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Volunteers clean up tires, over 70 bags of trash Pick of the litter

Christine Snyder Apr 7, 2019





Tanner Haid provides direction to volunteers Saturday morning including his daughters, 3-year-old Ariella Haid and 8-month-old Emelia Haid, and his wife Alexandra Beaulieu. The cleanup near Evitts Run behind the Save-a-Lot supermarket at 130 Augustine Ave. was part of the West Virginia Make It Shine program.

CHRISTINE SNYDER

CHARLES TOWN – As Tanner Haid works his way through the brush along Evitts Run, picking up glass Pepsi bottles from the 1970s, beer cans, rags, broken toys, food wrappers, plastic milk cartons, pillows, sports equipment, tires and other trash, he describes the immediate gratification he’s feeling.

“I love how you see right away that you’ve made a difference,” Haid explains Saturday amid a two-hour cleanup behind the Save-a-Lot supermarket at 130 Augustine Ave. in Charles Town. “In no time at all, the whole area looks better.”

Haid and about a dozen other volunteers – many of them members of the Rotary Club of Charles Town – spent two hours Saturday morning filling up one tangerine-colored trash bag after another. Besides making the once-cluttered landscape clean again, Haid said there are other payoffs to this work.

“Once an area’s been cleaned up, people tend to not use it as a dump site anymore,” said Haid, a Charles Town resident who works as the urban forestry coordinator for the Cacapon Institute. “If someone sees a lot of trash, they might add to it, but if an area is clean, the tendency is to want to leave it that way.”

Haid said that improved long-term water quality is another reward that will come from Saturday’s cleanup, part of the West Virginia Make It Shine statewide push held every spring.

“There’s a direct connection to clean water with this site, as the trash we removed was directly uphill of Evitts Run,” he said. “Things like leaking batteries, micro-plastics from plastic containers breaking down, old oil containers were all polluting the stream where residents fish.”

Haid, who volunteered to lead the Make It Shine spring cleanup in Charles Town, said the Department of Environmental Protection initiative encourages the cleanup of public sites all across West Virginia. It’s aimed at beautifying parks, waterways, hiking trails, sidewalks, streets and more.

Haid said last spring’s West Virginia Make It Shine statewide cleanup produced “phenomenal” results including collecting some 240,000 pounds of litter and debris by more than 4,800 volunteers.

The 2019 Make It Shine push continues through mid-April and Haid says he’s hopeful this year’s tallies are even bigger.

Volunteers in Charles Town picked up 50 tires and 70+ bags of trash – about 1,500 pounds of trash in all, Haid said.

The state takes care of landfill fees and works with the Department of Highways to haul away what’s been collected. Haid also got free trash bags and gloves for Saturday’s event.

This wasn’t the first time Haid had taken on such a project. Alexandra Beaulieu, Haid’s wife, partnered with him on a community cleanup in 2014 when the couple lived in Westridge Hills on Chestnut Hill Road in Harpers Ferry.

“It was such a great event, and the residents were all so enthusiastic and supportive,” Haid said. The two ended up organizing another cleanup the next year.

On Saturday, the pair's daughters Ariella Haid, 3, and 8-month-old Emelia Haid were also on hand, with Ariella making sure volunteers got water bottles as needed and knew there were snacks available.

Haid said he wants his children to know early on that they're important members of the community who can make valuable contributions.

"For me, the reason I do this is to start passing along the values of community engagement and environmental protection to my daughters," Haid said. "It's our duty as Charles Town residents to serve our community to make it better, cleaner and healthier for everyone. We can all make an impact."



Volunteers Chip Bennett and Josh Mongold from Rotary Club of Charles Town tackle trash near Evitts Run off Augustine Avenue. The two-hour cleanup netted about 1,500 pounds of trash.

TARA ORNDORFF