



DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

Downtown Grand Rapids Ambassador 2018 Annual Report



Program Overview

2018 was a year of change! New events and temporary improvements provided chances for hospitality engagement. New construction and fenced off sidewalks meant no two days were the same for our clean team. Newly constructed planter beds & temporary planters at Movies on Monroe kept our horticulture team busy. 2018 saw a change in the way we collected our data and utilized the SMARTSystem app - we streamlined similar items to make it easier for Ambassadors to navigate and we found new ways to show our impact. Melvin Eledge was promoted to Project Manager with Block by Block and Rebecca Krenz took over the operations of the Downtown Grand Rapids Ambassador Program. We overcame struggles, stayed on a steady path and improved the program and downtown at every opportunity. For 2019, our team eagerly anticipates new challenges, prospects for growth, ongoing collaboration and joyful determination in the ever changing landscape of the Cool City, Grand Rapids.

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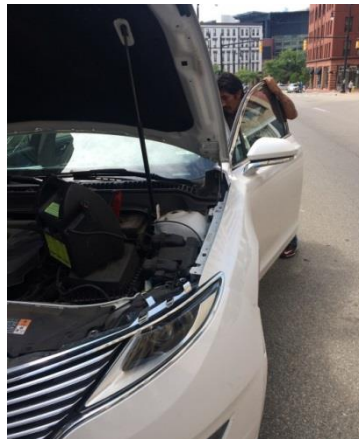
Hospitality & Engagement

2018 saw a change in the way we collect our data. We streamlined items that were similar to make it easier for Ambassadors to navigate our SMARTSystem app. 2018 was a year of change. New events and temporary improvements kept our hospitality team busy.

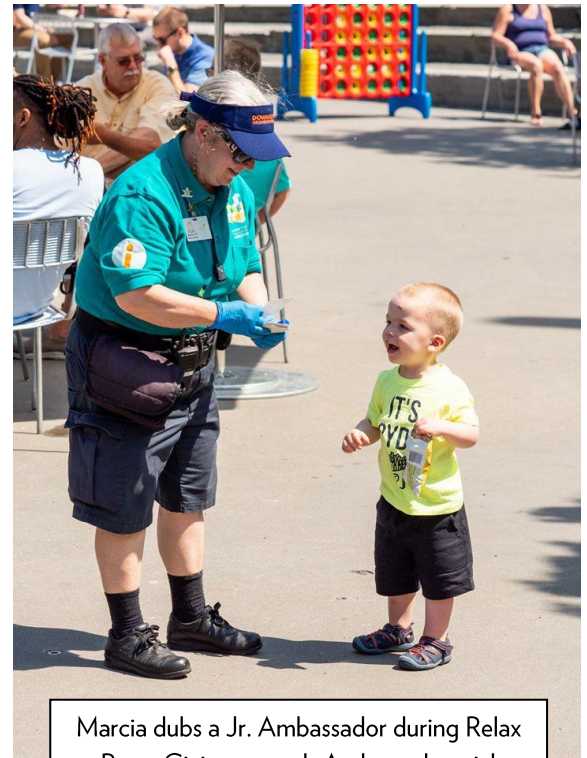
We participated in several events in 2018 including; *World of Winter*, *Art Prize*, *Light Up Downtown*, *Movies on Monroe*, *Relax at Rosa*, *Amway Family Fireworks*, *ADA Celebration*, *GVSU Welcome Week*, *National Night Out in Heartside*, and supported multiple cleanup events. We also participated in conversations regarding the Heartside Quality of Life Study spearheaded by the city as well as members and stakeholders of



Ellen provides first aid to a pedestrian.

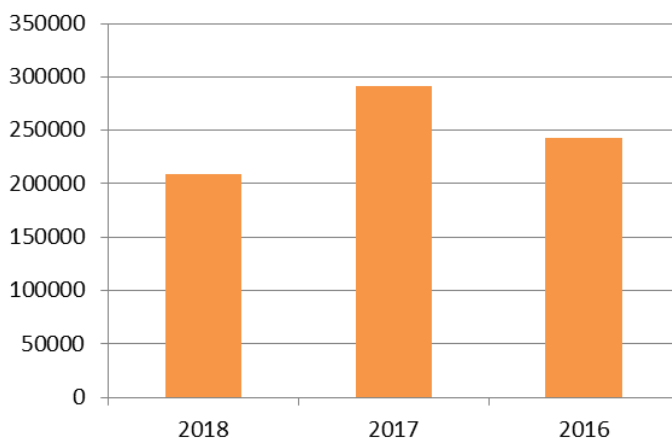


An Ambassador saves someone's day by providing a jump-start. Ambassadors are also trained in changing tires!



Marcia dubs a Jr. Ambassador during Relax at Rosa. Giving out a Jr Ambassador sticker provides an opportunity for us to engage families and make a child's day.

Total Hospitality & Engagement



Grace pictured with Becky Currier Wheeler, Ms Michigan 2018 at the ADA Celebration

Beautification



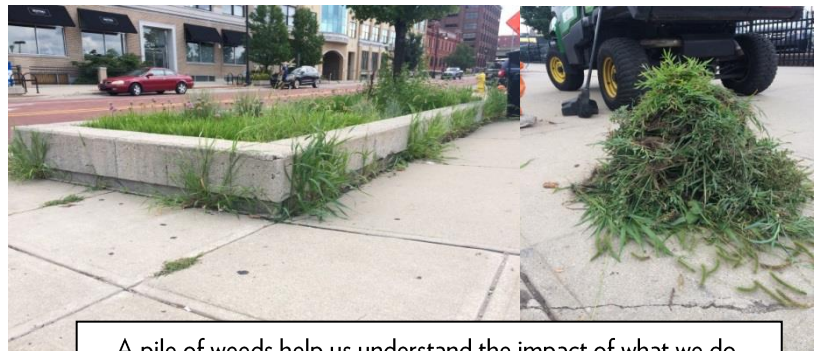
Newly promoted Clean Team Leader Evangeline learns how to maneuver the All-Terrain Litter Vacuum, or the “Seuss Machine” as we call it.

Fluctuations in weather threw us for a loop this year! Thaws in February allowed for an early spring cleanup. Sunny days in March jump started our peak season. Droughts in the summer kept our horticulture team filling up their water tanks and clearing weeds. A late leaf fall followed by heavy snow fall and a thaw made for mucky curb lines and heavy wet leaves. A dry and warm winter has meant less snow removal permitting us to continue removing leaves and weeds in the middle of winter! The team rolled with the punches and more than doubled our beautification statistics from 2017.

Due to the increase of trashcans in our downtown we removed over 6,000 more trash bags than in 2017. The addition of cigarette urns may have contributed to the 6% increase in cigarette butt recycling from the previous year.

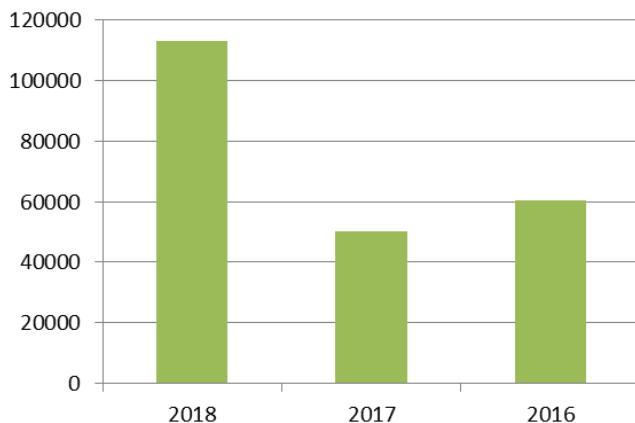


The pressure washing team gives new life to sidewalks.



A pile of weeds help us understand the impact of what we do.

Total Beautification Activity



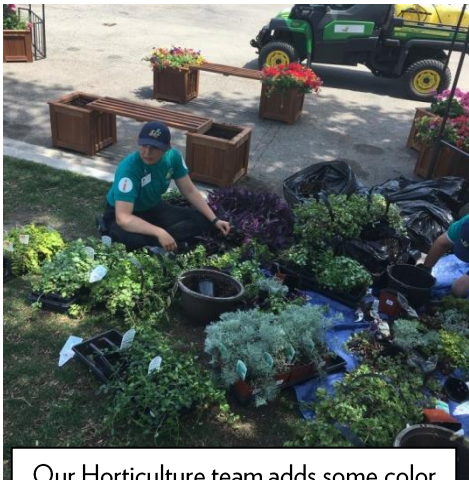
Melvin standing with 20 boxes of cigarette butts ready to go to Terracycle. Since its inception in 2016, the Grand Rapids cigarette recycling program has recycled 934,888 units (individual butts) or the equivalent of waste from almost 47,000 packs of cigarettes!

Horticulture

Micandy Gardens continues to beautify downtown. They jumped at new opportunities to plant annuals in parklets, hanging wall baskets, pallets and even recycled tire planters. They contributed to the aesthetics of Kick it at Calder and at Movies on Monroe. Their excitement for creating an urban landscape is inspiring. We have cultivated a positive working relationship and they love the feedback they receive from employees & residents of downtown.



Ellen completed her 3rd season as a Horticulture Specialist with the Ambassador program. Her expertise and knowledge has made her an integral part of our team.



Our Horticulture team adds some color to 555 Monroe where the Movies on Monroe was hosted in 2018.



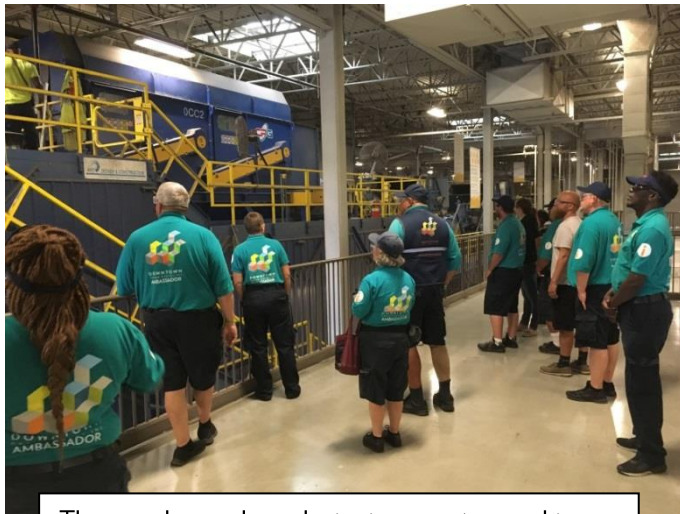
Heat, drought & heavy rains created the perfect environment for weeds to take over. The team pulled over 37,000 weeds this year, triple the amount pulled in 2017!



Special Projects & Initiatives

Our recycling pilot launched along Monroe Center on June 26th. The 1 year pilot will help us understand how people recycle downtown. Bright stickers aligning with Kent County's SORT program draw attention to the 18 bins that are attached to existing trash cans. Pictures and descriptions of what is recyclable help guide pedestrians.

To prepare the team for this initiative we took a field trip to tour the Recycling Education Center to better understand the complexities of recycling.



The team learns about the intricate sorting machinery



Rebecca & Ellen install a recycling bin along Monroe Center



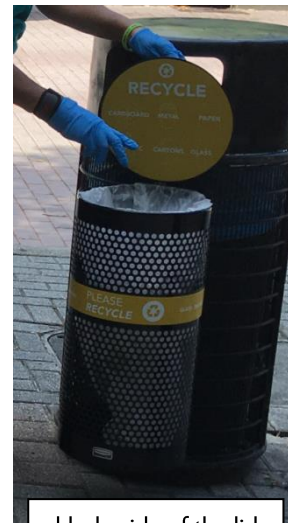
Stickering the new recycling bins



Funnel with symbols



Lid with recycling symbol



Underside of the lid with descriptions

Special Projects & Initiatives



180 pieces of seating, cushions, tables and footrests arrive at our building

The Ambassadors were heavily involved with installing and maintaining the Calder Plaza temporary improvements. Living room style outdoor seating, umbrellas, hammocks, & outdoor games were open to the public daily.



An almost completed "living room" style pod.



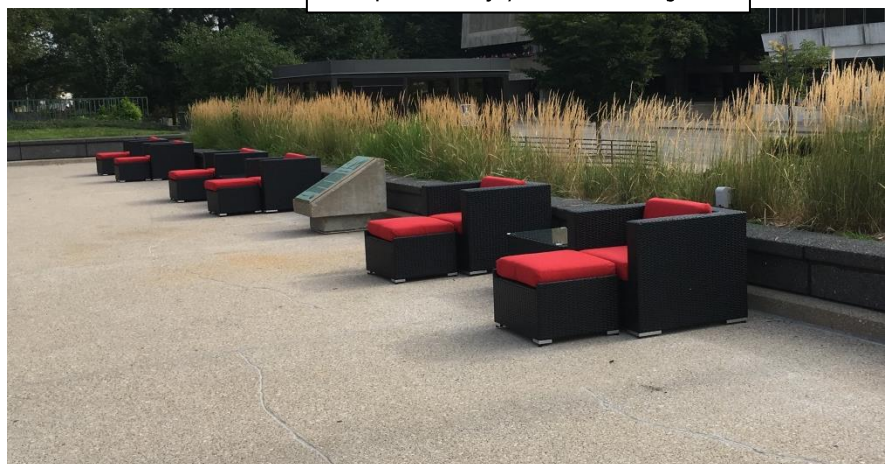
Taking lunch in the shade of a giant umbrella.



Seating near the food trucks provides a place to enjoy outdoor dining.



Ellen sets up ping pong.



Special Projects & Initiatives



The ambassador team was tasked with clearing the way for the ArtPrize mural, Anishinaabek, to be painted beneath the Pearl St. bridge on the Riverwalk. Among the debris we removed 8 bags of trash, an oscillating fan, a tube TV, a headboard, 1 folding chair, 1 snow shovel, and several pounds of untouched food.

The summer brought an uptick in graffiti vandalism downtown. The Ambassadors worked with different entities, including businesses, to remove some of this graffiti.



On 8/13/2018, the Ambassadors found graffiti tags in several areas along Monroe Center & Ionia. We worked to remove over 1 dozen of these tags and reported them to the police.



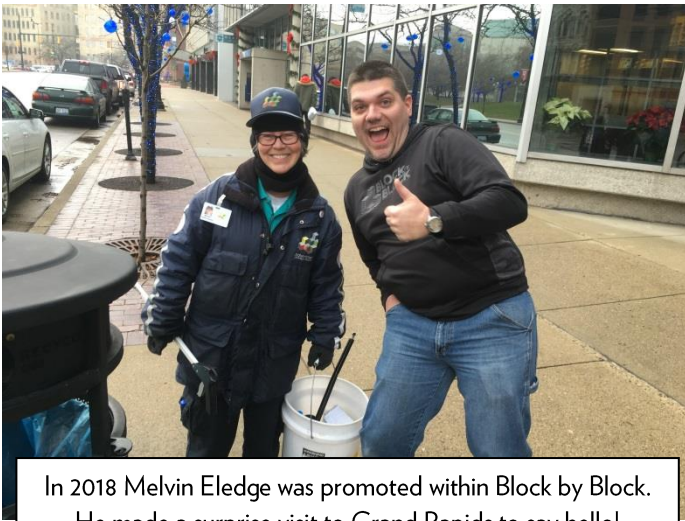
Highlights



The Ambassador program received Employer of the Year in 2018 for our work with InterAct. InterAct is an organization that helps people with barriers to employment find meaningful and long-term employment opportunities.



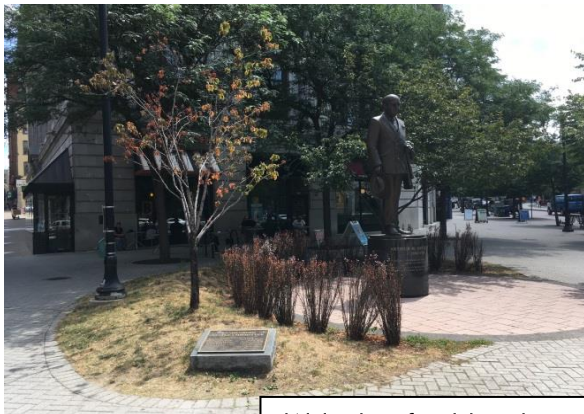
Rick uses a new weed snatcher to safely & easily remove weeds from sidewalk cracks.



In 2018 Melvin Eledge was promoted within Block by Block. He made a surprise visit to Grand Rapids to say hello!



It's a dirty job, but somebody's gotta do it! Evangeline pressure washes trash can liners to keep them fresh and in great shape.



With a bit of mulch and some tall grasses, we were able to spruce up the area around Senator Author Vandenberg.



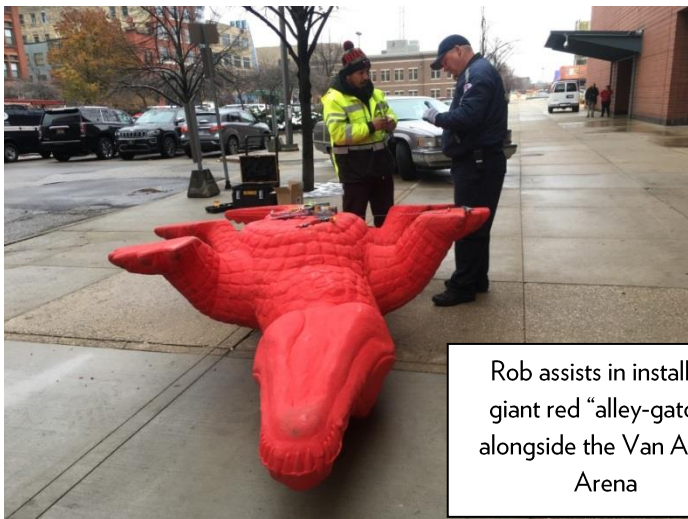
Highlights



Grace & Marcia rock the table at the Amway Family Fireworks



Jonah takes time to help children write letters to Santa at the Light Up Downtown event.



Rob assists in installing giant red "alley-gators" alongside the Van Andel Arena



Have you ever considered what goes into keeping trashcans beautiful? Ellen sweeps cobwebs, leaves and other debris from Monroe Center trash cans.

Jared takes a break from installing infrastructure to provide directions to a downtown visitor.



Martel of SpokeFolks provided general maintenance and repair training to the Ambassadors. He was able to focus on the tools we could utilize at the 5 DGRI owned bike stations downtown.

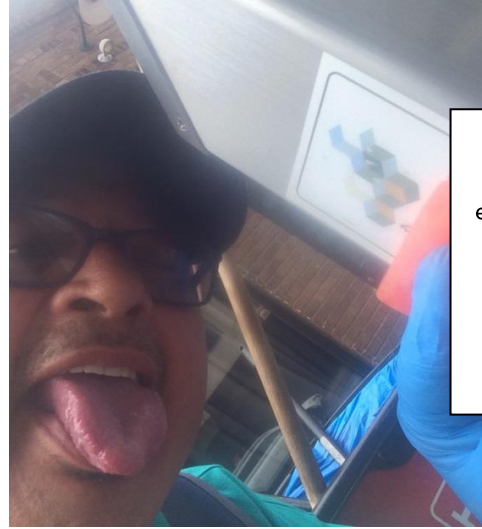


Highlights

Grace has perfected the art of tying trash bags, a task that requires patience & precision!



A selfie day competition sparked enthusiasm in the team when they were challenged to take a selfie while they remove graffiti.



Winter creates new challenges for the spring. Snow plows deposit a large amount of gravel and silt on the sidewalks. The Ambassadors armed with shovels and buckets clear up the sidewalks for safe passage.



Marcia passes out candy canes from a stocking during the holidays



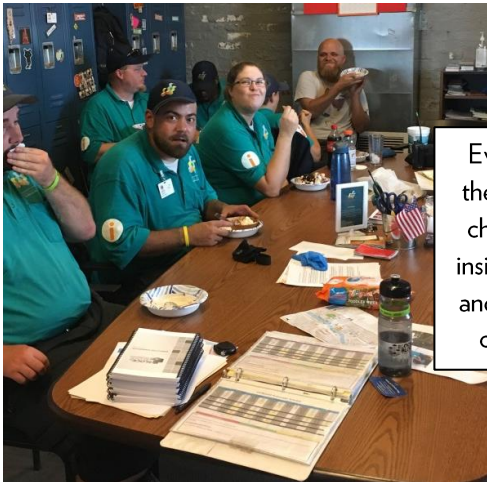
Talina poses with Mr & Mrs Claus at the annual Light Up Downtown event.

The Team



The Grand Rapids Ambassador Team started a “props box” as a way to recognize our co-workers for their hard work & model Ambassador behavior. In January Block by Block made this a Best Practice and rolled out the “fishbowl” nationwide.

Treat employees like they make a difference & they will. – Jim Goodnight



Every summer the team gets a chance to step inside to cool off and enjoy an ice cream social



In June we were awarded money to purchase healthy food options for the team. Making healthy choices was the theme of the summer.



A scavenger hunt provided an opportunity for team building. The Ambassadors had to utilize the SMARTSystem to make reports, input statistics and create maintenance requests. Marcia and Daniel are pictured here pointing out a missing brick.

Each day learn something new, and just as important, relearn something old.

– Robert Breault

Ellen shows ambassadors how to use equipment during our annual “Back to Basics” training.



To celebrate the end of the season, the Ambassadors headed to Craig’s Cruiser to play laser tag, race go karts and enjoy each other’s company.

Statistics Overview

| Total Annual Activity | | 2018 | 2017 | 2016 |
|----------------------------------|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Equipment Usage | ATLV Hours | 52 | 186.25 | 267 |
| | Bicycle (miles) | 59 | 652.2 | 460.3 |
| | Segway (Hours) | 329 | 438 | 82.25 |
| | Small Equipment (Hours) | 136 | 278 | 365 |
| | Total Equipment Usage | 576 | 1554.45 | 1174.55 |
| Beautification | Biohazard Clean Up | 2,587 | 4,800 | NA |
| | Biohazard - Human | 364 | NA | NA |
| | Infrastructure Management | 14,403 | NA | NA |
| | Graffiti - Removed | 2,102 | 3,323 | 6,915 |
| | Planters Watered | 6,173 | 4,533 | 18,042 |
| | Power Washing (block faces) | 505 | 276 | 226 |
| | Snow Removal | 9,850 | 9,653 | 11,419 |
| | Special Projects - Other | 17,647 | NA | NA |
| | Trash (Bags collected) | 21,768 | 15,616 | 12,503 |
| | Weed Abatement | 37,803 | 12,043 | 11,477 |
| | Cigarette Waste Recycled (Unit) | 411,810 | 350,168 | 172,910 |
| | Total Beautification Activity | 113,202 | 50,244 | 60,582 |
| Hospitality & Engagement | Business Contact | 2,066 | 2,079 | 1,473 |
| | Mobility Assist | 620 | 1,456 | 2,487 |
| | Observation - Fighting | 569 | 939 | 221 |
| | PA - Directions | 4,918 | 11,890 | 13,846 |
| | PA - Information | 38,730 | 50,911 | 49,591 |
| | PA - Other | 151,226 | 205,882 | 154,340 |
| | Panhandling - Aggressive | 375 | 1,244 | 233 |
| | Panhandling - Passive | 868 | 1,686 | 429 |
| | Request for Emergency Services | 36 | 56 | 260 |
| | Sidewalk Violation | 5,483 | 8,875 | 5,002 |
| | Social Services Assist | 3,951 | 5,756 | 14,996 |
| | Suspicious Package | 25 | 18 | 44 |
| | Suspicious Person | 34 | 302 | 165 |
| | Total Hospitality & Engagement Activity | 208,901 | 291,094 | 243,087 |
| Total Ambassador Activity | | 322,103 | 341,338 | 303,669 |