

# Volunteer Gwinnett NEWS



April 2021

## Greetings!

Welcome to Volunteer Gwinnett News, a quarterly newsletter to help you stay informed about opportunities to volunteer, how to become a volunteer, and the work volunteers are doing in our community. Volunteers are an essential part of Gwinnett County Government; their selfless contributions ensure projects get done, improve the community's quality of life, build partnership bonds, save tax dollars, and keep us all vibrantly connected.

## Greeting from the Chairwoman

This year, we welcomed Chairwoman Hendrickson on board. As a former County employee, Chairwoman Hendrickson is familiar with Volunteer Gwinnett and enthusiastic about volunteerism around the county. Read what Chairwoman Hendrickson has to say:



Dear Volunteer,

Thank you so much for choosing to volunteer with Gwinnett County. On behalf of the Board of Commissioners and County staff, I want you to know that we truly appreciate your willingness to share your time and talents to help keep Gwinnett a great place to live, work, and play.

Volunteer Gwinnett is a comprehensive, countywide volunteer program that promotes community service and volunteerism. We provide many opportunities to learn firsthand how our local government impacts residents by providing high-quality, cost-effective services. My own background as director of community outreach for the County taught me to appreciate all the many ways volunteers keep us vibrantly connected to residents, business owners, visitors, and community organizations. Volunteering is a great way to meet fellow residents from all over Gwinnett, make a real contribution, and have fun in the process.

I invite you – parents, friends, students, retirees, community leaders, business leaders, and residents – to join many others in giving back to our community. The contribution of your time and talents will make a positive, lasting impression on this wonderful place we all call home.

Sincerely,

Nicole Love Hendrickson, Chairwoman  
Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners

## 2020 Volunteer Gwinnett by the Numbers

In 2020, despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Volunteer Gwinnett had **29,600 amazing volunteers** who gave a total of **598,828 hours**; hosted **288 volunteer events**; and **donated 3,628 items** to HomeFirst Gwinnett through the Great Days of Service event.

Last summer, **3,017 volunteers** assisted with Summer Meals Program to serve families with children 18 years old and younger in 33 locations countywide.

## You're Invited!

In honor of National Volunteer Week, from April 18 to 24, we will be celebrating Gwinnett County's amazing volunteers all week long. With our theme this year, "Growing our Volunteer Family," we will celebrate and applaud all volunteers' efforts and dedication towards volunteerism.

**Saturday, April 24 | 2:00pm – 5:00pm** at [Rhodes Jordan Park](#) in Lawrenceville. Join us for a drive-thru volunteer appreciation party! Drive up with your whole family and join us as we celebrate our volunteer successes and upcoming opportunities. [Click here](#) for additional information.

**April 19 – 23 | 5:30pm – 7:30pm each night** at [Community Gardens](#). Participate in community share row planting. Five volunteer planting events in collaboration with [Harvest Gwinnett](#). Please click [here](#) or visit [VolunteerGwinnett.net](#) to register for this event by dates and locations.

- Monday, April 19: [E.E. Robinson Park Community Garden](#)
- Tuesday, April 20: [Dacula Park Community Garden](#)
- Wednesday, April 21: [West Gwinnett Park Community Garden](#)
- Thursday, April 22: [J.B. Williams Park Community Garden](#)
- Friday, April 23: [Peachtree Ridge Park Community Garden](#)

## Volunteers in Action



During the weekend of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, **Gwinnett Water Resources** conducted a volunteer waterways clean up the creek at Pinnacle Park in Norcross. With 14 volunteers and in about 3 hours, they collected 66 bags of trash and 12 tires, plus some loose pieces of debris, totaling 1,300 pounds! In 2020, Water Resources held 22 stream cleanup events with 303 volunteers. They were able to collect 24,370 pounds of trash and debris from County waterways and roadsides, including 701 tires.

Cleanup events happen year-round, in all areas of the county. Since they cover a range of interests and offer different levels of intensity, there is a cleanup opportunity for everyone! You can even host your own cleanup and get your community groups such as scout troops, sport clubs, youth groups, neighborhood associations, and others involved. To find out more, email [DWRInfo@GwinnettCounty.com](mailto:DWRInfo@GwinnettCounty.com).

**Gwinnett Parks and Recreation** was hard at work this quarter hosting three separate days of service events in February celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. Day at McDaniel Farm Park, Ronald Reagan Park, and Rhodes Jordan Park. With more than 100 volunteers providing 300 service hours, 250 native pollinator plants were planted. This year, the annual Trash Bash was held at Tribble Mill Park. In partnership with Water Resources and help from 25 volunteers, the morning was spent cleaning out more than 200 pounds of trash from across the wetlands of the park.



### Student leaders in action

CoServ Atlanta was founded by four students from North Gwinnett High School who strive to give back to their community. The group's focus has been around food and supply donations to hospitals and homeless shelters and letters of encouragement to seniors and other people around in community.

To accomplish one of their goals, recently, this group of student leaders led an event for their peer students to participate in writing letters of encouragement to senior residents during the pandemic. Approximately 100 letters were delivered to Gwinnett County Senior Services Home-Delivered Meals program in March. These letters will be sent out to the local seniors with the meals. This student organization is looking forward to this continued partnership.

## COVID-19 Response - Mobile Food Distribution

Gwinnett continues to help mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. A strategic partnership with the Atlanta Community Food Bank results in weekly mobile food distributions, supplying families with fresh and shelf-stable foods. In 2020, staff and volunteers distributed 448,747 pounds of food to 9,161 households impacting 37,771 residents!

Multiple departments have assisted with food distribution and offered additional resources to the community. Alongside Gwinnett Community Services, Gwinnett Fire & Emergency Services was onsite to conduct car seat safety checks and to sign up families for free residential smoke and carbon monoxide alarm safety checks and installs. Fire & Emergency Services has reported a 288 percent increase in appointments since January 2021 after attending the mobile food distributions.



Gwinnett Health and Human Services was present to assist residents 60 and older with shelf-stable meals and access to a care manager for additional services. Gwinnett Sheriff's Office ensured safety and helped control traffic flow for distribution attendees. Together we serve our community. To date in 2021, we have served **10,681 residents** with **127,873 pounds of food** impacting **2,726 Gwinnett households**.

## Community Collaborations



To celebrate Black History Month, Community Services partnered with the United Ebony Society to host multiple food distributions. The United Ebony Society helped collaborate with Gwinnett's historically black churches and organizations to host drive-thru mobile food distribution sites every Tuesday.

Together, we distributed **45,759 pounds of food** which impacted **938 households** totaling **3,727 Gwinnett residents**.

## We Need You!

### Grow with Harvest Gwinnett!

An initiative of Live Healthy Gwinnett, [Harvest Gwinnett](#) is an exciting new community garden program in nine locations across Gwinnett that aims to connect community members through hands-on environmental education, plant fresh produce, improve resident food access, and nurture engagement opportunities leading to improved health outcomes.



Currently, Harvest Gwinnett is seeking volunteers at various sites across the county to prepare for our 2021 spring planting season. The project will include tasks such as assembling shelving, carts, planting share rows and tasks to prepare for a vibrant growing season! For more information, call 678.277.0287 or email [HarvestGwinnett@GwinnettCounty.com](mailto:HarvestGwinnett@GwinnettCounty.com).

### Earth & Global Youth Service Day

Celebrate [Earth Day and Global Youth Service Day](#) with a donation of your time at the park! Assist with park cleanups and pollinator plantings Saturday, April 24 at Harbins Park all while having fun. Volunteers are needed from 9:00am to noon and you can register at [VolunteerGwinnett.net](http://VolunteerGwinnett.net) or by calling 678.277.0900.

### Unleash Knowledge with B<sup>2</sup> Anywhere!

[Building Brains \(B<sup>2</sup>\) Anywhere](#) is seeking volunteer assistance in sorting donated books for youth ages 0 to 8 for the G.R.E.A.T. Little Minds Book Exchanges. B<sup>2</sup> Anywhere volunteers are needed on Wednesdays from 9:30am to 11:30am through April 28. Sorting space is located at the Lawrenceville Senior Center. Social distancing and masks required. For more details and to register, click [here](#).

### Medical Reserve Corp Volunteers

When a disaster or public health emergency occurs, local resources may be overwhelmed. Only volunteers who have been registered, credentialed, and trained in advance can participate in emergency response efforts. MRC GEM is a medical reserve corps sponsored by the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General and organizes and trains volunteers before a disaster occurs. They work with local partners, like Public Health, Emergency Management, and local hospitals. There is no minimum commitment, so you can try to come help if called in an emergency including helping with the COVID-19 response. All necessary training is FREE. Volunteers come from all walks of life, not just the medical and health professions. Register at [VolunteerGwinnett.net](http://VolunteerGwinnett.net) or visit [MRCGEM.com](http://MRCGEM.com) to learn more.

## Around the Community

Water Resources' annual spring festival will be held virtually this year during April and May. The Water Wonders event offers fun activities, crafts, and useful information for all ages. Attendees will be encouraged to volunteer in their own backyard by picking up trash or making sure the faucet is turned off.



The Water Wonders webpage will be available for a month from April 19 to May 14. Click [here](#) for more information.



Volunteer  
Gwinnett

**Volunteer Today!** [VolunteerGwinnett.net](http://VolunteerGwinnett.net)  
770.822.7955 • [volunteergwinnett@gwinnettcounty.com](mailto:volunteergwinnett@gwinnettcounty.com)