

# 2013 ANNUAL REPORT

*The Ecology Action Center is a not-for-profit environmental agency with a mission to inspire and assist residents of McLean County in creating, strengthening and preserving a healthy environment. The EAC acts as a central resource for environmental education, information, outreach, and technical assistance in McLean County.*



# FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

With little time to regroup from a wild and crazy 2012, the Ecology Action Center dove headfirst into 2013 with eagerness and enthusiasm. Responding to the needs of our community, the EAC is taking on an increasingly larger role in providing for household hazardous waste collection. Addressing the need to broaden our revenue structure, we've increased our fundraising efforts to help support our important programs. These changes as well the ongoing development of new program areas have kept the EAC family of board members, staff, interns, and volunteers all very, very busy.

Highlights of 2013 include:

- Illinois EPA funding received for the first time in six years for Household Hazardous Waste Collection. The October HHW event at Mitsubishi Motors was success on multiple levels—great turnout and short wait times!
- Our annual wine-tasting fundraiser, the Sustainable Gourmet, grew yet again, which necessitated a move to a bigger location. Station 220 hosted the ever-popular event in what was evident as a natural fit!
- EAC developed a brand new community energy efficiency program in partnership with the City of Bloomington and Town of Normal, which will launch mid 2014.
- The second annual We Care Twin Cities Half Marathon benefitting the Ecology Action Center went zero waste, generating only five pounds of landfilled trash for 1,500 people!
- Development of a new Household Hazardous Waste funding agreement with local government agencies, anticipated to be approved in 2014.
- EAC launched the first-ever baseline Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory for the Bloomington-Normal community, with release of the final analysis in 2014.
- Our hard work and efforts were recognized with three different awards—local, state, and national!
- Our reach and impact continues to grow—in 2013 we reached local residents approximately 330,500 times through education programs, special events, newsletters, social media, community presentations, phone inquiries, radio spots, feature stories, and visitors to the EAC!

We are grateful to the strong backing of our many donors, members, sponsors, volunteers, and community partners. Without your contributions and assistance, we couldn't realize such significant results! Thank you for your continued support.

But for all that we've accomplished in the past year with the help of our many partners and supporters, we're still building momentum. 2014 will see some big changes as we work hard to continue to improve our local environment.

Won't you join us in these efforts?



Michael Brown  
Executive Director



# EDUCATION & OUTREACH PROGRAMS

The Ecology Action Center coordinates education and outreach programs in three different areas for municipal clients. It provides 1) solid waste planning and education in fulfillment of the Illinois Solid Waste Planning and Recycling Act requirements for McLean County and Bloomington-Normal as well as 2) storm water education for Bloomington-Normal, McLean County, and the Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District to meet the public education requirements of their National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Phase II Storm Water Management Plans, and coordinates 3) the McLean County Radon Program with funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through the Illinois Emergency Management Agency in order to raise awareness of radon.

## PROGRAMS & PRESENTATIONS

In 2013, recycling presentations to area fourth graders and other elementary school students focused on where our garbage goes and what choices we can make that result in far less garbage being set to the landfill. **We made 89 presentations to 2,646 elementary students** in Bloomington, Normal and rural McLean County. Presentations to 29 other community groups reached an additional 600 people.

EAC educators raised awareness about storm water runoff pollution through **clean water presentations to 1,096 area 3<sup>rd</sup> graders in 44 classes at 18 schools**. These programs focused on the water cycles and preventing pollution from storm water run-off. Nine presentations to other area community groups on clean water protection, Yard Smart and storm water runoff reached 156 people.

EAC's Radon Program Coordinator presented two public information sessions to 48 attendees at the Normal Public Library; almost ninety percent of attendees bought a radon test kit. EAC sponsored an educational social hour for 60 members of the Bloomington/Normal Association of Realtors.

## FESTIVALS & FAIRS

EAC staffed information booths promoting recycling, clean water and radon awareness at over 30 area fairs and festivals in 2013. **We spoke with nearly 4,000 members of the community at these events.** Highlights included booths at the Sugar Creek Arts Festival, the Sweet Corn Blues Festival, Bloomington Culture Fest, and the Home Show, among many others.

## HELPLINE

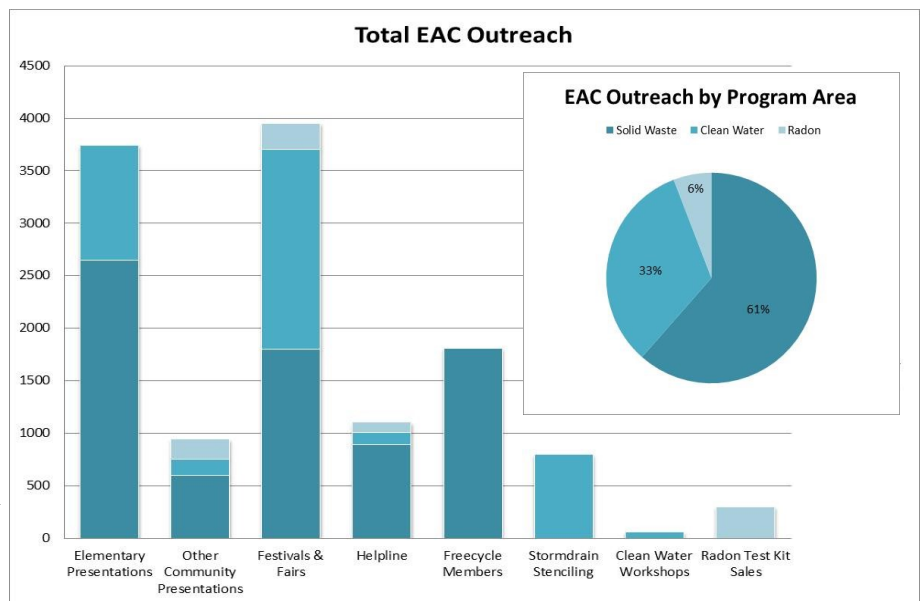
Our staff is available daily to answer phone calls about recycling, clean water and radon. In 2013, **we received and responded to over 1,100 phone calls.** Inquiries ranged from recycling and hazardous waste disposal, to rain barrels and radon test kits.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

EAC staff administers and promotes McFreecycle, a free listserv for the exchange of materials in McLean County to avoid disposal of useable items. There are currently 1,811 members with an average of 750 messages exchanged monthly.

In 2013, EAC's ongoing storm drain stenciling program had a total of 95 volunteers who spent 163 hours painting 221 storm water inlets. They distributed information on storm water runoff pollution and ways to reduce this pollution to 799 homes in Normal and Bloomington. EAC staff organized and conducted 9 rain barrel making workshops with a focus on storm water runoff issues. 62 rain barrels and 275-gallon mega rain harvesters were constructed.

Over 300 radon test kits were sold during the year. Free radon test kits were provided to all new Habitat for Humanity homeowners.



**Over 12,500 McLean County residents reached through EAC education programs in 2013**

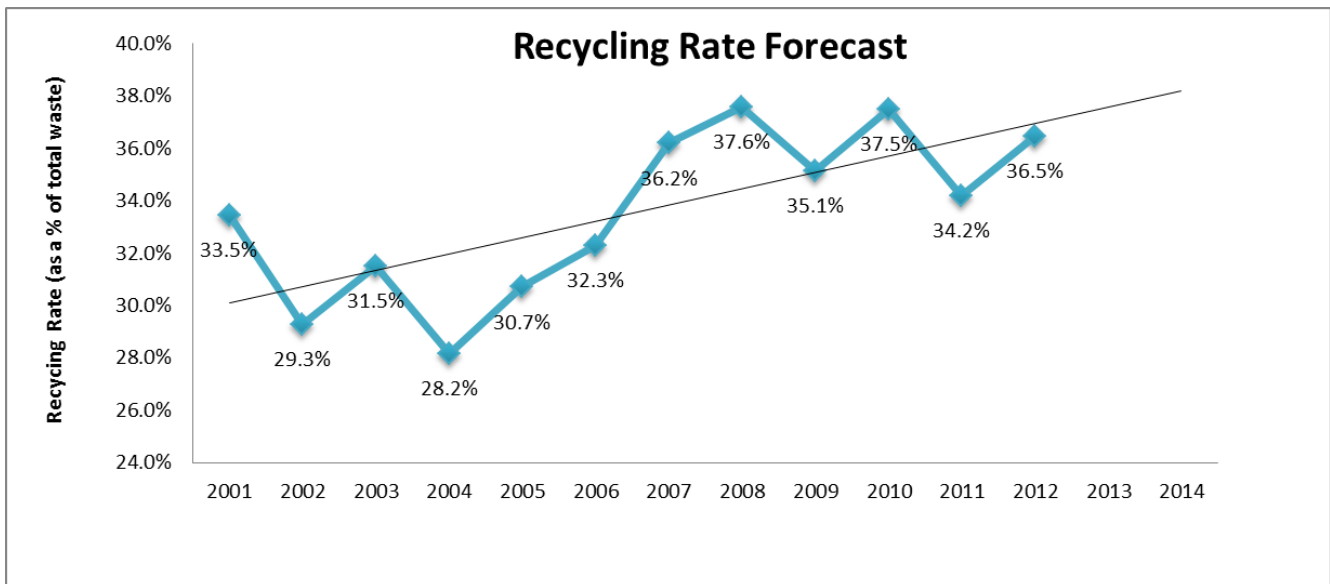
# RECYCLING PROGRAMS

## MCLEAN COUNTY RECYCLING RATE

EAC's annual survey of area waste haulers, recyclers, municipalities and organizations **saw a 12% decline in municipal solid waste collection** from the 2011 rate with 183, 079 tons of municipal solid waste generated. At the same time, **McLean County recycling increased by 6.7% to an overall recycling rate of 36.5% of all municipal solid waste generated.**

Marked growth in the recycling of household batteries, construction and demolition of material, food waste, and wood waste all contributed to the county-wide recycling rate increase from 2011-2012.

**The upturn in recycling puts the community on track to meet the 40% recycling goal** established by the 2012 McLean County Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan Five-year Update. Reaching or exceeding this goal helps our community extend the life of our landfill, save money on trash hauling, conserve resources, and reduce climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions of methane from landfilling waste.

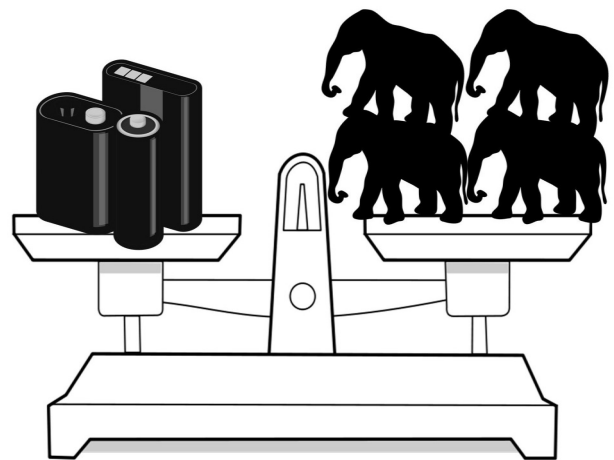


## RECYCLING PROGRAMS

EAC staff oversaw the ongoing administration and promotion of three major recycling programs that contribute significantly to the county's rising recycling rate. The Compact Fluorescent Lamp (CFL) recycling program with 3 drop-off points in Bloomington and Normal continues to grow--**approximately 5,643 CFLs were recycled in 2013, preventing the release of 22,572 grams of mercury to the environment.**

We administered and promoted the Household Battery recycling program in conjunction with Interstate Batteries, Batteries Plus, and Springfield Electric. **In 2013, over 26,900 pounds of batteries were recycled, more than any previous year.**

The Illinois Plastic Pot Recycling Program in cooperation with YouthBuild McLean County, continues to provide recycling drop-offs for plastic garden pots throughout the year.



**26,900 pounds:** the weight of 4 elephants or the amount of batteries recycled in McLean County in 2013



## EVENTS

The EAC coordinates, hosts and facilitates several events throughout the year that support and promote recycling and solid waste reduction, clean water and radon awareness. The following are the major events undertaken in 2013.



### HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION

**EAC applied to and received funding from the Illinois EPA for a fall 2013 Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Event.**

EAC staff received permission to use Mitsubishi Motors North America manufacturing plant as a new event location. We coordinated all logistics of the successful October 5 HHW Collection including planning, promotions, volunteer recruitment and management, e-waste collection, site preparations and site take-down. **Over 1,300 cars carrying the HHW of 1,829 households took advantage of the 2013 McLean County HHW collection.**

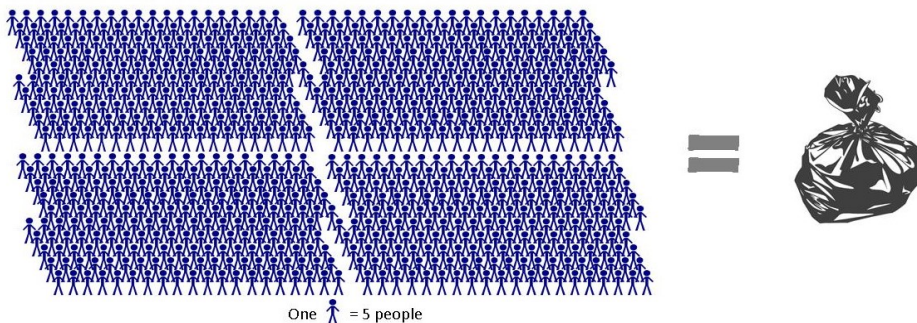


Extensive promotions of the HHW Collection Event included articles and advertising in the Pantagraph, a postcard mailing, multiple radio interviews and advertising, presentations to community groups, Facebook posts, website and newsletter promotion.



### ILLINOIS SUSTAINABLE LIVING AND WELLNESS EXPO & MEGA-RECYCLING EVENT

The annual Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo (ISLWE) at IWU is coordinated by the EAC each year to promote living well and living green. In 2013, the event was redesigned as a **public "Zero-Waste" event** to promote conscious waste reduction and recycling. Much of the literature was presented electronically instead of using paper hand-outs, food service items were washable instead of disposable, vendors were encouraged not to distribute extraneous trinkets, and food waste was composted. **Less than one bag of trash was collected at this event which had over 4000 participants.**



**Over 4000 ISLWE participants, 1 bag of trash**

In addition, we redeveloped the "Renewable Fashion Challenge" program to promote textile reuse and waste reduction. EAC staff coordinated a kick-off event at Mission Mart to recruit participants for the program that culminated with a fashion show at the Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo. Ten contestants competed to win a first place prize valued at over \$100.

At ISLWE, we were proud to award the annual McLean County Green Awards. The McLean County Waste Reduction and Recycling Award recognized the Jewel-Osco for their zero-waste accomplishments. The McLean County World of Difference Award was presented to WGLT's Good to Go Commuter Challenge.

The Mega-Recycling Event held at ISLWE collected electronics, clothing, shoes, plastic garden pots, light bulbs, batteries and other nontraditional recyclables from 300 families. WJBC provided coverage about nontraditional recycling. We provided participants with information about where to recycle such items year round.

## EVENTS



### WE CARE TWIN CITIES RACES

We restructured the 2nd annual We Care Twin Cities Half Marathon, as a Zero Waste event. This two day event included a Kid's Run, 5K, 10K and Half Marathon and drew approximately 1500 participants. We replaced disposable water cups with reusable HydraPouches **eliminating 5,000 plastic cups** on race weekend.



**VS.**



**Six 95-gallon carts of compostable waste vs. 1/2 bag (5lbs.) trash**

Additionally, we implemented food waste composting and recycling with help from Midwest Fiber Recycling & C.O.P.S. Shredding. **We collected six 95-gallon carts of compostable waste – food, paper products that had touched food, etc.** We replaced the traditional pre-race expo giveaways with Virtual Race Bags, offered recycling of race gear, bibs, shoes, electronics, and TerraCycle recycling of Clif Bar and granola bar wrappers. We also had washable coffee cups for volunteers, and encouraged all volunteers to bring their own water bottles and travel mugs. Finally, we sent out a call for donations of old trophies that could be repurposed as awards for this event. Hundreds of trophies were donated and **192 unique trophies were given new purpose as awards for the various We Care Races.**

As a result of these efforts to avoid waste generation, increase reusables, and increase recycling, **the event ultimately only landfilled about 5 pounds of waste for approximately 1500 participants.**

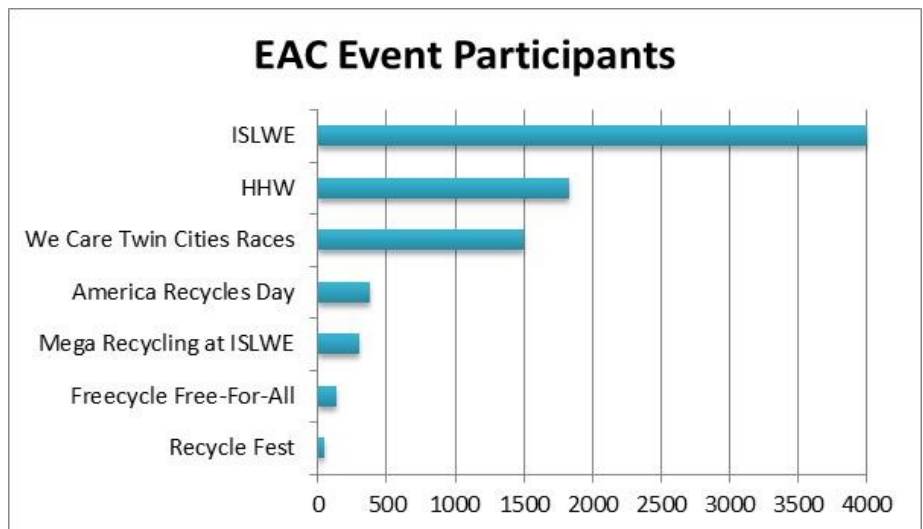
### YARD SMART

EAC hosted its Annual Yard Smart Garden Walk on June 29 showcasing area yards that reduce their impact on clean water. We had 80 participants this year and were pleased to promote the event with a live interview on WMBD TV's "Living Well" show watched by over 1,000 people. We redesigned the full set of Yard Smart fact sheets as brochures, added new content and created a new brochure on gardening during a drought. By the end of 2013, over 80 households in McLean County had pledged to use ecologically sustainable practices in their yard care through the Yard Smart certification program.

### OTHER EVENTS

EAC staff coordinated America Recycles Day Mega Recycling Event in partnership with Illinois Wesleyan University in November. Over 370 households recycled thousands of pounds of electronics, textiles, light bulbs, batteries and garden pots. Participants were given handouts with information about where to recycle non-traditional materials locally as well as updates about the Household Hazardous Waste collection.

EAC, in coordination with the City of Bloomington, hosted the second annual Recycle Fest at Western Avenue Community Center to promote the use of the new recycle carts. We hosted Freecycle Free-For-All events at White Oak Park and Anderson Park to encourage reuse of materials instead of disposing of them. Finally, we provided battery & CFL recycling at a community recycling event sponsored by Senators Barrickman and Brady.



**Over 8,000 participants at EAC events in 2013**

# MARKETING

EAC actively promoted recycling and solid waste reduction throughout 2013 using various forms of media. The following are some of the high points.

## WEBSITES & SOCIAL MEDIA

EAC launched its newly redesigned, user-friendly website in 2013, which received over 22,500 visits during the calendar year to solid waste, recycling, hazardous waste, and clean water related pages within the new site. We posted 283 messages concerning solid waste and clean water on its Facebook page and Twitter account, which had over 75,000 views.

## NEWSLETTERS

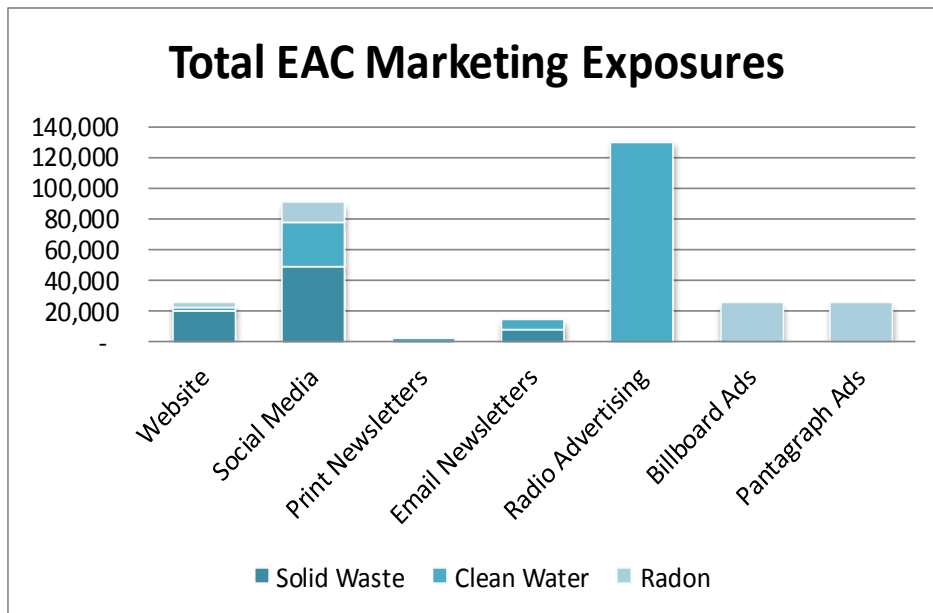
Each quarter the EAC produced and mailed newsletters to approximately 270 households. We sent nine EAC Action News email newsletters to over 900 email addresses to promote local recycling and clean water issues. Email newsletters were also targeted to such timely events as HHW, recycling, water conservation, and composting. The spring issue of Talking Trash teacher newsletter, a resource for educators on solid waste issues, was sent electronically to 106 subscribers.

## RADIO

In 2013, we ran Storm Water Runoff Awareness advertisements on four local radio stations WGLT, WJBC, WBNQ, and WBWN, reaching approximately 130,000 area listeners. We were featured on WGLT's Sound Ideas program about hazardous waste and source reduction. We promoted recycling to youth audience through the "Generation Next" program on WXRJ radio.

## ADVERTISING

During Radon Action Month in January we purchased billboard advertising space that was visible on Route 9 at the Hershey Road intersection, and ran a bold, new message "Radon Causes Lung Cancer" to raise awareness about the direct link between Radon and Lung Cancer. During Radon Awareness Month in October we ran multiple ads in the Pantagraph with the same direct message. We also promoted radon testing through targeted advertisements on Facebook.



**Over 310,000 exposures in McLean County through EAC marketing in 2013**

## AWARDS & ACCOLADES

### 2013 GOVERNOR'S SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS HONORABLE MENTION

Since 1987, the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center has presented Governor's awards to organizations in Illinois that have demonstrated commitment to environmental excellence through outstanding and innovative sustainability practices. ISTC technical experts select winners through a rigorous review and examination process.

The EAC received an honorable mention at the 2013 Governor's Sustainability Awards for its 2012 first-ever locally funded Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Event for McLean County residents. The nearly year-long fundraising and public awareness campaign resulted in tremendous community collaboration, significantly increased visibility of HHW disposal, and contributed to our highly successful September 2012 collection event.

### 2013 TOP-RATED GREAT NONPROFITS

GreatNonprofits honored the EAC with a prestigious 2013 Top-Rated Award, which was based on the large number of positive reviews that volunteers, donors and clients wrote about the EAC.



*"...I was so glad for the help from the Ecology Action center that I volunteered at the 2013 collection. They were great to work with - well thought out, thoroughly prepared, and friendly. I have also purchased radon kits at their office and made a couple of rain harvesters at their workshops. This is a place with tremendous attitude and very helpful whenever I have contacted them, and their newsletters are well worth reading.."*

"Savvy donors want to see the impact of their donations more than ever," said Perla Ni, CEO of GreatNonprofits, "People with direct experience with the Ecology Action Center have voted that the organization is making a real difference."

### 2013 GREEN EXCELLENCE AWARD

The McLean County Chamber of Commerce presented the EAC with the 2013 Green Excellence Award at its annual Gala. The award is presented to a Chamber member that has implemented practices in their business operations monitoring the environment, economy, and society. With its origins in a one-day recycling drive in 1971, the Ecology Action Center has provided leadership towards a more sustainable community for over four decades.

With a small but dedicated staff and generous volunteers, supporters, and partners, the EAC has had a significant influence in the community. Through its diverse outreach and education efforts, the center has over 300,000 interactions with area residents in a calendar year. While the promotion of recycling and waste reduction remain a major focus, the EAC continues to expand its program areas to now include clean water, radon awareness, and energy efficiency in as well as promoting sustainable lifestyles. The EAC appreciates the continued support of the community and looks forward to the next four decades of helping to improve the McLean County environment.



EAC Staff and Board receive the Green Excellence Award from the McLean County Chamber of Commerce



## SPONSORS & CONTRIBUTORS

*We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the municipalities, businesses and organizations who generously supported our efforts to inspire and assist residents of McLean County in creating, strengthening and preserving a healthy environment through sponsorship of our programs and events in 2013.*

### 2013 MUNICIPAL & STATE AGENCY PARTNERS

Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District	McLean County
City of Bloomington	McLean County Regional Planning
Illinois Emergency Management Agency	Town of Normal
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency	

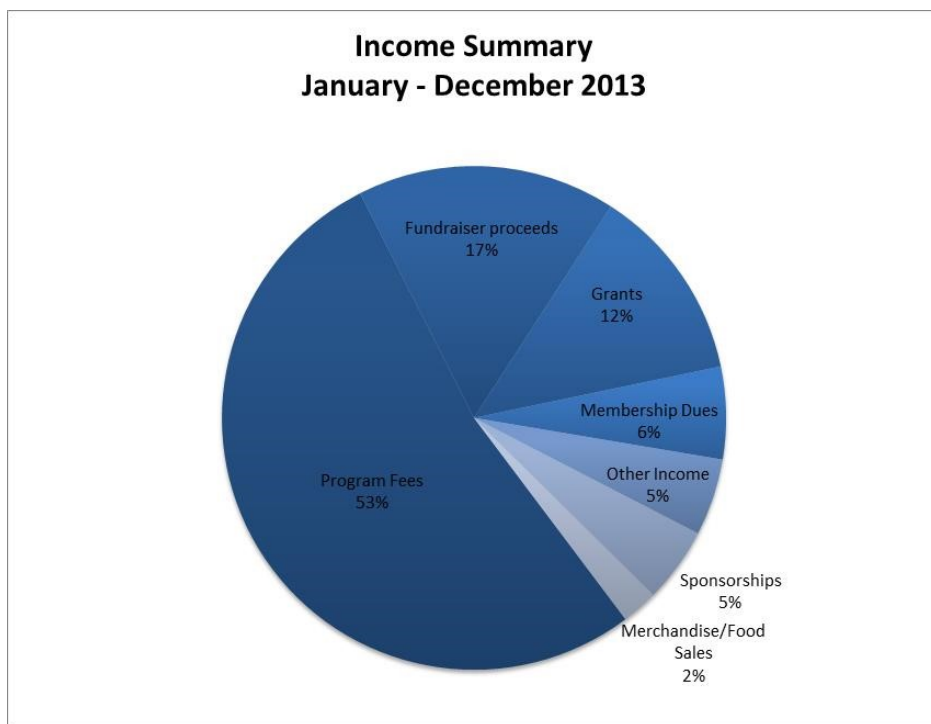
### 2013 EVENT SPONSORS

Accelerated Rehab	Minerva
Accent Nature	Mitsubishi Motors
Axel Jimenez, State Farm Agency	Nu-Way
Beachbody	On-site Computer Services
Bloomington-Normal Marriott	Prairie Signs
Casey's Garden Shop and Florist	Progressive Asset Management
Greg Yount, Coldwell Banker Commercial	Republic Services
DRCSoft	Real Time Pain Relief
Eastview Christian Church	Relax to Restore
Epiphany Farms/Station 220	Sherri Thornton & Matthew Fraker
Family Chiropractic	Solid Ground Gardening
Fleet Feet Sports	Springfield Electric
Four Seasons	State Farm Insurance
GFWC IL Bloomington-Normal Junior Woman's Club	Stout Chiropractic
Gold's Gym & Gold's Gym Express	The Workout Company
Green Top Grocery Coop	Town of Normal
HealthSource of Normal	Trunk Bay Properties
Heartland Bank	University of Illinois Extension
Heartland Foot & Ankle Associates	Vitesse
HolleHock Designs	Weavers Rental
ISU Credit Union	WGLT/Good To Go
Knight Light Photography	Wild Style Design
La Gondola	WJBC
Little Jewels	Zozzaro Chiropractic & Rehab
Midwest Fiber	
Midwest Food Bank	

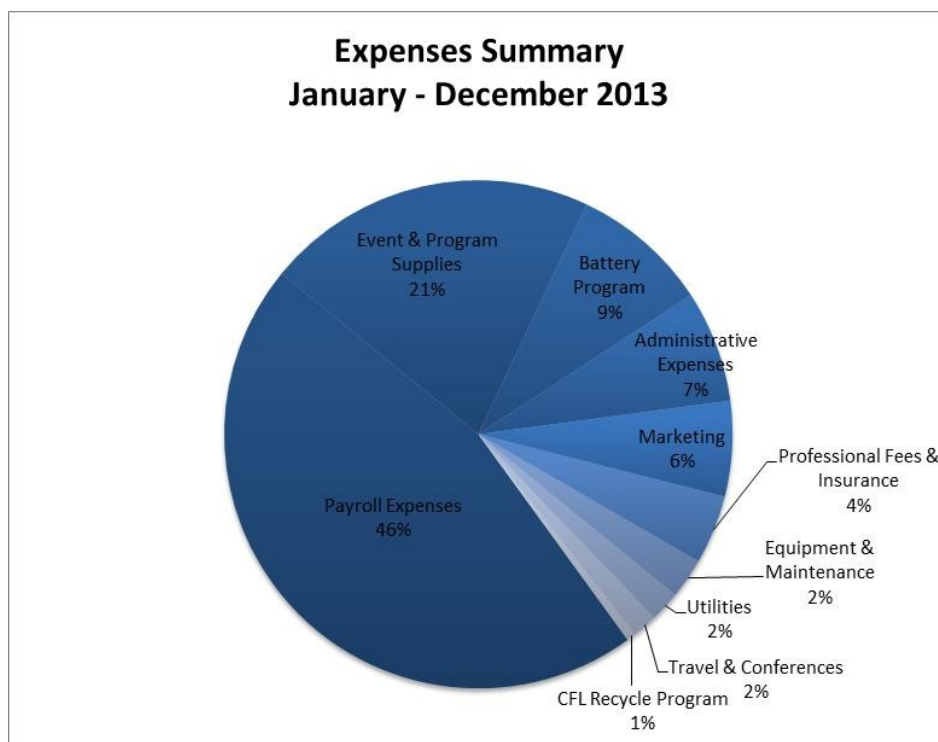
### 2013 NONPROFIT PARTNERS

Habitat for Humanity ReStore	Illinois Wesleyan University
Home Sweet Home Ministries	ParkLands Foundation
Illinois Green Business Association	Recycling Furniture for Families
Illinois Recycling Association	Sugar Grove Nature Center
Illinois State University	

# 2013 FINANCIAL SUMMARY



**Total 2013 Income: \$268,159**



**Total 2013 Expenses: \$246,163**

# CONTACT US

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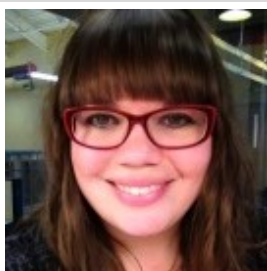
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## 2013 - 2013 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Carlo Robustelli—President  
Kari Sandhaas—Past President  
Charlotte Brown—Vice President  
Nancy Armstrong—Treasurer  
Charles Bristow—Secretary  
Robin Weaver—Ex-officio Normal

George Kutz—Ex-officio Bloomington  
George Gordon—Ex-officio McLean  
County  
Myra Gordon  
Carl Teichman  
Laurine Brown

Anand Bhende  
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