



clean MEMPHIS

Advancing a More Sustainable Memphis for All

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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ABOUT CLEAN MEMPHIS

Our Mission, Vision & History

MISSION

Educating youth, engaging leadership, and empowering communities to sustain a cleaner Memphis.

VISION

Engaged Communities. Sustainable City. A Better Memphis.

HISTORY

Clean Memphis was founded in 2008 to foster a cleaner and greener Memphis. We work to inspire Memphians to be environmental stewards grounded in civic responsibility. In 2020, we pivoted our strategy, using research from peer cities to begin focusing on advancing a zero-waste, circular economy policy plan in Memphis and Shelby County.

We engage leadership with data to drive policy changes that support sustainability in Memphis, empower community leaders with tools to beautify their neighborhoods, implement environmental education programs in schools to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards, and collaborate with businesses and organizations to reduce food waste and create a more sustainable local food system.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO

Nefertiti Orrin



As I reflect on the past year, I am deeply proud of the strides Clean Memphis has made in building a more sustainable and resilient community. In 2024, we expanded our reach across Memphis and Shelby County — providing environmental science education through 12,000+ student interactions, strengthening partnerships with local and national organizations, and driving measurable progress in waste reduction and food recovery.

Our team's efforts culminated in milestones like the successful completion of the EPA Trash Free Waters initiative and the rapid growth of our food rescue network, supported by the Hilton Global Foundation. From school cafeterias to local festivals, our presence is growing — and so is our influence.

Yet, we are equally mindful of the challenges. The demand for system-level change often outpaces the available resources, and building sustainable infrastructure requires patient, persistent work. We continue to learn, iterate, and refine our approach, guided by a continual commitment to partnerships and community-driven solutions.

Looking ahead, our most ambitious efforts are just beginning. The Circular Economy Task Force is laying the groundwork for a transformative shift in how Memphis thinks about waste and opportunity. With over 35 cross-sector stakeholders and momentum building for the 2025 Circular Mid-South Summit, we are positioning Clean Memphis as a regional leader advancing circular economy innovation.

This vision — a cleaner, more resilient, and economically vibrant Memphis — isn't just an idea. It's alive in the relationships we build, the data that guides us, and the leadership that rises from every corner of our community. It's bold, it's urgent — and it's absolutely within reach. Every day, I'm inspired by our team, our partners, and the people of this city who show up, speak out, and push for the progress Memphis deserves.

Thank you for your continued belief in this work and in our shared future.

Nefertiti Orrin
President & CEO

WITH GRATITUDE

Thank You to Our Funders

CORPORATE

Archer
Deloitte
FedEx
Forward Momentum

Get Green Recycleworks
International Paper
Nike, Inc.
Papa John's Foundation, Inc.

PGA Tour
Republic Services
Sylvamo
Target

FOUNDATION & NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Anonymous Foundation
Assisi Foundation of Memphis
Downtown Memphis Commission
Hilton Global Foundation

Lawrence Lewis Foundation
National Geographic Society
Natural Resources Defense Council
TEGNA Foundation
Tennessee State Parks Conservancy

Turley Foundation
Union Pacific Foundation
Wolf River Conservancy
World Wildlife Fund

GOVERNMENT

City of Memphis, City Council
City of Memphis, Housing & Community Development
City of Memphis, Storm Water
Shelby County Commission

Tennessee Department of Transportation
Tennessee Valley Authority
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

INDIVIDUALS

Letitia Anderson
Norman Anderson
Rosa Bergen
Wight Boggs
Janet Boscarino
Charles Brashear
Vickie Carros
Nancy Chung
James Curry
Jeana Daniel

Bryce Daves
Annalee Elmore
Glenn Fiscus
Ryan Hall
Tonya Hayes
Dametrious Hawkins
Vicki Howell
Katy & Jon Hottinger
Philji Johns
Marko Jankov

Kroger Community Rewards
Jim and Lisa Maddox
John McDonnell
Tara Minmier
Nike, Inc. Employee Giving
Matthew Owens
Cardell Orrin
Marion Quinlen
Michael Robertson
Rudy Romo

Scott and Steph Rollen
Suzanne Rollen
Dwayne Spencer
Linda Standifer
Jenai Taylor
Marsha Walton
Crystal Warren
Will Weaver
Williams Family
Charitable Fund

WITH GRATITUDE

Thank You to Our Event Sponsors

LOVING LOCAL

Presenting Sponsor

Tennessee Valley Authority

Gold Sponsors

International Paper

Republic Services

Silver Sponsors

Colliers International

Downtown Memphis Commission

Evolve Bank and Trust

The Marston Group

Memphis Grizzlies

Memphis Medical District Collaborative

Pinnacle Financial Partners

Stryker

Tioga

In-Kind Sponsors

MemPops

REHARVEST MEMPHIS

Presenting Sponsor

Republic Services

Tennessee Valley Authority

Hilton Hotels

Gossett Motors

Gold Sponsors

City Auto

Silver Sponsors

BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee

Community Trust

Adams Keegan

Duncan Williams

Memphis Grizzlies

Memphis Travel

Shelby Electric

In-Kind Sponsors

Athens Distributing

The Compost Fairy

Get Green Recycleworks

Memphis Made

Mid-South Food Bank

South Point Grocery

OUR IMPACT

Organizational Highlights



EDUCATION & ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY

Federal Grant Milestone

- Completed our first federal grant project, the EPA Trash Free Waters initiative.
- As a result, Compass school students collectively **avoided the use of 102,361 plastic water bottles** in a single year by switching to reusable options.

Strategic Partnerships

- Two new national partnerships deepened our sustainability work in schools.
- We conducted cafeteria food waste audits and introduced “Share Tables” through the World Wildlife Fund, reducing food waste and recovering surplus food
- Through National Geographic, we engaged 25 middle and high school students in the Slingshot Challenge, sparking youth-driven solutions to local environmental issues.



FOOD WASTE REDUCTION & RESCUE

Network Size

- Expanded food rescue network to **85 partners** — including FedExForum, Renasant Convention Center, and Mempho Presents — **redirecting surplus food and fighting hunger** in Memphis.

Expanded Capacity

- Thanks to the growth of our Careit food rescue network, bolstered by support from the Hilton Global Foundation – we welcomed a Food Rescue Support Specialist in 2024.
- This strategic hire has allowed our Food Rescue coordinator to focus on donor-recruitment and relationship building, resulting in **new partners** and a **dramatic surge in food rescued**.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

River Roots Festival

- Brought together **over 300 community members** and **12 partner organizations** for an engaging event that spotlighted water refill stations in public parks and raised awareness about the environmental impact of single-use plastics.

Volunteer Power at FedEx St. Jude Championship – PGA Tour

- Mobilized a dedicated volunteer team of **31 individuals** who contributed **76 hours** to sort and divert recyclable materials, keeping valuable resources out of the landfill.

PROGRAMS: ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Empowering Students & Educators



We believe that education is the foundation for building life-long stewardship and civic engagement. Our programs are supported by Stanford University research which found that environmental education develops academic skills such as critical thinking, decision-making, and systems thinking, fostering the growth of lifelong learners and effective problem solvers.

We provide high quality, hands-on experiences that bring environmental concepts to life with a particular focus on how our local community is impacted. Standards-aligned lessons complement classroom instruction, offering in-depth exploration of the content. Our education program brings environmental science to life while empowering students as citizen scientists. Through activities like campus litter analysis and cafeteria food waste audits, Clean Memphis demonstrates how students can be proactive agents of positive change.

IMPACT NUMBERS

12,868

Student
interactions

109

Educators engaged
in professional
development

271

Students immersed in
field trip experiences

2,093

Environmental books
given to second and
third graders

215

Students conducted
food waste audits

30

Organizations accessed
the environmental
book club toolkit.



PROGRAMS: PROJECT GREEN FORK

Building a Sustainable Food System



Project Green Fork (PGF) develops a sustainable food system for all Memphians by reducing food waste, connecting local partners, and promoting green dining practices. Up to 40% of food in the U.S. goes uneaten, and the Natural Resources Defense Council estimates that 5,000 tons of rescue-appropriate food is available in Memphis annually – much of it going to local landfills and contributing to climate pollution.

To address this challenge, PGF connects local food providers with surplus meals to organizations that serve people experiencing food insecurity. The program also supports 50 local restaurants in adopting environmentally sustainable practices. PGF strengthens local sustainability efforts by linking service providers like Compost Fairy and Get Green Recycleworks with hospitality providers and food donors such as FedExForum and Renasant Convention Center, connecting them with compatible food rescue agencies.

IMPACT NUMBERS

122,168

Pounds of surplus food rescued and redirected for community use

203.29

Tons of CO₂e avoided

11,262,809

Gallons of water usage reduced in future food production

101,807

Meals recovered

\$6,000

Awarded in mini grants to local grassroots food rescue organizations

50

PGF-certified restaurants — a 19% increase over 2023

25

Restaurants participated in four rounds of the 901 Save the Food Challenge

400

Attendees at Loving Local, a community event to raise awareness about food waste

\$100,750

Raised for Reharvest Memphis and Loving Local sponsorships



PROGRAMS: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engaging and Empowering Communities

Fostering a robust community engagement program remains a key priority for Clean Memphis. We continue to build a strong network of citizens and business leaders to champion sustainability and support community initiatives that are focused on reducing waste.

In 2024, we expanded our community education efforts to focus on the three R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Our workshops featured partners such as Memphis City Beautiful and Memphis Stormwater, and were co-hosted with community groups, government agencies, and businesses including Dixon Gallery and Gardens, Boshi Botanicals, Hilton Hotels, Memphis Libraries, Memphis Housing and Community Development, Memphis and Shelby County Schools, the Shelby County Commission, Glenview Community Association, and community centers like Glenview, Greenlaw, and Bert Ferguson.



IMPACT NUMBERS

300+

Attendees at the
River Roots Festival

90%

Waste diversion rate
achieved at the festival

500

Reusable water
bottles distributed

12

Community partners
engaged

400+

Volunteers mobilized

225

Attendees at 11
community workshops

15

New corporate and
community partners

1

Collaborative event
with Binghampton
Development
Corporation: Bigger
Brighter Binghampton
— included litter
cleanup and outdoor
classroom construction



CIRCULAR ECONOMY TASK FORCE

Building Momentum for a Sustainable Future



The Circular Economy Task Force was created to lead coordinated efforts in Memphis and Shelby County toward reducing waste and unlocking economic opportunity through circular practices. Initially formed to advocate for funding a regional waste characterization study, the Task Force has since evolved into a hub for cross-sector collaboration and action.

In 2024, we reached several important milestones:

- Expanded membership to over **35 stakeholders** from government, business, and nonprofit sectors.
- Launched the foundation for an **industry directory** to better connect local businesses with recycling, reuse, and material recovery services.
- Brokered a formal partnership between Republic Services and Binghampton Development Corporation to develop a **mattress recycling strategy**, setting a precedent for innovative, community-based solutions.

Looking ahead, the Task Force will continue to raise awareness of circular economy benefits, job creation, improved air quality, and community resilience — and support real-world implementation. A major focus in the coming year is the **Circular Mid-South Summit**, planned for Fall 2025, which will bring together stakeholders to align goals, share best practices, and accelerate action.

This work lays the foundation for a cleaner, more connected, and economically vibrant future for Memphis and Shelby County.

OUR TEAM

Our People, Advancing Sustainability



Janet Boscarino
*Director, Strategic
Partnerships & Development*



Michelle Cowan
*Director, Education &
Community Engagement*



Leann Edwards
*Director, Project
Green Fork*



Amber Lipford
Lead Educator



Ali Manning
*Program Consultant,
Project Green Fork*



J.P. Miller
*Community
Engagement Manager*



Nefertiti Orrin
*President
& CEO*



Sam Powers
*Grants Project
Manager*



Kathleen Quinlen
*Director, Finance &
Operations*



Stephanie Rollen
*Food Rescue
Specialist*



Heidi Rupke
*Food Rescue
Coordinator*



Emma Simmons
Lead Educator

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Guiding Our Vision



Jake Allen
Flex



Marshall Bartlett
Home Place Pastures



Nora Boone
Community Attributes, Inc.



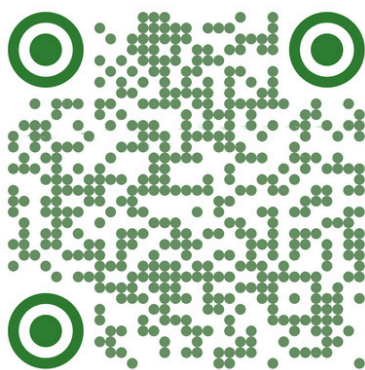
Charles Levell Hairston
International Paper



Hanna Oysel
Adams Keegan



Maggie Strom
*Tioga Environmental
Consultants*



Advancing a More Sustainable Memphis for All

**Join us,
partner with
us, support
the mission.**



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