NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION
VOLUNTEER CLEAN-UP PROGRAM

Volunteer clean-up events, organized by neighborhood associations, not only help keep neighborhoods clean, but are also the source of great community pride. They provide a wonderful opportunity for bringing neighbors together and building lasting relationships, while encouraging volunteers to continue in their efforts to beautify and improve their community.

When planning a volunteer clean up, the first step is to contact the Department of Sanitation’s Customer Service Unit – (646) 885-DSNY– at least four (4) weeks in advance of the clean-up. Activities may include removing trash, tires, as well as other debris and litter. The DSNY will loan you equipment, such as brooms, shovels, rakes, etc.; will provide you with work gloves and trash bags; and will coordinate with the local Sanitation District for the collection of bagged debris.

How To Get Started:

Contact the DSNY Customer Service Unit - At least four (4) weeks in advance of your planned clean-up event, submit the location of your clean-up area(s), a description of your clean-up activities, and a list of equipment needs. The DSNY will review your plan (see below); will arrange for short-term, cost-free loans of DSNY cleaning tools (your group will have to pick up and return any loaned equipment); will coordinate with the local Sanitation district as necessary; and will identify appropriate debris pick-up sites, where Sanitation can collect trash, litter, debris, etc.

Prepare Clean-Up Event Plan - Prepare an event plan that identifies 1) clean-up area(s), such as a sidewalk, a street segment, or other areas, 2) clean-up tasks, such as how you will organize volunteers and 3) a rain date.

Publicize Clean-Up Event - To maximize volunteer turn-out, you may want to publicize your clean-up event in several ways, such as articles in a neighborhood newsletter and local newspapers; fliers posted at stores in your neighborhood; letters and phone calls to your local Community Board, business and community leaders and announcements at worship services and other community meetings. If possible, recruit one volunteer per block to go door-to-door shortly before your clean-up event to provide a final reminder.

Celebrate Accomplishments - Recognize volunteers, perhaps by listing their names in neighborhood publications. Bring cameras to take “before-and-after” photos and videos and capture volunteers in action improving their neighborhood. If you wish, you may share your photos and videos with us; we would like to admire the results of your efforts. Schedule future clean-up events to follow up on your success; perhaps establishing annual events to make community clean-ups a regular part of your neighborhood’s social fabric.