

THE HISTORY OF KEEP CHARLESTON BEAUTIFUL

Keep Charleston Beautiful, formerly the Clean City Commission, focuses on preventing litter before it happens. Historically, the Commission worked to reform sanitation ordinances and create an environmental court. More recently, the commission has focused on education, awareness, and community involvement.

1977-1985

In 1977, Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. organized the Charleston Clean City Commission as an affiliate of the Keep America Beautiful Clean Communities Program. During its first decade, the Commission focused on instituting better procedures for the enforcement of environmental ordinances. The Commission worked closely with the Sanitation Division (now Environmental Services Division) to improve trash and garbage pickup scheduling and efficiency. In addition to strengthening enforcement of environmental ordinances, the Commission created Clean City Clara, a pelican mascot, to use in educational programs. Clara visited students throughout Charleston and encouraged them to live litter-free lives. The early work of the Commission also focused on large-scale cleanup projects.

AWARDS & IMPORTANT EVENTS:

- 1982 - Clean City Commission helps revise the Environmental Code of the City of Charleston.
- 1983 - Clean City Commission initiated a citywide cleanup event called the Clean City Sweep. Clara debuts.
- 1984 - Commission worked with City Council to create an Environmental Court.

1985-1995

The focus of the Commission gradually shifted to education and community outreach. The Commission's mascot, Clean City Clara, grew in popularity. She was portrayed by a series of volunteers including Ann Andrus, Iona Sanders, The Back Porch Storytellers, and Mary and Moose Moyers. The Clean City Commission continued to sponsor an annual citywide cleanup called the Glad-Bag-a-Thon. They recruited the assistance of Citadel cadets, area businesses, neighborhoods, and schools to clean up the City of Charleston. As a result of their work with education, cleanup, and the ongoing support of enforcement activities, the Commission won several awards during this period.

AWARDS & IMPORTANT EVENTS:

- 1986 - Palmetto Citation of Excellence
- 1987 - Take Pride in America National Award
- 1988 - Charleston Pride Board Community Award
- 1992 - The Story of Clara produced by the Commission; a book about how Clean City Clara helps kids prevent litter.

1996-2004

In the late 1990's and early 2000's, the Commission focused on addressing specific environmental concerns including dog litter, cigarette litter, neighborhood cleanliness, and beautification. The Coordinator of the Commission was an authorized code enforcement officer. The Commission was working to increase the public's awareness of environmental ordinances and compliance with the ordinances.

The Commission continued to organize a major cleanup each spring as part of the Great American Cleanup sponsored by Keep America Beautiful. The Commission won two major awards for its participation in this program. In 1998 the Commission won First Place Municipal Program in South Carolina and First Place Municipal Cleanup in the United States in 1999. Clean City Clara continued to visit schools and to teach children how to stop litter. The new group of volunteers included the Charleston Southern Women's Basketball team, Johnson & Wales Future Business Leaders of America, and College of Charleston Masters of Environmental Sciences Student Association.

AWARDS & IMPORTANT EVENTS:

- 1998 - Commission wins First Place Cleanup Program in South Carolina
- 1999 - Commission wins First Place Cleanup Program in the United States
- 2003 - Commission wins First Place Litter Prevention Program in South Carolina

2005-2010

In 2005, the Clean City Commission changed its name to Keep Charleston Beautiful (KCB). Along with the name change, the Commission continued to evolve to meet the needs of the community. Clean City Clara continued to visit local schools. Clara saw over 3,000 students during the 2008-2009 school year and, in the spring of 2009, was awarded Keep South Carolina Beautiful's Program of the Year. Clean Up After Your Pet and My City is NOT Your Ashtray gained community support over the years. There were over 65 dog waste bag dispensers installed in over 20 City parks, and dispensers are maintained through the help of community sponsors. In 2009, the community used over 300,000 dog waste bags.

Though KCB still works to increase the public's awareness of local ordinances, the Coordinator of KCB is no longer an authorized code enforcement officer. KCB focuses on education, awareness and action, but also still maintains a close relationship with the Livability Court. In the summer of 2010, KCB was moved under the City of Charleston's new Livability Division.

The Green Spaces Recycling program was kicked off in October of 2009, placing 25 recycling bins in City Parks. The first four parks to get bins were Marion Square, Hampton Park, White Point Garden, and Waterfront Park. KCB was awarded a \$10,000 grant from The UPS Foundation in the Spring of 2010 to further the program. The same year, a new program, Charleston Friendly Yards, was introduced. This program focused on the encouragement of sustainable, environmentally aware yards and gardens.

AWARDS & IMPORTANT EVENTS:

- 2005 - Keep South Carolina Beautiful Program of the Year, My City is NOT Your Ashtray
- 2007 - Keep America Beautiful Innovation Award, Dash for Trash
- 2008 - Keep America Beautiful President's Circle Recognition Award
- 2009 - Keep America Beautiful Affiliate Award, Distinguished Service Citation
- 2009 - Keep South Carolina Beautiful Outstanding Performance Award, Program of the Year Clean City Clara
- 2009 - Keep America Beautiful President's Circle Recognition Award
- 2010 - Carolina Recycling Association Getting the Word Out: Sensational Education and Outreach Award
- 2010 - KAB & USDA People's Garden recognition
- 2010 - Keep SC Beautiful Gold Level Affiliate Recognition Award

2011-PRESENT

In 2011, KCB won a \$2,000 grant from Keep America Beautiful to help build vertical gardens at the Elliottborough Park, and a \$10,000 grant from Waste Management to expand the Green Spaces Recycling Program in City Parks. In 2012, KCB was awarded \$2,000 from the CLPP grant to help reduce cigarette related litter on the Municipal Golf Course and \$1,000 from UPS to help with community murals. Continuing with grant success, in 2013 KCB was awarded \$5,000 from LOWES/KAB to help with the local Green Heart Project at Mitchell Elementary. A LOWES grant was received in 2017 to help expand composting services throughout the Charleston peninsula. In 2018 KCB received a grant from LOWES to build a pollinator book nook garden, and in 2019 KCB received an additional \$20,000 from LOWES to build a community garden at Corrine Jones Park. Grants continue to be the main source of funding for KCB.

AWARDS & IMPORTANT EVENTS:

- 2011- Keep America Beautiful Affiliate Award, 1st place
- 2011- Keep America Beautiful President's Circle Recognition Award
- 2011- Keep SC Beautiful Affiliate Recognition Award- Gold Level
- 2012- Keep America Beautiful's President Circle Recognition
- 2013- Keep America Beautiful's President Circle Recognition
- 2014- Community Pride Recognition- Johnnie Dodds Education Award, 3rd place
- 2014- Ashley Cooper Stormwater Education Consortium Partnership Recognition
- 2015- Keep SC Beautiful Affiliate Recognition Award-Gold Level
- 2019 – Keep America Beautiful President's Circle Recognition Award