



VOLUNTEER  
#GOODdeeds



# KEEP AUSTIN BEAUTIFUL

Fiscal Year 2017  
Annual Report



# Mission

We provide resources and education to engage citizens in building more beautiful communities.

# Vision

Our vision is for Austin to be the cleanest, most beautiful community.

# About us

Our 31<sup>st</sup> year was driven by the energy of working on projects with amazing volunteers and partners in every corner of Austin. Some projects spanned the entire city, such as the 20,000 native trees planted by our 100 Adopt-a-Creek groups, while others were more localized, such as the bilingual campaign created by Dobie Middle School students to teach their peers about recycling and composting. In every project, we saw communities coming together to accomplish more than any of us could on our own. We could not do all that we do without the tremendous support of the individuals, businesses, schools, community groups, nonprofits, and government agencies who donate their time, skills, and money to our cause. Together we are building a more vibrant, connected city and keeping Austin beautiful.

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Alyssa Gonzales  
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Lily Nguyen  
Fund Development Intern

Ruth Patrick  
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# Beautify Austin | LBJ High School

At Keep Austin Beautiful, we are continually looking for ways to ensure everyone in our city has access to beautiful outdoor spaces, no matter where they live. For the past two years, we've been tackling this problem head-on through Beautify Austin, a program dedicated to transforming underutilized public properties into attractive and functional green spaces. In the coming year, Keep Austin Beautiful is particularly thrilled to announce our biggest Beautify Austin project yet, a large-scale transformation of the grounds at LBJ Early College High School in northeast Austin.

Through involvement with our Green Teens program, LBJ students and administrators have taken the first steps in transforming the school's front courtyard, planting native shade trees and designing raised garden beds. With the design support of the award-winning Ten Eyck Landscape Architects, we're extremely excited to build upon the students' efforts and bring additional structural improvements, functional enhancements, and native landscaping to the LBJ Early College High School Campus, creating a more aesthetically pleasing, functional, and sustainable space.



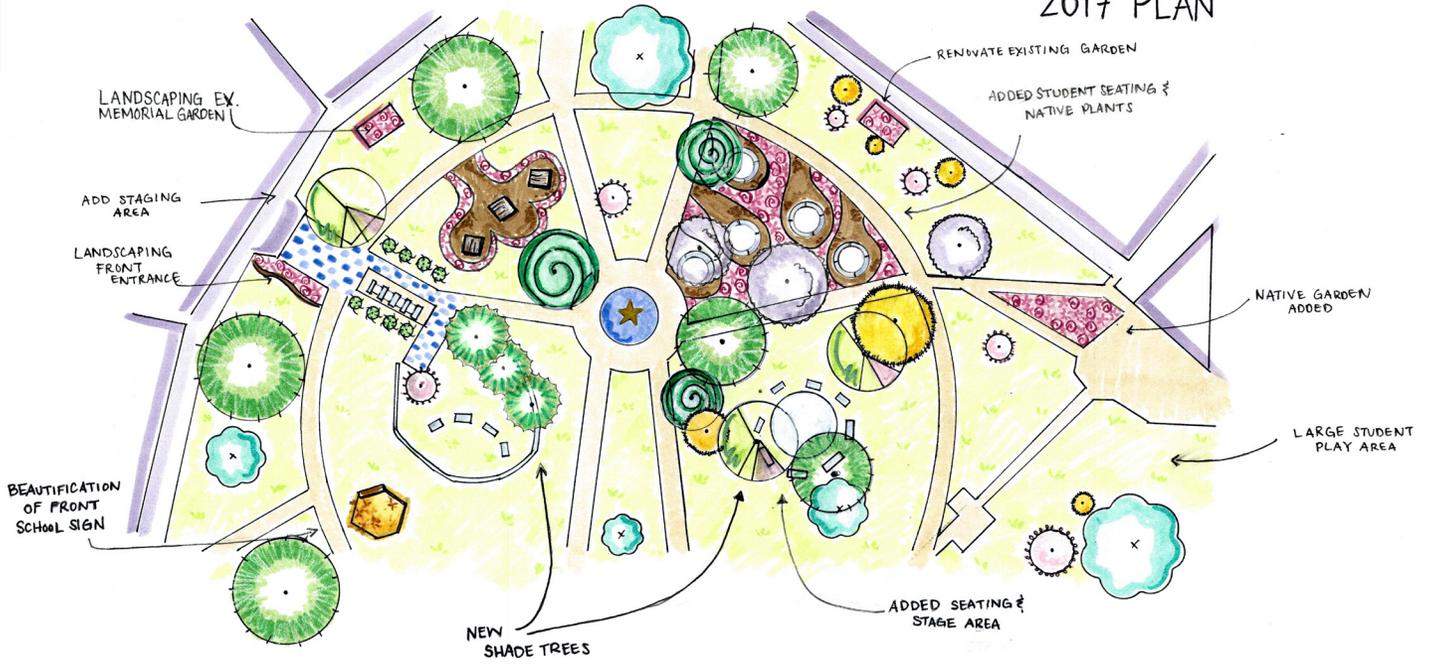
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Rodney Ahart'.

Rodney Ahart, Executive Director

# LBJ HIGH SCHOOL

## Phase 1

2017 PLAN



A. KARTACHAK DESIGNS

Keep Austin Beautiful's programs encompass everything from citywide cleanups involving thousands of volunteers to impactful education programs that combine classroom instruction with environmental service projects. No matter the project, our aim is to empower Austinites to become passionate stewards of our public green spaces, neighborhoods, and waterways.



## Clean Sweep

This year's Clean Sweep was another amazing success, and reflected the expansive range of Keep Austin Beautiful's focus areas. On Saturday, April 8, a grand total of 4,144 volunteers cleaned up 31,680 pounds of trash and 3,186 pounds of recycling from 139 sites across Austin, but their efforts didn't stop there. Eight groups tackled the removal of invasive plant species, and more than a dozen groups planted native trees and plants to restore creek habitats and beautify public spaces.

# Highlights



## Green Teens

The students who participated in Green Teens this year were immersed in nature and challenged to solve problems related to natural resources. They built solar-powered cars, worked with scientists to restore watershed habitats, educated peers through a bilingual recycling and composting campaign, and learned to mimic the call of a Barred Owl. At Travis High School, students brewed natural bug repellent from American Beautyberries gathered on school grounds to take camping in Dinosaur Valley State Park. Far from city lights, a number of students had their first experience of a clear night sky brilliant with stars. Although the darkness of the wilderness was novel—and even a little frightening for some—one Green Teen reflected, “You really shouldn’t let your fear take over because it will ruin your experience and you won’t have any fun. It’s hard, but [you] can eventually do it.”

# Cleanups and Restoration

Austin's rolling landscape is shaped by the creeks that flow through neighborhoods and greenbelts. Most of these creeks make their way to Lady Bird Lake, which is visited by thousands of kayakers and paddle boarders year-round. These beloved waterways, however, have been significantly impacted by human activity as our city grows. Keep Austin Beautiful is therefore coordinating comprehensive efforts to preserve Austin's watersheds, removing invasive species to help restore biodiversity, planting native trees and grasses to prevent erosion and reduce runoff, and mitigating litter to prevent toxins from leaching into the soil and water.



**145** miles of creeks  
adopted  
**100** Adopt-a-Creek  
Groups



**20,000**  
native trees planted  
**72** invasive species  
removal projects



**166,000** pounds of  
trash collected  
**20,000** pounds of  
recycling collected



## Clean Lady Bird Lake

Every other month, Clean Lady Bird Lake mobilizes between 300 and 400 volunteers to collect litter at 25 shoreline and on-the-water sites. A typical cleanup will collect about 4,000 pounds of trash and 500 pounds of recycling, and volunteers are sure to discover any number of weird items, ranging from voodoo dolls to scarecrows to VHS tapes. For volunteers, Clean Lady Bird Lake is an opportunity to get outdoors, make new friends, and help care for one of Austin's most beloved features. Susie Shockley, a longtime Lake Leader at Zilker Park, captures the spirit perfectly. She says, "I love seeing first-timers come and participate and how much everyone falls in love with the cleanups. I love when families bring their little ones to participate [and to] learn about how important it is not to litter and to volunteer at a young age."



## Adopt-a-Creek

In 2017, 3,694 volunteers with 100 Adopt-a-Creek groups cared for 145 miles of creeks throughout Austin. Collectively, they cleaned up 34,233 pounds of trash and 3,361 pounds of recycling. To help restore riparian habitats, volunteers removed countless invasive trees, shrubs, and other plants, planted nearly 20,000 native saplings, and distributed thousands of native seeds along creeks. Cliff Tyllick describes the marked changes he has witnessed along his group's stretch of Walnut Creek. After removing hundreds of invasive trees and shrubs, Cliff says, "Native saplings are getting water, finding daylight, and starting to take back the canopy. Where there are no native saplings, all those seeds we've scattered are sprouting, filling the void with wildflowers and native grasses." It's an encouraging image of healthier waterways, preserved for Austin's future.

# Beautiful Spaces

Keep Austin Beautiful believes that everyone should be able to experience natural beauty in their daily lives, and our city has numerous parks, greenbelts, and creeks that are enjoyed by Austinites year-round. However, not everyone has easy access to these places, as fewer than half of city residents live within walking distance to a public park, according to a recent study by the Trust for Public Land. Our community-focused beautification projects work to create more natural spaces in underserved parts of Austin. Many of these projects are initiated by community members, and this year we formed significant partnerships with two schools to transform their grounds into welcoming gathering spaces for the communities they serve.



Tools used by  
**9,000** individuals  
and **180** different  
groups





## Beautify Austin

Beautify Austin engages entire communities in large-scale projects for three months at a time, with various follow-up projects over the next year. This year's Beautify Austin projects took place at Sims Elementary School and Paredes Middle School. At Sims, the school grounds were transformed into a neighborhood focal point, with a rain garden as the central feature. This garden addressed drainage issues at the school while providing a place for hands-on environmental learning among the thriving native plants and pollinators. At Paredes, Eagle Scout Anthony Hall took charge of designing and installing a rainwater collection system for the school's permaculture garden. New gutters along the tool shed and chicken coop now funnel water into a 500-gallon barrel, which irrigates edible plants during dry spells and has allowed the community to expand the garden.



## Tool Shack

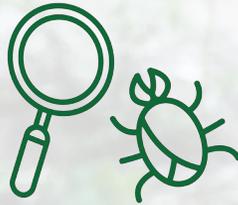
Now in its twelfth year, our Tool Shack supplies community groups with nearly any tool they could need to build gardens, remove invasive plants, beautify public spaces, or complete neighborhood improvement and maintenance projects—all completely free of charge. At Reagan Early College High School, student and community volunteers borrowed tools to complete a teaching garden. This garden will allow students in wheelchairs or with mobility impairments to grow food as part of a class that combines math and science skills with cooking and healthy eating. UT students affiliated with The Project, UT's largest service day of the year, used Tool Shack resources to complete numerous beautification projects in the Rundberg neighborhood. With hundreds of tools and resources, the Tool Shack is well stocked to serve a variety of community needs.

# Youth Education

Keep Austin Beautiful's diverse education programs emphasize hands-on activities and service learning projects to instill a strong sense of environmental stewardship among young people. Our fun, interactive projects help students see how their actions can make a big difference in caring for the environment, and help cultivate their passion for maintaining the parks, creeks, and green spaces of our city.



**10,770**  
students  
educated



**1,043**  
activities  
led at **106**  
schools



**12,000**  
native  
seedballs  
distributed





## Clean Creek Campus

In partnership with the City of Austin Watershed Protection Department, our Clean Creek Campus program conducted 25 service learning projects at 17 schools this year, teaching 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> graders about protecting water quality. After learning concepts in the classroom, Clean Creek Campus participants visited local creeks to put their knowledge into action. Students from Sims Elementary learned about vegetation's vital role in maintaining creek health, and distributed over 200 seedballs along the banks of Tannehill Branch Creek. Rain will melt these perfect packages of soil, clay, and native seeds, allowing wildflowers to take root and establish a more connected network of plants that prevents further pollution from entering the creek. Through such projects, Clean Creek Campus students are sure to see the impact of caring for Austin's creeks and parks.



## Generation Zero

Whether helping elementary students witness the wonders of organic decomposition with in-classroom worm composting bins or guiding high school students through audits of their schools' waste streams, Generation Zero empowers Austin youth to take charge of ambitious waste reduction projects. Generation Zero is a partnership between Keep Austin Beautiful and Austin Resource Recovery to help the city divert 90% of trash from overburdened landfills by 2040. The program reaches thousands of students at all grade levels in schools across greater Austin, encouraging the next generation of Austinites to be knowledgeable and active conservationists. Mary Metcalf of Maplewood Elementary says, "I see my 5- and 6-year-old students becoming advocates for the environment, and having a real sense of agency: they believe they can make positive changes in their world..."

# Waste Diversion

One of the most important aspects of sustainability is reducing how much waste we produce. Keep Austin Beautiful has long provided resources and information about recycling, and one of our major focus areas is encouraging more recycling at events.



**1,400**  
pounds of  
recyclables  
diverted from  
the landfill



**83**  
events supported  
with free recycling  
bins





## Zero Waste Events

As part of the City of Austin's Zero Waste by 2040 initiative, Keep Austin Beautiful has partnered with Austin Resource Recovery and Travis County to help reduce the amount of landfill waste generated at events ranging from major festivals to church potlucks. In keeping with our own aim to lead by example, all Keep Austin Beautiful events are now zero waste. Whether we're serving food and drink to more than 1,000 volunteers after Clean Sweep or throwing a party for our annual award winners and donors at Beautify Bash, we're not sending anything to the landfill. All food scraps are composted, and all of our utensils, dishes, and glasses are reusable, recyclable, or compostable.



## Event Recycling

Recycling is for everyone, and Keep Austin Beautiful's partnership with Austin Resource Recovery to provide free event recycling bins and signage makes sure that everyone has the opportunity to recycle. In addition to supplying easy-to-transport recycling frames and collection bags, we offer highly visible flutter flags that draw attention to the recycling bins and increase recycling rates at public events. This year we supplied free bins and flags to 83 events large and small, including the Trail of Lights in Zilker Park, the Texas Book Festival, school fairs and talent shows, and numerous runs, walks, and marches. In a city famous for its festivals, live music, and frequent celebrations, we're happy to do our part to help make events across Austin more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

# Outreach and Communications

44

organic  
media spots

7

segments  
on local  
TV news

4

features on  
AISD home  
page



Keep Austin Beautiful's Clean Sweep on CBS Austin  
| April 8th, 2017

# 33%

increase in online audience growth. We reach an average audience of **2,000 people per day** with our social media messaging.

## Engagement Highlights

It was a major year in audience growth for Keep Austin Beautiful. This year we not only saw an increase in our overall online engagements with fans and volunteers, but we also reached new audiences across the country. Keep Austin Beautiful's Clean Sweep was featured on the television show "Texas Cake House," which airs nationally on The Food Network. The episode was viewed by more than 630,000 people when it premiered and continues to air throughout the year.

Some other exciting numbers:

35,500 unique website visitors

8,533 Twitter followers

8,208 Facebook fans

400% increase in engagement on Facebook

164% increase in followers on Instagram

13,000 online newsletter subscribers



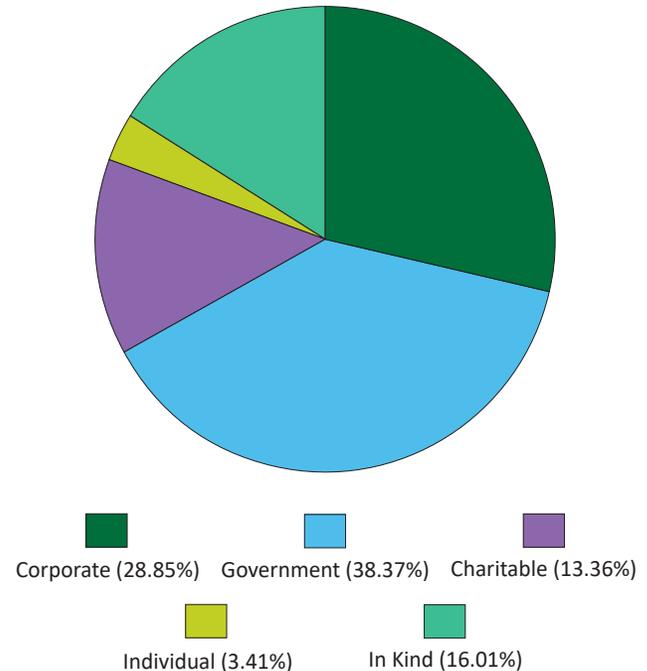
# Financial Responsibility

We could not accomplish everything we do without the many contributors who donate funds, products, and services in support of our mission. Their generosity allows our programs to reach more people in more locations across Austin. **77% of all donations go directly to our initiatives to clean, beautify, and educate Austin!**

## FY 2017 Operating Revenue

Corporate	\$327,409
Government	\$435,432
Charitable	\$151,639
Individual	\$38,664
In Kind	\$181,688

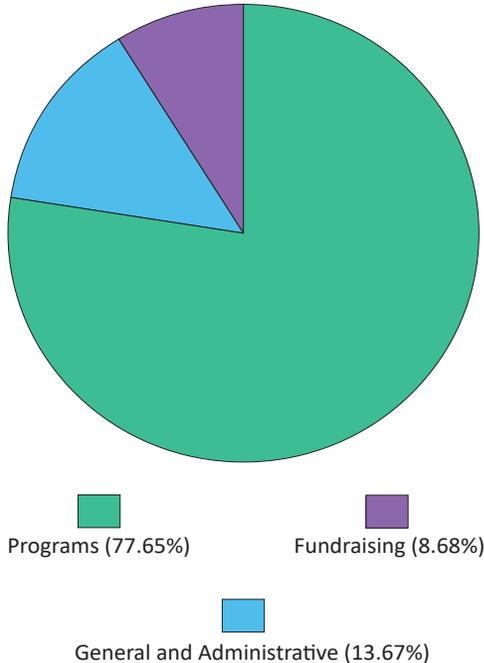
## Operating Revenue\*



# \$.77

of every dollar donated to  
Keep Austin Beautiful is designated for programs.

## Total Expenses\*



## FY 2017 Total Expenses

Programs	\$783,817
General & Administrative	\$137,978
Fundraising	\$87,583

\*Pre-audited financials

# Sponsors and Partners

## **Diamond Sponsors**

Applied Materials Foundation | Dell | National Fish and Wildlife Foundation  
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## **Gold Sponsors**

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### **Affiliate Partners**

Keep America Beautiful | Keep Texas Beautiful

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