

Being Great Neighbors

When looking for ways to improve the environment, you don't need to look very far. You can make a widespread difference just by walking through the neighborhood! Small acts like paying attention, making connections, picking up trash or planting a tree go a long way to supporting your community and the health of our planet. And it's a fun way to connect to each other, do Creation Care and share our work over a meal together.

Invite the Neighborhood

Chances are there are people living nearby who also want to make the neighborhood more eco-friendly. Invite them to your Creation Care Team meetings. They can help engage even more people in your neighborhood events.

Episcopal Relief & Development seeks to assist individuals and whole communities to believe in themselves, their knowledge, their abilities, their values and their worth to break through traditional hierarchical perceptions of power and cycles of dependence reinforced by an overemphasis on outside solutions and outside funds. [Learn more](#) about how we do this, and how you can use asset-based community development in your own neighborhood.



Carolina and her family receive fruit trees for their kitchen garden in the Aanglidesh area of Honduras.

Plant a Tree

Or plant lots of trees. Find out from your civic leaders how to get permission to plant in easements and other public areas. Check with your neighbors and see if they would welcome a free tree to their property—they only need to agree to water it for the first two years. Find an area in your neighborhood that would be perfect for some tall, woody plants or one currently succumbing to soil erosion.

Planting new trees is a great way to let nature take hold again and get a group of neighbors working together. Buy the trees in bulk through the Arbor Day Foundation or ask a local nursery for a discount or donation. When your saplings grow larger, they'll help cool your neighborhood, combat climate change, foster living habitats and clean the air.

Start a Neighborhood Vegetable or Pollinator Garden

Plant a neighborhood garden on your church grounds, at a local park or playground or join an existing garden (with permission). Your neighbors will notice you making this gift to them. These green spaces attract kids, pets and families and are the perfect spot to meet your friends and hang out. While you're there, pick up litter and collect pet waste. See tips for planting pollinator gardens earlier in this handbook, and check out the [Good News Gardens](#) for tips on planting a vegetable garden.

Pick Up Litter

If you go on a prayer walk or are just taking a stroll around your church grounds and the nearby neighborhood, carry a small trash bag to pick up waste. Trash that isn't bound for recycling or a landfill often ends up in a stream, which can harm aquatic life.

Get Involved in Your Watershed Group

Do you know which stream or river receives the runoff water from your community and its neighbors? No matter how close or far you live from the nearest stream or river, your actions impact its health. Everything on this earth rests on a watershed—the area of land around a body of water—and affects its quality. Find out which river is yours and discover if there's a watershed group associated with it. These organizations often hold tours and educational events that teach you how to care for your watershed right from your own backyard.

Encourage Recycling

One of the easiest ways to improve the environment is to recycle. A community that produces less trash by using existing items to create new products is a great thing. Next time you're hauling the trash and recyclables to the curb, chat with your neighbor about doing the same. To encourage others who may be less equipped, hand out recycling bags or help them replace broken bins. Go even further and host recycling bins for neighbors on your church and community grounds.