Organization Name: Greater Greenmount Community Association

Amount Requested: $500

Activity Start/End Dates: July 5th, 2021-July 19th, 2021

Organizational Background:

The Greater Greenmount Community Association (GGCA) was established with a mission of improving the lives of our residents and making our community thrive through revitalizing programs. Sandra Coles founded the GGCA in 2007, as a response to the struggles she saw in the residents of Barclay and East Baltimore Midway. These struggles were imposed on them by urban renewal plans, with no one to advocate for their own choices. The GGCA held its first organizational meeting on January 15th of that year, the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. We incorporated in 2008, receiving 501(c)(3) IRS tax-exempt status the following year. As of today, we have undertaken several projects that have a significant impact on the Greater Greenmount community. Projects involved painting storm drains with environmental messages on them, to raise awareness about the dumping of waste into the Chesapeake Bay. A total of 25 storm drains were painted in 2012 and 2013. One of our most recent projects is the development of new housing in the neighborhood. The plan is to restore a townhouse, and then construct a total of eight new buildings. The groundbreaking ceremony for the first such building took place on the 22nd of September, 2018.

Statement of Need:

During our effort of spreading awareness about pollution in the Chesapeake Bay, we observed poor air quality in Barclay. ([Barclay, MD Air Quality & Pollen | Weather Underground (wunderground.com)](https://www.wunderground.com/health/us/md/barclay). This can lead to health problems like respiratory issues, headaches, and throat irritation ([Barclay, MD Air Quality Index | AccuWeather](https://www.accuweather.com/en/us/barclay/21607/air-quality-index/2135177)). As seen on satellite photos and Google Maps images taken in the last few years, waste is scattered on the streets of Barclay, continually increasing rather than decreasing. This represents great danger for the residents, as it seriously impacts both their health and personal satisfaction. According to the article *DWP: Trash collections to resume on normal schedule*, from the website [www.wbaltv.com](http://www.wbaltv.com), there are growing complaints from residents that their neighborhoods are polluted and littered with garbage, a problem that city officials aren’t hasty in addressing. Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, fewer and fewer community workers are willing to show up to work, resulting in waste being left unattended.

Purpose of Request:

We believe that in order to tackle something big, one needs to start small; We also want residents to take the situation into their own hands. That is why we, the Greater Greenmount Community Association, have decided to perform a major cleanup in the neighborhood of Barclay, MD, with the help of our members, as well as volunteers from all over the neighborhood. Such a project would not only secure a much cleaner environment, but also build team spirit and unity, giving residents a sense of responsibility for making the area a better place. Everyone in the Barclay neighborhood will benefit, regardless of age, gender, race, class, and other factors. Barclay will become a cleaner place for everyone to live in, motivating them to keep it that way. It also has a significant chance of improving the health of residents. This will encourage them to also focus on other, larger-scale environmental concerns within the neighborhood.

What we are proposing can be outlined as such: Our organization will post advertisements promoting a community cleanup on platforms like Facebook and Twitter. We will also inform the City Council of our intentions, telling them to communicate it to the citizens. On the 5th of July, 2021, at 9:00 AM EST, all volunteers and GGCA members will meet outside of Barclay Town Hall for a brief, 15 minute instruction session. They will then split into groups of six, and disperse through the neighborhood starting at Barclay Rd. Each group will be led by one of our members (making for six volunteers and one member in each group). Each individual will be carrying a large plastic bag, and wearing gloves. One group will walk down Goldsboro Rd, picking up waste along the road there. Another group will stride along Maple Ln. Yet another will be cleaning Railroad Avenue. There will be two-hour intervals at whom the groups will be cleaning their respective sections, with 30-minute breaks in between. The main cleanup session will last from 9 AM to 3 PM, although volunteers will be permitted to stay for as long as they wish. These cleaning processes will continue every day for two weeks, extending to every possible area of the neighborhood. We shall deliver all collected waste to the initial point at Barclay Town Hall, from which our members will distribute it to the appropriate waste disposal facilities. Volunteers will not be required to participate in the activities for the entire span of 14 days. However, active participation will be encouraged by our members, responsible for maintaining team spirit in the groups. The open-air streets of Barclay will serve as the location of our event. There aren’t any tents or shelters that we would need, and participants who are tired will be allowed to sit on benches. In the case of rain, we will take shelter in Barclay Town Hall.

While efforts to keep Baltimore clean are already being conducted (Most notable being the Annual Mayor’s Spring Cleanup), our project focuses specifically on Barclay, bringing it forward as the center of attention. We are approaching the environmental and social issues in Barclay with a community cleanup because it has been proven that an unclean neighborhood affects not only people’s physical health, but their morale as well. When a neighborhood is unclean, this contributes to the weight of hopelessness generated by other issues in faced by the residents. Living in an unclean neighborhood also causes more stress and dissatisfaction with one’s situation. Even though such a project may not directly tackle problems like unemployment and crime, it instills a hope in residents that a change for the better is possible, and that they act as the agents of that change.

However, the confidence and unity of residents are only some of the benefits gained from such an operation. A clean neighborhood might make people motivated for new projects, both on a personal and neighborhood level. First and foremost, the number of people moving out of Barclay will decrease, meaning that businesses and shops in the area will lose less employees, working at greater capacity than before, especially after COVID. Secondly, Barclay is a neighborhood of street art, with graffiti and paintings located on many buildings. Less scattered waste will give more opportunities for artists to express themselves. This, in turn, will make Barclay more attractive to visitors, once again boosting income in the area. Finally, Barclay’s example may motivate other neighborhoods to improve their situation, having similar a similar impact there.

With that in mind, we at the GGCA have developed a cleanup plan that calls everyone to make a small push that will get the train moving. That way, even those who do not view themselves as passionate environmentalists will have a reason to be there.

Anticipated Results and Learning:

At the end of the program, we plan to hand out surveys to residents, to fill them out whenever they can, and mail them to our address. These surveys will inquire about the participants’ feelings before the cleanup, the experiences during the cleanup, and their feelings after the cleanup. The GGCA will consider positive responses a measure of the plan’s success. Another way to determine our success would be to sum up the amount of waste collected (in tons), and post the results on our website as proof that our cleanup was a successful activity. This could also be done daily, with the aim to determine how many full bags were collected at the end of a day, and understand whether the amount of waste collected every day is increasing or decreasing.

Aside from simply looking at the positive responses of the surveys, our team will also look at the negative responses, in order to take note of the areas we would need to improve should such an activity be performed again in the future. For example, if there are repetitive complaints about the hours when the cleanups will be conducted, we will make sure to change the hours should we ever repeat the project. Our surveys will also have a question about the residents’ preferred times for such activities to take place. The information from our surveys, conclusions, and all other data will be posted on our website.

Stewardship and Sustainability:

We sincerely hope that our idea has resonated with you, as we know that you, too, care about the future of Barclay and its residents. The Greater Greenmount Community Association sincerely thanks you for taking your time to read through this grant, and promises complete commitment to all requirements of your organization. We are here to empower children and adults, encourage diversity, but also unity and togetherness. We hope to improve the lives of everyone, without exceptions, in Barclay, while also demonstrating Barclay’s example to other neighborhoods.

We also hope that the data published on our website will serve as an effective lesson for everyone, showing them how teamwork could improve the place one lives in. We certainly plan to continue hosting cleanups after this initial events. We hope to finance these subsequent cleanups using fundraisers and donations from anyone who can afford it. We believe that our project has the ability to get people’s attention, and this attention will fuel future attempts.

As a conclusion, we would like to say that one of our main goals is to motivate people to not only clean the neighborhood, but keep it clean as well. And, once our project demonstrates the benefits of a clean neighborhood, we are certain that people will, in fact, be willing to contribute.