

Milwaukee, Wis. - November 4, 2009 --- On Saturday, November 7 from 9:00am - 12:00pm, more than 26 ball fields in Milwaukee will get makeovers courtesy of local green industry companies. Using seed and fertilizer donated by Spring Valley, Carlin/Progreen+, Reinders, and Milorganite, lawn and landscape firms will aerate and overseed ball fields at churches, schools and community parks across the city and suburbs. The renovations are part of a collaborative effort with national non-profit Project EverGreen, a service organization dedicated to preserving and enhancing green spaces today and for future generations.

Lawn and landscape firms selected ball fields to which they have a personal or community connection. The goal of the project is to demonstrate how important green spaces, such as well managed lawns and landscapes, gardens, parks, sports fields and golf courses are to the environment, the economy, and the overall quality of life.

"We are renovating the ball field located at Harris Bank field in Cedarburg," said Mike La Rosa of La Rosa Landscape Company. "We selected our ball field because this field is shared by many families in our community and it touches the most people. We live and breathe green spaces and are proud to join forces with the rest of the Milwaukee green industry community on November 7."

Ball fields to be renovated include:

- Stone Bank Elementary School, Oconomowoc
- Hales Corners Lutheran Church
- Fireman's Park, Wales
- Marcy Elementary School, Sussex
- Jayhawk Football Field, Menomonee Falls
- Racine Public Schools
- Starbuck School
- Gilmore School
- Mitchell School
- Racine Montessori School
- Branen Field at Sunset Park
- Hintz Sports Complex
- Burlington High School
- Village of Waterford: Whitford Park
- Waterford School District High School
- Town of Norway, Meyer Park
- Union Grove Christian School
- City of Elkhorn Hanson Park
- Walworth County ball fields

For more information about Project EverGreen, call 1-877-758-4835 or visit www.projectevergreen.com/akron.

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For more information, visit www.projectevergreen.com.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**MEDIA CONTACT:****Jeff Salem****402-437-6409****jeffs@swansonrussell.com****Landscapes Services Eases Burden for Our Troops**

How can you help a service family burdened by the absence of a loved one on duty in the Middle East? Magnetic ribbons on your car are nice. But what about some real down-to-earth support? For example, why not offer to mow their lawn or trim their shrubs? Fast forward to this summer and you'll find there's a well-organized, but unpaid "army" of landscape contractors doing just that. Meet GreenCare for Troops.

In New Jersey, for example, Sophia Comas Phillips, whose husband, Sgt. Benjamin Phillips, is stationed in Iraq, knows her neatly-mown lawn would be growing out of control without her GreenCare for Troops volunteers. Likewise, in suburban Los Angeles, Karen Rodriguez, and her two daughters look out on shrubs and flowers being neatly tended by their GreenCare friends until Lt. Cmdr. David Rodriguez comes home from Baghdad.

And all this lawn and landscape care, now being delivered to families nationwide, is free. "There's no catch," says Den Gardner, whose organization –Project EverGreen– is now its fourth year of sponsoring GreenCare For Troops. "Currently, we have 8,000 military families signed up, and thanks to the generosity of lawn and landscape contractors and volunteers, we hope to enlist even more."

Gardner, who is executive director of Project EverGreen, says the roots of this national public service effort go back to the organization's basic mission. "We're committed to dramatizing the benefits of green spaces to our environment, our economy and our lifestyles," he said. "GreenCare For Troops grew out of this commitment when we realized that how much a burden lawn and landscape care can become when service families are concerned for the safety of a loved one overseas."

In addition, support for GreenCare for Troops is coming from many green industry firms. Cub Cadet is providing significant and important underwriting for administrative support, thousands of landscape contractors donate materials and close to 2,200 volunteers help provide the free lawn and landscape services.

To find out how qualified families can apply for free lawn and landscape care this summer go to www.projectevergreen.com/gcft/ and click on the GreenCare for Troops logo. Or, you can make a toll-free phone call to (877) 758-4835 to have an application mailed.

"There is no cost or obligation to families who apply to participate in GreenCare for Troops," Gardner said. "Project EverGreen will make every effort to link those who apply with local land and landscape firms who have indicated a desire to help. However, since this is strictly a volunteer program, we cannot guarantee assistance to everyone who applies."

According to Gardner, the appreciation of this effort by service personnel and their families has been most gratifying. "We even had one soldier serving in Iraq ask us to send him a Project EverGreen banner to display—and we were happy to oblige."

About Project EverGreen

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About GreenCare for Troops

GreenCare for Troops is a nationwide outreach program coordinated by Project EverGreen that connects local green industry professionals with men and women serving our country in the armed forces away from home. GreenCare is in the process of helping more than 2,200 volunteers provide free lawn and landscape services for more than 8,000 military families nationwide. The cost to manage the GreenCare for Troops Program is underwritten by Cub Cadet Commercial. To sign up or volunteer, please visit <http://projectevergreen.com/gcft/>.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT:

Jeff Salem

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City of Milwaukee Declares May

'Project EverGreen Month'

Goal: Help Milwaukee Unite to Improve Public and Private Green Spaces

Milwaukee, WI --- The City of Milwaukee is officially proclaiming the month of May to be "Project EverGreen Month". May 1st marks the official start of the national non-profit service organization's public education program in Milwaukee to inspire citizens, businesses and developers to increase the number of well-maintained green spaces throughout Milwaukee. This includes home lawns/landscapes, community spaces, commercial areas, golf courses, sports fields and other green spaces.

A kick-off event will take place at The Domes on Thursday, May 7, 2009, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. and will include the reading of the official proclamation by Milwaukee's Environmental Services Superintendent Preston Cole, as well as appearances by garden expert Melinda Myers and Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker. Park Director Sue Black and Wisconsin Landscape Contractor Association representative Heather Schuster will also be in attendance.

The Domes is located at 524 S. Layton Blvd. The kick-off event is free and open to the public, and refreshments will be provided on a first come, first served basis courtesy of Kujawa Enterprises, Inc.

Milwaukee is the second city selected for Project EverGreen's "EverGreen Zone" initiative. The purpose of the EverGreen Zone program is to raise public awareness about the benefits of expanding, preserving, and maintaining green spaces that positively impact climate change and create countless economic, environmental and lifestyle benefits.

Project EverGreen's plan is to create a number of EverGreen Zones across the country in the next several years and for the second year, will return to Akron, Ohio. Project EverGreen is supported by many organizations including the Wisconsin Landscape Contractor Association who assists by helping to facilitate volunteers and donations.

Milwaukee EverGreen Zone volunteers will champion the city's green spaces during Jazz at the Park, Summerfest and various other local events by passing out educational literature, seed packets and other items. These volunteers will place hundreds of yard signs and posters in public and private green spaces all over the city.

And from May 9 through May 16, 2009, any consumer or business will have the opportunity to show support for Project EverGreen's latest initiative, "Buck It Up for Military Families". Created as a fundraising program to support the nationally recognized GreenCare for Troops program, "Buck It Up" provides free lawn and landscape services to families whose major breadwinner is currently serving in active duty. A single dollar (or \$5 or \$10) donation creates scholarships for military family members seeking a career in the horticulture industry, increases the infrastructure to better handle the 8,000 military families and 2,200 volunteers currently participating in the program, as well as enhances the free lawn and landscape services currently provided. For more information about this program, please go to www.projectevergreen.com/gcft/buckitup.html.

Additionally, Project EverGreen is teaming up with the Milwaukee Public Schools for the first annual Art of Green Spaces Competition. The competition's goal is to encourage young people to create visual art, vocal and instrumental music and dance and drama exhibits demonstrating why they believe green spaces are important to Milwaukee.

Winners of the competition will have their work recognized at an awards ceremony and displayed in prominent public locations. The contest is underway and the deadline for entries is May 28, 2009. For more information about the Art of Green Spaces Competition, please call Project EverGreen at 877-758-4835.

The public education program culminates in August with the massive renovation of a blighted public green space. Together with the City of Milwaukee, Project EverGreen and its sponsors will renovate seven public landscape renovation projects during Milwaukee's Clean and Green program to provide an inviting environment for the community to enjoy a healthy green space. For more information about Project EverGreen visit www.projectevergreen.com.

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COLOR YOUR ENVIRONMENT GREEN

Where's the best place to start improving the environment? "Right in your own back yard," says, Den Gardner, executive director of Project EverGreen, "and don't forget your front yard as well."

Gardner is talking about a growing "grassroots" effort by Project EverGreen to focus homeowners on improving their own personal "green space." "It's important to realize that individual efforts do matter," he says and points to research (www.projectevergreen.com) which bears this out. For example:

Protection and cooling – Working to create thick, healthy turf has several advantages. First, it provides a living filter to help trap pollutants. Not only is groundwater protected but it reduces storm water runoff into lakes and streams as well. In addition, through a process known as evapotranspiration, grass and other plants warmed by the sun give up water. This water evaporates to cool not only the plant, but the surrounding area as well. As a result, a well-tended lawn is one of nature's most overlooked, and yet most efficient cooling systems. In fact, researchers have calculated that evapotranspiration from the front lawns in a block of eight houses, produces cooling equivalent to 70 tons of air conditioning.

Improved air quality – Having a plan to promote the growth and health of your trees, shrubs and turf is also important in fighting global warming. A single tree has the ability (called carbon sequestration) to annually absorb 26 pounds of CO₂ from the atmosphere. This equals the amount found in 11,000 miles of car emissions. Promoting tree planting in your neighborhood and area parks can pay off big – one study shows that an acre of trees has the ability to remove 13 tons of pollutants annually.

Lower energy consumption – Don't take the summertime shade you enjoy for granted. Properly pruning, watering and feeding the trees that shade your home can also help reduce your use of electricity. One study estimates that properly placed shade trees can reduce a home's air conditioning demand by 10 to 30 percent. That's important, not only for your budget, but for the ability to reduce the amount of fossil fuel used in power generation. If you need more shade, be sure to consult your landscape professionals. They can advise about the right type of trees for your area as well as the best placement to gain maximum shade value.

Plan, plan, plan – The bottom line, according to Gardner, is that efforts to improve your home's green space can benefit the environment. "Green matters, but it can matter even more when you understand how to balance the amount and placement of grass, trees, shrubs and other plantings to produce benefits for the environment and for your family's lifestyle as well, says Gardner. "It takes some planning – but it's well worth it."

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HOW TO GREEN-UP YOUR HOME'S VALUE

Want a good way to help protect the value of your home? Remember these two words: Green matters. Not green paint, mind you, but green space. It's an umbrella term for the trees, lawn, shrubs and other plantings that can affect not only the salability of your home, but your utility bills as well.

Which is why Project EverGreen, a national non-profit organization, is leading the charge to educate consumers about the many values of green space—especially as it affects their pocketbooks.

According to Den Gardner, executive director of Project EverGreen, "Research shows that improving the green space around your home can have real economic benefits."

Protecting Home Value

Gardner cites a number of studies which show that sprucing up your green space can help protect and, depending on market conditions, bolster home value. For example: a study cited in Smart Money magazine indicated that consumers value a landscaped home up to 11.3% higher than its base price. In addition, The Wall Street Journal reported that landscaping investment is normally recovered fully and sometimes doubled by its ability to increase home value.

That sounds good, but Gardner adds this important caution: "It's wise to plan before you plant. Make sure you begin landscape improvement or renovation with well-thought-out ideas for maintaining and/or improving your green space. You may want to do the work yourself—and that's good exercise; however, it's always wise to seek professional advice to get the right balance and placement of trees, shrubs, grass and other plantings."

As evidence of this he cited a research project conducted by the Horticultural Research Institute (HRI). This showed that a sophisticated landscape design with trees and large, colorful bedding plants can raise the perceived value of a home between 5% and 11%. On the other hand, consumer reaction was that minimalist landscapes (i.e. with small plant size and low sophistication) actually decreased the perception of home value.

Saving Energy Costs

Planning the right mix of trees, grass and other plantings can also make a difference in a home's energy consumption. One study has estimated that when properly placed to shade your home, trees can reduce air conditioning demand by 10 to 30 percent. Another study found attic temperatures could be up to 40 degrees lower when adequate shade was present.

"There are two ways you take advantage of this natural cooling effect," Gardner says. "(1) If you have mature trees make sure they're pruned properly to maximize shade benefits and, (2) in planning for future shade, seek professional advice as to the type and location of the trees you should plant. Both steps can help lower your electrical bill."

Also, don't overlook how maintaining a thick, healthy lawn and other plants also provides cooling benefits. "This is due to a process known as evapotranspiration," Gardner says. "When vegetation is warmed by the sun it gives up water which then evaporates to cool not only the plant itself but the surrounding area as well. The result is one of nature's most overlooked, and yet most efficient cooling systems. In fact, researchers have calculated that evapotranspiration from the front lawns in a block of eight houses, produces cooling equivalent to 70 tons of air conditioning."

You can find more information about these and other benefits of green space by accessing www.projectevergreen.com.

About Project EverGreen

Headquartered in New Prague, Minn., Project EverGreen is a national non-profit organization representing green industry service providers, associations, suppliers/distributors, media companies and other organizations. Project EverGreen's mission is to preserve and enhance green space in our communities for today and future generations. Project EverGreen is committed to informing the American public about the positive effects of well-maintained green spaces, including lawns and landscapes, sports turf, golf courses and parks. We want to inspire you to get involved and get passionate about green spaces! For more information, visit www.projectevergreen.com.

RX: ADD MORE GREEN TO YOUR LIFESTYLE

Here's a tip for ensuring your family's well-being: Remember that green matters. This is true not only in leafy salads and vitamin-filled vegetables—but in the green outside your home. In fact, researchers find that contributing to exterior “green space” can play an important part in the way we feel and act.

According to Den Gardner, executive director of Project EverGreen, “Evidence shows that planning to achieve the right mix of trees, grass, shrubs and plants has real benefits not only for your family's lifestyle, but for your neighborhood and community as well.”

“In essence, green has always been nature's prescription for helping us to relax, slow down, and relieve the stress of daily life,” says Gardner. “In fact, evidence proves that working to maintain and improve green space helps lower blood pressure, reduces muscle tension related to stress, improves attention and reduces feelings of fear and anger or aggression.”

These benefits aren't restricted to those who have a proverbial “green thumb.” Gardner adds, “Scientific literature is full of examples showing how the therapy provided by a green environment is helpful for people of all ages.”

A study conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services found that children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) improved their ability to focus and concentrate when they were exposed to parks and other green spaces. A similar study by the University of Illinois found that girls exposed to green settings are better able to handle peer pressure, sexual pressure and other challenging situations and perform better in school.

Research conducted by the Human-Environmental Resources Laboratory at the University of Illinois-Urbana found that inner-city families with trees and greenery in their immediate surroundings had safer domestic environments than those in buildings barren of nature. These researchers suspect that mental fatigue—which green spaces have been shown to reduce—play a role in the amount of aggression and violence in these settings.

These clinical situations give tangible results about how plants, flowers and green landscapes affect both physical and mental health. But what difference can they make for you and your family? They invite you to step back and assess if you're getting enough value from your existing green space. For example, are you ‘putting up’ with street noise and headlight glare that could be screened out with well-placed plantings? Or, are you getting enough benefit from your existing trees? Also, don't overlook the fact that careful planning to add more green space in your environment combines a feeling of personal well-being with definite economic benefits. Well-placed shade trees give lower cooling cost and homes with attractive landscapes command higher selling prices.

The bottom line, according to Gardner: “Don't take your green space for granted. Take time to evaluate how an investment in more efficient landscaping can provide an extra layer of comfort for you and your family. For more background on the benefits of green space, you'll want to access www.projectevergreen.com, and talk to your local landscape professional.”

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SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

Project EverGreen Month, [MONTH, YEAR]

A Proclamation by the Mayor of [CITY, STATE NAME]

To The People of [CITY NAME]:

Whereas: Achieving ecological sustainability in [CITY NAME] begins with our green spaces; and

Whereas: The City of [CITY NAME] is proud to recognize the impact green spaces have - locally, nationally and globally - on the environment, economic development and our lifestyles; and

Whereas: The benefits of trees, turf and landscape are so comprehensive and interconnected, simply maintaining and creating more green space within [CITY NAME] will improve the urban environment.

Whereas: It is proper to observe Project EverGreen Month in [CITY NAME] so that all our citizens may work together to manage our green spaces to help improve our lifestyles, economy and environment.

Now, Therefore: I, [INSERT NAME], Mayor of the City of [CITY NAME], Ohio, do hereby proclaim, the month of [MONTH, YEAR], as:

“PROJECT EVERGREEN MONTH” in the City of [CITY NAME].

In Witness Whereof: I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of [CITY NAME] to be affixed hereto this [DATE].

Mayor
City of [CITY NAME]