



NJCCC Salutes the “Queen of Volunteers”

For many more years than Judy Murphy would like to count, she has proudly served as secretary of the New Jersey Clean Communities Council (NJCCC).

But now, with her move to a retirement community in Fredericksburg, Va., Murphy said it is time to retire from the board – after more than 20 years of service.

Murphy, of Morristown, became involved with the NJCCC while serving as a recycling specialist for the Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority, as well as working as the county’s clean communities coordinator.



Over two decades, she has helped guide the council to introduce many new statewide programs and bring in thousands of volunteers. She retired from her county work in September 2000, but has remained with the NJCCC.

“I would say our biggest achievement over the past 20 years has been to bring in Sandy Huber as our executive director,” Murphy said. “She has done so much to get people involved in cleaning up urban waterways, as well as bring a number of programs under one roof. She has been tremendous with board recruitment and getting our name out across the state. We have seen so many people attend our galas, and we have awarded so many volunteers to show our appreciation.”

"Judy has been tremendous to the council; she is really a queen of volunteerism," Huber said. "She has always been there for us and eager to lend a hand. She will be sorely missed, but has left an incredible legacy with us."

Murphy said she hopes the NJCCC can focus on education, as recruiting children to help fight against litter is the key to a long-term solution. Adding more board members to the ranks is also important, she said, noting a more eclectic mix of business owners and business groups can help draw more private support.

"I really wish everyone well," Murphy said. "I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the council over the years and have met so many wonderful people who give of their time to the cause. I hope that continues for a very long time."

NJCCC Celebrates "Slam Dunk the Junk" in Newark



NJCCC joined forces with corporate volunteers, city officials, and hundreds of local schoolchildren for the 13th annual "Slam Dunk the Junk" program, held October 8 at Lincoln Park on Broad Street, and other sites across the city.

"This has become a great tradition in the City of Newark," said Mayor Ras Baraka. "For 13 years, it has showcased our determination to make our beloved Newark a cleaner city."

"Residents of all ages and a variety of community organizations come together to remove trash from our streets and plant flowers, and physically transform the face and streetscape of Newark, creating a visible city we can all believe in," the mayor added. "I congratulate all the participants for a decade of teamwork and partnership on this important annual event."

At Lincoln Park, the children used large, clear bags and rakes to clean up leaves and trash from the park, as music piped in from a DJ on a large stage. The kids danced, ran, and laughed as they worked, competing to see who could clean the park the quickest.



Meanwhile, they were visited by none other than Batman and Batwoman, who arrived in a modern-day Batmobile. The kids gathered around the car, eager to get autographs and photos with the masked crusaders. Later, Batwoman grabbed a rake and joined the kids in the cleanup.

Newark's Department of Neighborhood and Recreational Services provided equipment for the cleanup crews. Awards were given to teams of volunteers who removed the most litter, as well as those who found the most interesting, educational, or unusual way to pick up trash.

Newark students made quick work of fall cleaning at NJCCC's "Slam Dunk the Junk" community cleanup drive.

"The Newark cleanup is part of a highly successful series of urban cleanups hosted by the New Jersey Clean Communities Council," said NJCCC Executive Director Sandy Huber. "It fosters cooperation of government agencies, community organizations, schools, and businesses in cleaning up litter."

Event sponsors included the state Department of Environmental Protection, Essex County, the Greater Newark Conservancy, Integrity House, Panasonic, Ace Environmental Services, Covanta Energy Corporation, The Coca-Cola Company, ShopRite, the Lincoln Park Coast Cultural District, Investors Bank, NJ Transit, Sims Metal Management, PSE&G, Waste Management of New Jersey, Anheuser-Busch, and Newark Public and Charter Schools.

Coca-Cola provided volunteers from its facilities in South Brunswick and Carlstadt, along with bottled water for volunteers.

"Coca-Cola is a proud partner of the NJCCC for more than 12 years," said Michael Sullivan, Vice President of Coca-Cola Sales Operations.

“This cleanup demonstrates our commitment as a company to creating sustainable, clean environments for the residents and businesses in urban areas such as Newark and throughout the state.”

Belmar Dives Against Debris



It has become a 20-year tradition in Belmar, where local divers wait until the end of the summer season to coordinate underwater clean-ups.

This year, there were 32 divers and 20 support volunteers who took to the Belmar Underwater Marine Park to clear out any discarded items that are not biodegradable during the September 20 event. Weeks after the summer boat traffic, with the water

remaining at perfect temperatures, the clean-up has become a not-to-miss event for local divers who want to combat litter in an ideal setting.

The effort is overseen by Charlie Van Der Linde, the Belmar harbor master who has strong ties to the NJCCC. A big organizer of the annual event is Joe Skimmons, owner of Divers Two in nearby Avon-By-The-Sea.

The effort is part of a national campaign known as “Dive Against Debris.” Skimmons estimates his local group has removed 30,000 pounds of debris from the waters of Belmar since the 1990s. Gone are the days when divers would find bowling balls or torque wrenches or funerary urns. But the divers still find plenty of fish hooks, plastic bottles and other debris.

“We all just jumped on board and haven’t really stopped,” Skimmons said. “This is a great excuse for divers to get wet and dive in these pretty areas. It is also great to see our progress year after year, as we have kept this area very clean. With such success, it has not been hard to find volunteer divers.”

