

## What is the Cultivating Our Community Project?

The Cultivating Our Community project is a collaborative effort to develop and implement a planned and coordinated approach to beautification in Genesee County and set higher standards for the visual landscape of our community. A clean and attractive community encourages economic development, improves the community's image, and provides a vibrant place to live, work, and play. The project is funded by the Ruth Mott Foundation in partnership with Keep Genesee County Beautiful.

- ⦿ Beautification of twenty-seven gateways in the City of Flint consisting of traffic triangles and park entrances, and twelve gateway sites throughout Genesee County, including Burton, Clio, Davison, Fenton, Flushing, Genesee, Grand Blanc, Mt. Morris, Swartz Creek and five (5) Flint Elementary school sites.
- ⦿ Over 70 businesses, organizations, schools, neighborhood and other groups have agreed to sponsor the gateways by maintaining the sites for a three-to-five year period.

## Who is involved in the project?

The Cultivating Our Community project is funded by the Ruth Mott Foundation through Keep Genesee County Beautiful. The Genesee Regional Chamber of Commerce and Ruth Mott Foundation-Applewood also played key roles in the program startup in 2006-2007. More than 70 businesses and organizations have agreed to become sponsors of gateway sites while numerous organizations, businesses, neighborhood clubs, governmental entities, and surrounding communities are participating in their own projects.

- ⦿ 111 partners and sponsors throughout Genesee County are using or supporting the Cultivating our Community program.
- ⦿ Since the program started, 6,512 volunteers have spent 29,169 hours to plant and maintain over 54,225 plants, bulbs, tree, shrubs and grasses at the gateway sites between October 2006 – October 2013. The value of the volunteer “sweat equity” and in-kind and cash donations to the program is \$712,786 to date!

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## Sponsor Roles and Responsibilities

### ⦿ **Setting the Example**

Our sponsors understand the importance of “**setting standards**” of beautification for businesses and organizations in our community. We recommend that each Gateway Site Sponsor evaluate how their neighborhood, property, building, or storefront looks to customers and clients and make the necessary changes to instill a sense of community pride and set an example to others.

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## ⦿ **Determining Who Will Lead the Project for Your Organization**

To serve as the main contact between Keep Genesee County Beautiful and your business or organization, **we recommend that you identify two (2) people** to serve as the Gateway **Committee Co-Chairs**. It's easiest to recruit people who have a passion for gardening or enjoy community work. You will find that their passion is contagious and will motivate others to "dig" in as well.

The **time commitment** of your Gateway Committee Co-Chair(s) may vary, but on average they could spend up to five (5) hours from February through April each year on organizing volunteers for your gateway site and promoting the project within your business or organization.

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## ⦿ **Recruit and organize volunteers to care for your garden site.**

Volunteers need not be gardeners to become involved in the gateway project! Volunteers love our community and want to make a difference. They can expect to spend approximately 60-90 minutes at each maintenance visit along with other volunteers.

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## ⦿ **Attending Spring Workshop**

Keep Genesee County Beautiful hosts a Spring Workshop every year in April to provide general information to Gateway Committee Co-Chairs regarding the installation and/or maintenance of the gateways. Co-chairs from each organization must attend the Spring Workshop.

Information on spring cleanups of sites will be provided. In addition, you will receive materials and resources to assist you in the ongoing maintenance of your site. The training session will also provide an excellent opportunity to meet Gateway Co-Sponsors from other organizations that may also be assigned to your site.

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## ⦿ **Maintaining & Reporting on Your Gateway Site**

### 1. **Regular Maintenance**

In most cases, additional organizations and businesses have been assigned to sponsor your gateway site to share responsibilities so that **maintenance occurs at your site every two (2) weeks throughout the season.**

With regular maintenance every two (2) weeks, the gateway sites should take a minimal amount of time to maintain. By scheduling an adequate number of volunteers to pull weeds, pick up litter and deadhead perennials on a regular basis, it should take no more than 60-90 minutes every time you visit the site. Problems will occur when a regular maintenance schedule is not adhered to, resulting in increased volunteer hours.

Keep Genesee County Beautiful assesses mulch and plant replacement needs, as well as installation. Pruning trees and shrubs is also the responsibility of Keep Genesee County Beautiful.

## **2. Seasonal Clean-ups**

There will be two (2) times each year when seasonal clean-ups will be required in addition to the regular maintenance schedule. The spring and fall cleanups will involve more volunteer hours for tasks such as deadheading and edging the garden beds. Keep Genesee County Beautiful takes care of pruning, plant replacement and mulch needs.

## **3. Reporting**

You will be provided with reporting forms at the Spring Workshop each year. The information turned in with your year end report is presented to the Ruth Mott Foundation and the community to keep them informed of the program progress and community participation. Reports must be submitted to Keep Genesee County Beautiful by **October 31** each year. All program related forms can be found in Section 4.

