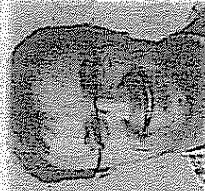


3/20/11



MANDEVILLE WEST

Kenny Mathews

# Volunteers sought for cleanup day

Volunteers are needed to join Keep Mandeville Beautiful (KMB) in a citywide cleanup as part of the nationwide Keep America Beautiful's "Great American Cleanup."

The event will take place on April 9 from 9 a.m. until noon. Local businesses, churches, civic groups and families are

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## KMB aims to change attitudes about litter

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encouraged to volunteer for the litter cleanup and beautification projects, including the mulching of lakefront oak trees, and planting and mulching of gardens around town. Volunteers of all ages are welcome. The project is a great way for students to earn community service hours. Groups and families are encouraged to preregister and receive an assigned position by calling 624.3165 or e-mailing [kmb@cityofmandeville.com](mailto:kmb@cityofmandeville.com). Registration for walk-ups on the day of the event will be held at 8:30 a.m. at the lakefront gazebo near Coffee Street.

Volunteers will receive a designated site to clean, safety vests, a trash grabber and garbage bags. All participants should wear comfortable, closed-toe shoes, sunscreen and gloves.

The "Great American Cleanup" runs from March to May and is expected to involve nearly 3.5 million people, volunteering more than 8 million hours

to clean, beautify and improve 15,000 communities during 30,000 events in all 50 states. Activities will include beautifying parks and recreation areas, cleaning seashores and waterways, handling recycling collections, picking up litter and removing scrap tires, planting trees and flowers, and conducting educational programs and litter-free events.

KMB Director Susan Russell said, "The cleanups KMB coordinates are so important on so many different levels. The obvious benefit, of course, is that trash which litters the sides of the roads and gets into our ditches and then the waterways is removed. But just as importantly, these cleanups serve as a fabulous educational tool. About three-fourths of our cleanup volunteers are people under the age of 18. Once a person bends down and picks up someone else's trash, the chances of them ever littering again is reduced drastically. There is no textbook or marketing campaign that is as effective or more powerful as being up close and hands-on with

the problem."

The cleanup is one of the events that cut to the core of the KMB mission. Born out of grassroots efforts in the late 1990s to preserve and promote Mandeville's natural beauty, KMB became an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful in 2002.

Funded by grants, donations and the city of Mandeville, and led by a director and a volunteer advisory board, the organization focuses on changing the attitudes and behaviors of people through educational programs and activities aimed at reducing litter; increasing recycling, beautification, and heightening environmental awareness.

KMB programs and activities are designed to improve the physical appearance of Mandeville and to bolster an overall sense of pride in the community while bringing together all segments of the community. Among the events coordinated by KMB are the "Adopt-a-Spot" program, city-wide cleanups in April and September, school presentations, an anti-litter art contest and the

maintenance of city gardens, including the butterfly garden.

Russell said the organization's most recent endeavor is in the area of recycling. It recently opened a recycling drop-off site on Girod Street, started a paper recycling program in Mandeville schools, loaned portable recycling containers to event organizers for outdoor special events, and bought recycling cans for the Mandeville Trailhead. Next month, KMB will spearhead an effort to increase curbside recycling by mailing a postcard and refrigerator magnet to all Mandeville households. The magnet will educate and remind people when and how to recycle.

KMB has many ongoing volunteer opportunities for people of all ages. Last year, more than 1,200 people volunteered more than 4,000 hours to KMB.

"Our program's success relies on volunteer help from our community," Russell said. "Whether you want to volunteer one time for just a couple of hours or if you are looking for a bigger project, KMB is the organization for you."