

Clean-Up Day will help beautify Aurora and bring community together



Spring is in full swing, and if you're starting to turn your mind to a bit of seasonal cleaning, think big as Aurora gears up for the first of its twice-annual Community Clean-Up Day.

The Spring Community Clean-Up Day will take place Saturday, April 20, with Town Park as its nerve-centre.

Beginning at 8 a.m., registered participants can pick-up their cleaning kits at the Downtown Aurora greenspace and fan out to one of several target locations throughout the community to pick up what shouldn't be there.

Andrea Lee-Han, who has been participating in the Community Clean Up Days for the last three years, will once again be heading out on April 20 to beautify Aurora, not just with her own family, but with a number of residents she cares for at Kingsway Place Retirement Community on Murray Drive.

"It's nice that we can all be together on this one day to do this one task, but it is not just one day – every day we need to think about the earth, what we do, and making sure that we do have something left for the next generation," she says.

When she first began participating in days like these, she says she noticed a lot of high school kids were having trouble completing their community service hours and thought this was a great opportunity to get that done.

"I said to my kids, 'Come on out, it's a nice day, we're going to pick up garbage,' and they were like, 'Oh, okay,'" she says, affecting a groan and a chuckle. "It snowballed from there and I wanted to bring that to Kingsway. We didn't start at Kingsway in that first year, I thought, let's get them conditioned first to be able to pick something up from the floor from a lower level and be safe to navigate when they are outside in the community. Because we had COVID at the time everyone had to be masked, everyone had to be social-distanced, and this was an opportunity to do something outside."

"One of the things I kind of preach is we live in a community and we have to take care of our community. You don't want to live in garbage, you want to make sure that you're home. This is your home and when your home is clean you feel better about it and you also feel you're helping your neighbours, too," adds Lee-Han, noting that the area Kingsway and its residents and volunteers take on include the greenspaces around their residence and nearby schools. "We had high school students who came in with us, for the older

ones I was able to leave them in certain areas, the Guides were there teaching them, too, so they could make sure they were understanding we are stewards of this earth and we need to take care of it if we want to have a future. That's my takeaway and I hope I instil that with the residents, too. If you take pride in your surroundings, hopefully that will transfer to whatever is inside the building will also be outside the building, too.

Target locations this month's Clean-Up Day include John West Way, Alex Brodie Drive, Vandorf Sideroad, River Ridge Boulevard, Earl Stewart Drive, Issacson Court, Henderson Drive between Yonge Street and Watts Meadow, Stone Road, First Commerce Drive, Desjardins Way, William Graham Drive, Old Bloomington Road, St. John's Sideroad, Industrial Parkway, Bayview Avenue, Yonge Street, Wellington Street, and all stormwater management ponds.

"Our community takes pride in maintaining a clean and beautiful environment," said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement. "The annual spring cleanup is an excellent opportunity for residents to actively contribute to preserving the natural beauty of Aurora and fostering a sense of community pride."

To participate, individuals or groups can register at aurora.ca/Cleanup. Registration must be completed by Friday, April 19. Cleanup kits will be available for pickup at Town Park on the day of the event, while supplies last. Volunteers will have the option to choose their own cleanup location or select from a list of target areas provided on the Town's website.

Students participating in the cleanup will receive volunteer hours for their contribution to the community.

For more information on the Spring Community Cleanup or to register, please visit aurora.ca/Cleanup.

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