



Friends,

Resourcefulness. 2020 certainly demanded that we dig deep to find new and creative ways to keep Indianapolis beautiful. And I'm proud to say we persevered through a number of complex challenges, in no small part thanks to you!

When our normal way of doing business was interrupted, we quickly found new ways to deliver important services. Our education programs went from in-school to online. Our supply distribution for litter cleanups quickly shifted to contactless dropoffs through the city's network of library branches. We limited the group size for volunteers, kept everyone safe, and still managed to plant 3,100 trees around the city, in neighborhoods that needed and wanted that environmental benefit.



One particular highlight was the opportunity to work with different faith leaders to help plant 200 trees in Garfield Park for the City's Bicentennial. When people couldn't congregate inside buildings for spiritual uplift, KIB created the opportunity to gather outdoors and plant trees to care for our community—and for future generations.

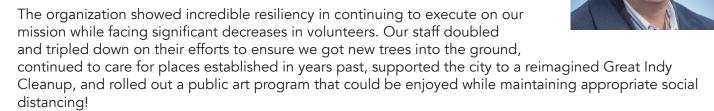
We also added four new GreenSpaces to our network and continued to safely work with residents to maintain the existing ones. Another highlight was the creation of our own native plant nursery. Rather than look elsewhere for native flowering plants, we decided to grow our own—some of which we used in our GreenSpaces, some of which we gave away to our dedicated volunteers, and some of which we sold to those wanting to plant natives in their own yards.

One of the biggest challenges for KIB centered on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We take these issues very seriously and created a charter to hold ourselves accountable for how we will act internally with our own staff and board and how we will act externally with the community at large. We will continually report on our progress to become a better organization and to serve the city we love so much.

Here's to a brighter, cleaner, and healthier 2021!

Jeremy Kranowitz President & CEO Friends of Keep Indianapolis Beautiful,

As KIB was wrapping up 2019, we were very optimistic about what 2020 would hold for us. We had onboarded a new CEO, had signed a new long-term contract with the City of Indianapolis, and were looking forward to the major rollout of our Art & Seek project. Just like many other organizations, we were then hit with an unprecedented level of change related to the pandemic.



Though the successes of 2020 did not look like we expected, KIB continued to execute on our mission and come out in a stronger position at the end of the year. We now look forward to 2021, where we hope to see more of you able to come back out and participate in larger-scale volunteer efforts to create vibrant public places that will help people and nature thrive.

Sincerely,

David Feinberg

Chair, KIB Board of Directors

Director, Crowe LLP





TABLE OF CONTENTS

STRATEGIC DIRECTION	07
PANDEMIC RESPONSE	10
NOTABLE COLLABORATIONS	11
PROGRAM REPORT	15
YEAR IN REVIEW: FINANCIALS	27
THE STAFF	29
THE BOARD	32
2020 DONORS TO KIB	33

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Starting in spring 2020, KIB engaged planning expert Peter Adler to help guide the organization toward building its new four-year Strategic Plan. Some elements were inspired by nationwide conversations on racial equity and our Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Charter. KIB staff and board identified environmental equity as a primary driver for the plan. We laid out three strategic goals for 2021–2024:

- Equitably Improve Access to Environmental Benefits so People Can Thrive in Nature: Improve interaction with natural features in socially vulnerable neighborhoods, strengthen biodiversity to help nature thrive throughout the city, and reduce littering behavior to improve neighborhood cleanliness and health
- Broaden Neighborhood Representation and Awareness to Address Community-Driven Needs: Expand opportunities for input from neighborhoods to influence how and where KIB allocates its resources to improve environmental equity, increase opportunities for neighborhood participation in KIB programs, and broaden knowledge of KIB programming among neighborhood residents and partners
- Improve Long-Term Financial Sustainability to Allow for Equitable Allocation of KIB Resources: Diversify sources of annual revenue to allow for more resources to be allocated in neighborhoods that need and want them most, grow financial reserves to ensure stability during economic downturns, and secure funds for social programs to help people thrive

To help us choose areas of geographic focus for our work, we're looking at litter, tree canopy cover, the Thrive Indianapolis Plan Social Vulnerability Index, and community engagement to find the greatest overlap of opportunity for impact.





PANDEMIC RESPONSE

With group sizes and volunteer opportunities limited, KIB focused on giving residents clear direction on how to take action at home. Here are some ways we responded during the pandemic:

- Used our fleet of vehicles to deliver food with the Indy Parks Food Distribution Service
- Created video tutorials, printable resources, and linked resources for the Indianapolis community to plant trees, create gardens, pick up litter, and improve water quality
- Promoted litter pickup via two Virtual Great Indy Cleanups, an Adopt-A-Block Captains drive, and the #EveryLitterBit challenge
- Organized contactless supplies pickups in partnership with the Indianapolis Public Library
- In the absence of large public volunteer projects, planted trees with staff, dedicated Tree Tender volunteers, the Youth Tree Team, and seasonal workers hired via CARES Act funding
- Implemented safety measures following suggestions from the Marion County Public Health Department, CDC guidelines, and a survey of our volunteers

NOTABLE COLLABORATIONS

CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS/DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

KIB receives funding from the City of Indianapolis, directed through the Department of Public Works (DPW), to assist with creating and maintaining green infrastructure. In 2020, KIB began a new three-year contract with the City of Indianapolis. Our plan has ties to multiple partner agencies' plans to increase quality of life: the Thrive Indianapolis Sustainability Plan, the White River Vision Plan, and the Project Indy/JobReady Indy initiative for youth workforce development.

In late July, KIB began discussions with the City of Indianapolis about using some of Indy's CARES Act funding to employ individuals who had lost work or been unable to find employment due to the pandemic. With our existing staff, CARES Act employees were able to plant 1,190 trees and complete our tree planting commitments for the year. We hired two part-time individuals to support our Development and Marketing teams. These employees focused on database management and social media.

In partnership with the Office of Sustainability, KIB also kicked off a three-year effort to understand littering and illegal dumping in Indy and to develop a campaign to change those behaviors. The campaign will include research-based behavioral science interventions and broaden awareness-messaging.





NOTABLE COLLABORATIONS

INDIANA UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE INSTITUTE (ERI)

Teams from ERI have partnered with KIB on three research projects. Researchers are looking at the environmental and social impacts of KIB GreenSpaces, studying migratory birds at our native landscapes, and monitoring air quality in relation to vegetation in the Pleasant Run and Fall Creek Watersheds. This is a long academic process, but we saw preliminary findings on GreenSpaces in 2020. The data collection in Pleasant Run wrapped up, and researchers completed a second pass in Fall Creek. KIB President and CEO Jeremy Kranowitz presented at the ERI conference in December.

PARTNERS FOR THE WHITE RIVER

In July 2017, the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust announced a \$4.8 million commitment to a multi-year initiative to protect and restore the White River. In Phase I, KIB's role involved over 80 acres of habitat restoration along the White River and its tributaries as well as the creation of two high-value native public landscapes at Fall Creek and 30th Street and in Christian Park. KIB continues the work via Phase II of the grant for 2020–21. The new phase supports five Urban Naturalists, with our work focusing on Riverside Park and Ravenswood Overlook Park.

RECONNECTING TO OUR WATERWAYS (ROW)

KIB was a founding partner of Reconnecting to Our Waterways (ROW) in 2012. ROW is a collective impact initiative with more than 100 local partners that work to change the quality of life and ecology along Indianapolis waterways—and in surrounding neighborhoods. In addition to serving on the ROW Steering Committee, KIB staff chair the Ecology committee, Pogue's Run Waterway committee, and Sustainability Task Force. In 2020, ROW partnered with KIB to complete habitat restoration work in Brookside, Spades, Riverside, and Christian Parks.

PROGRAM REPORT: BEAUTIFICATION AND ANTI-LITTER

GREAT INDY CLEANUP

Results: 116.15 tons of litter removed from streets, alleys, and parks

Although there were fewer cleanups in 2020, we still saw incredible work from volunteers and the City's Solid Waste Team. Beginning on July 17, we were able to accommodate up to 5 cleanups per weekend. As residents looked to get outdoors, there was a 35% increase in collected litter in August and September compared to those months in 2019. With additional support from Republic Services, KIB was able to coordinate 10 cleanups per weekend in the fall. This resulted in 43 fall cleanups—68 total for the year—including one that encompassed five neighborhoods.

On April 1, KIB held a Virtual Great Indy Cleanup, inviting people to go outside, wave to their neighbors, pick up litter, and share on social media. Activity around the event saw over 3,600 social media engagements and more than 140,000 social media impressions.

ADOPT-A-BLOCK

Results: 750 people dedicated to keeping their streets free of litter and debris!

Adopt-A-Block provides supplies and resources for residents to keep their blocks clean on an ongoing basis. 2020 was a renewal year, which means all Adopt-A-Block Captains were asked to renew their formal commitment to volunteer for the program for another two years. By the end of 2020, 750 individuals from 80+ neighborhoods had signed up as Block Captains





PROGRAM REPORT: BEAUTIFICATION AND ANTI-LITTER

INDY ART & SEEK

Results: Public art installed across the city, reflecting neighborhood character and local artists

Indy Art & Seek is a citywide public art experience that launched on Saturday, September 5, 2020. Over 100 new pieces of public art, created by over 60 local artists, were hidden across the city for the community to seek out. The Otocast mobile app guides users via GPS to exact locations and provides a complete art experience with audio from the artists, video, and photos of the artistic process. The events of 2020, from the pandemic to Black Lives Matter, led many of the artists to create art pieces reflective of current events and that spoke directly to what their neighborhood was experiencing. The app will remain active through the end of 2021.

PROGRAM REPORT: GREENING PROGRAMS

IPL PROJECT GREENSPACE

Results: Sixty-five spaces to bring communities together and support nature—including four new ones

Renew Our Communities (Forest Manor): Residents envisioned an escape from the urban environment—a space to enjoy nature, listen to music, and host public gatherings, small sales from local vendors, and art displays. Additions include pathways, plantings, a stage, and new fencing to create a safe haven in the bustling urban corridor.

Legacy Park of Hope (Forest Manor): The Forest Manor Ball Fields used to host Little League baseball until the early 1990s. In 2019, four churches in the area formed a committee dedicated to revitalizing this community asset. In 2020, KIB installed walking paths, new patio surfaces, seating, new gardens, trees, and public art.

Sarah T. Bolton Prairie of Poetry (Beech Grove): Located in Sarah T. Bolton Park, this native plant prairie includes pathways, seating, art, birdhouses, and interpretive panels designed by the Indiana Historical Society with significant input from the community.

Spruce Green (Fountain Square): Neighbors came together to form their own nonprofit, the Spruce Street Neighbors Coalition, and applied for a GreenSpace in 2019. The project refined a triangular lot formed by three intersecting streets, just off the Pleasant Run Greenway Trail.





PROGRAM REPORT: GREENING PROGRAMS

HABITAT RESTORATION

Results: Replaced invasive species with native plants that support local wildlife and ecosystems

Much of the riparian area in Indianapolis (land along the banks of a river or stream) is overcome with invasive plants. Through KIB's habitat restoration efforts, harmful plants are removed and eventually replaced with native species.

KIB's five-member team of college-age Urban Naturalists managed invasive species at nine sites, sowing a diverse native grass seed mix to restore the understory. Additionally, they continued to steward two high-value native landscapes at Christian Park and Fall Creek and 30th Park.

COMMUNITY FORESTRY

Results: Planted thousands of trees that help improve our air and water quality

KIB was able to complete every tree planting slated for the 2020 calendar year, planting 3,102 trees—most of them native shade trees—along streets, in parks, at schools, in combined sewer overflow basins, and on private property.

PROGRAM REPORT: YOUTH PROGRAMS

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Results: Dozens of Indy residents learned about the importance and health of our environment

As the pandemic limited in-person gatherings, KIB created a new Education Hub online. Audiences included parents-turned-elementary-teachers and at-home gardeners looking to turn backyards into pollinator prairies. The KIB-at-Home landing page, created in May, soon became the most used resource KIB offered online.

YOUTH TREE TEAM (HIGH SCHOOL & EARLY COLLEGE)

Results: Thirty-six youth gained job experience planting and maintaining trees

The three-season youth employment program not only centers on tree care but also provides personal and professional development and enrichment opportunities. The youth focused on mulching trees that had been planted over the past three years and helped KIB meet its planting goals. Enrichment activities included a tree ID hike in Southwestway Park and two days working with Urban Naturalists at one of KIB's GreenSpace projects.





PROGRAM REPORT: YOUTH PROGRAMS

URBAN NATURALISTS (UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE)

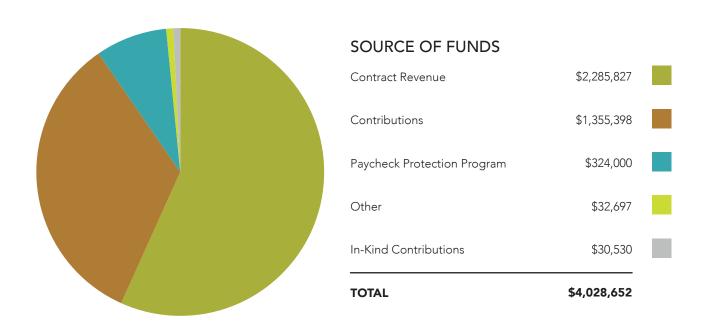
Results: Teams of young adults helped restore Indy habitat

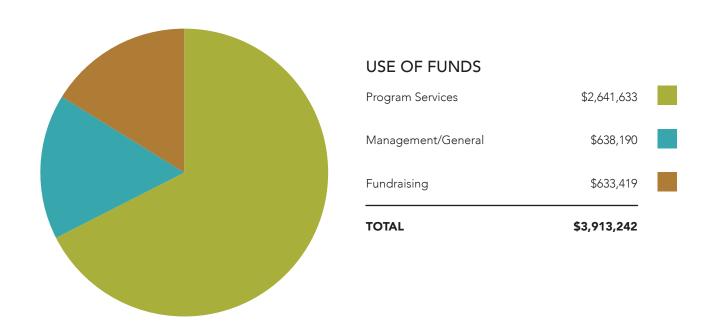
KIB employs college students interested in environmental careers. KIB's five-member team managed 2.67 acres of invasive plant species at 9 sites, took care of native landscapes at Christian Park and at Fall Creek and 30th Park, and picked up 13,334 pounds of litter.

"I think one of the most important things I learned was how actually doing this kind of green work actually happens. Not just the theoretical stuff about, say, what is the right pesticide to use and when, but actually seeing a problem, diagnosing it, and then doing the right treatment."

— 2020 Urban Naturalist

YEAR IN REVIEW: FINANCIALS





THE STAFF



Mark Adler VP of Special Initiatives



Esmé Barniskis Volunteer Coordinator



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Belinda Betton VP of Finance & Administration



Stuart Burns Database Manager



Joe Jarzen VP of Program Strategy



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WHO WE ARE

Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc. is a nonprofit organization with a mission to engage diverse communities to create vibrant public places, helping people and nature thrive. Annually, KIB works with thousands of volunteers on hundreds of community projects across Marion County.

WHAT WE DO

We're the ones who smile when planting trees in the rain, who laugh with friends as we pick trash off our neighborhood streets, and who care very deeply about the health, happiness, and greenness of our city. We see a beautiful place to call home—one that is loved and cared for by the community and is ecologically rich with plants, trees, and pollinators.

How do we do it? We plant trees, create green spaces, engage students in nature, restore urban habitat, and pick up litter with the help of volunteers and donors like you.







