



## **The Great American Cleanup Turns 25! Register Now for a Cleanup Event near You**

(Hampton Roads, Va., March 8, 2023) – What is an appropriate gift for a twenty-fifth anniversary? Silver cuff links or a bracelet are nice. But local [Great American Cleanup](#) (GAC) organizers are hoping Hampton Roads residents will give the gift of time by participating in a cleanup event near them, March 24-25.

“When you volunteer for a litter cleanup or beautification project, you give just a little bit of your time to make a big impact in your community,” said Rebekah Eastep, an askHRgreen.org team leader.

Since launching GAC in 1988, [Keep America Beautiful](#) (KAB) estimates that 500,000 volunteers have taken part in 15,000 community events nationwide through local affiliates and KAB partner organizations. askHRgreen.org has championed the event too, supporting the campaign in Hampton Roads for over a decade.

According to Eastep, last year more than 1,400 local volunteers participated in organized litter cleanups, planted 264 plants, painted trash cans and structures, mulched playgrounds, pulled invasive weeds and removed graffiti. At the end of the 2022 cleanup event, residents had cleared more than 33 tons of litter from the region—compared to 24 tons of trash recovered during the 2021 cleanup.

The region’s litter prevention team is always in need of more volunteers. While askHRgreen.org works year-round to raise awareness about some of the most frequently littered items in the U.S.—cigarette butts, food wrappers, beverage containers, plastic grocery bags, and straws—litter continues to be a major problem in most Hampton Roads communities.

“Not only is litter an eyesore, but it can also negatively impact property values and the overall quality of life we enjoy here in Hampton Roads,” Eastep said. “Litter attracts more litter. It harms our region’s natural resources, and it deters from attracting new business opportunities and visitors to our region.”

According to askHRgreen.org, there are easy ways to reduce litter by:

- Securely closing trash can lids, keeping a trash bag in the car and covering truck loads.
- Reducing the use of single-use products, such as straws, plastic cutlery, beverage and take-out containers, and by choosing reusable or low-waste alternatives instead.

- Making sure businesses have trash cans and cigarette waste receptacles strategically placed around the premises. askHRgreen.org will even help businesses install cigarette waste receptacles at no cost through its [Cigarette Waste Receptacle grant program](#).
- Getting involved. In addition to GAC, there are other local cleanup events throughout the year, including the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Clean the Bay Day on June 3.
- Participate in Adopt-a-Spot programs by rallying neighbors, friends or coworkers to routinely clear litter on the block, at school, in local parks or near the office. Litter grabbers, trash bags and safety equipment are available to "check out" for community use through the askHRgreen.org [Team Up 2 Clean Up](#) program.

Studies confirm that beautiful places are not only environmentally healthy, but they also contribute to the region's economy and society, while creating better places to raise families, start a business and go to school.

"The cleanup season is just getting started, and there is plenty of work to be done," Eastep said. "Everyone can play a role in keeping Hampton Roads clean. Let's show some community pride, get out there and just do it."

To register for a Hampton Roads GAC event, visit [askhrgreen.org/great-american-cleanup](http://askhrgreen.org/great-american-cleanup). And for more info and resources for all things green, visit [askhrgreen.org](http://askhrgreen.org).

**About askHRgreen.org** [askhrgreen.org](http://askhrgreen.org) is your go-to resource for all things green in Hampton Roads – from recycling tips and pointers for keeping local waterways clean to water-saving ideas and simple steps to make local living easy on the environment. Launched in 2011, the region-wide public awareness and education campaign is administered through the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and powered by the following members: The cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg; the counties of Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City, Southampton, Surry and York; the town of Smithfield; and HRSD. Like [askHRgreen.org](#) on [Facebook](#), follow on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), tune in to [YouTube](#) and catch the "Let's Talk Green" [blog](#), written by a team of local experts.

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