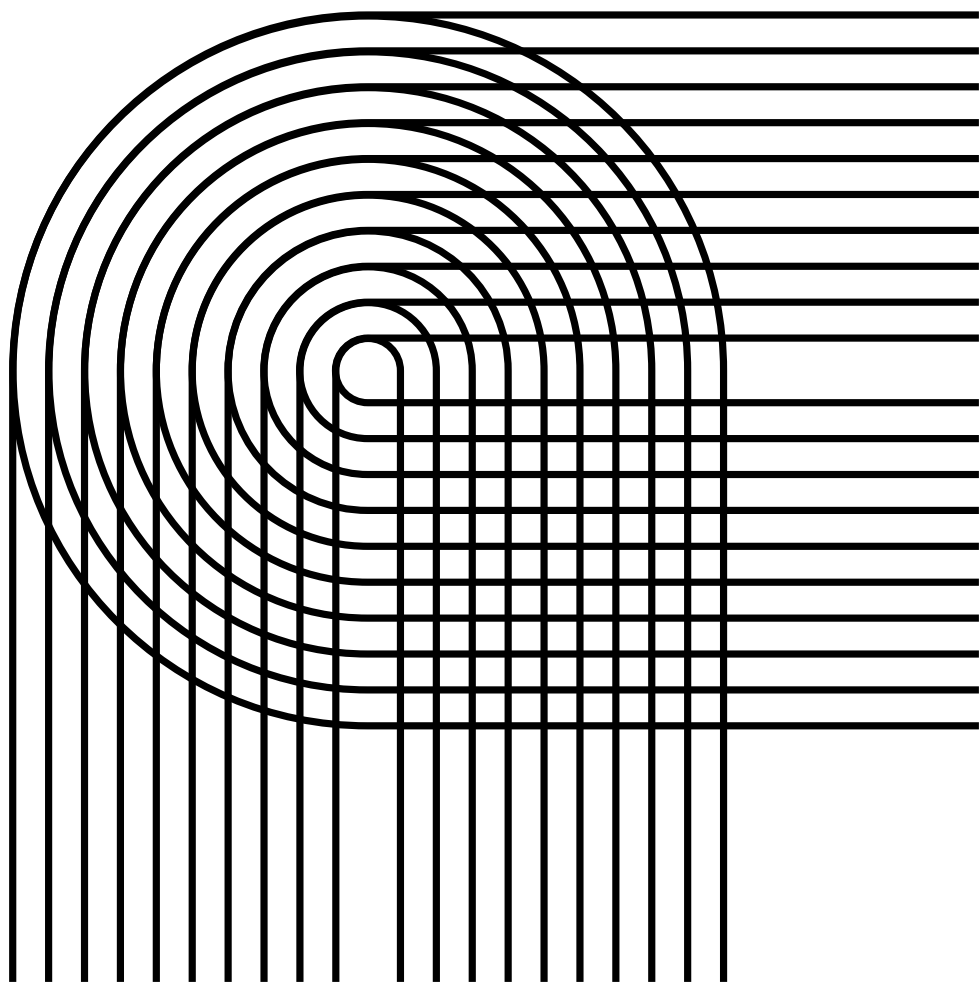


QUARTERLY REPORT

PHOENIX SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE | SPRING '22



OUR MISSION

To promote environmental awareness and integrate sustainable practices throughout UChicago and surrounding communities .

PSI aims to:

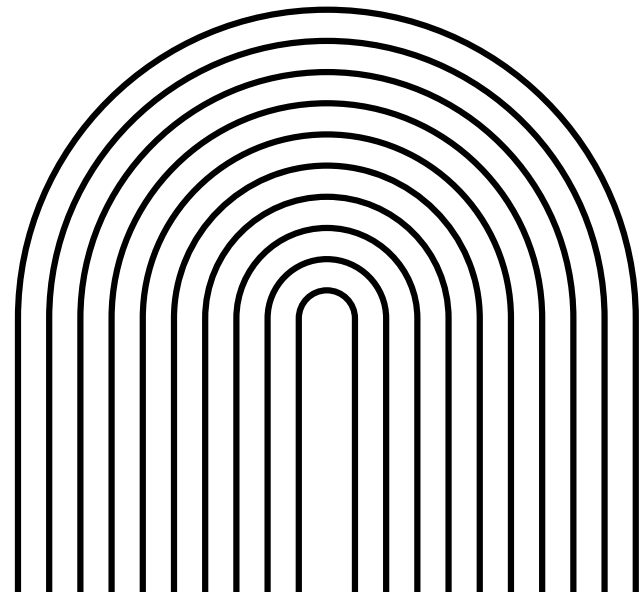
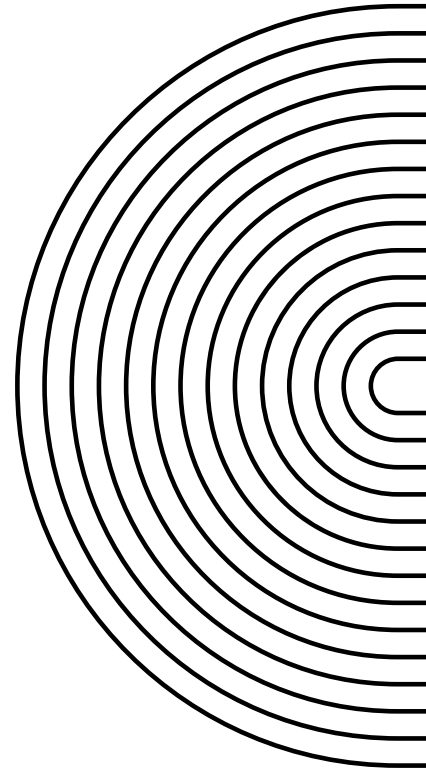
- Expand our network to enhance partnerships and collaborative opportunities
- Build an open, inclusive, and inviting community
- Promote project productivity through workshops, leadership trainings, and accountability measures
- Provide members with necessary skills to accomplish tangible outcomes in project work
- Encourage creativity in addressing issues and designing solutions to environmental problems

OUR PROJECT GROUPS

Centered upon a project group structure and partnership model, we create lasting change and impact by getting directly involved in planning, directing, and executing initiatives. Our project groups address issues of specific interest to our members and are relevant to local sustainability needs.

This quarter, PSI has 8 project groups:

1. Campus Composting
2. Campus Waste Reduction
3. Green Data
4. Environmental Education
5. Hyde Park Business Partnerships
6. Public Engagement
7. Science, Art, and Sustainability
8. Service



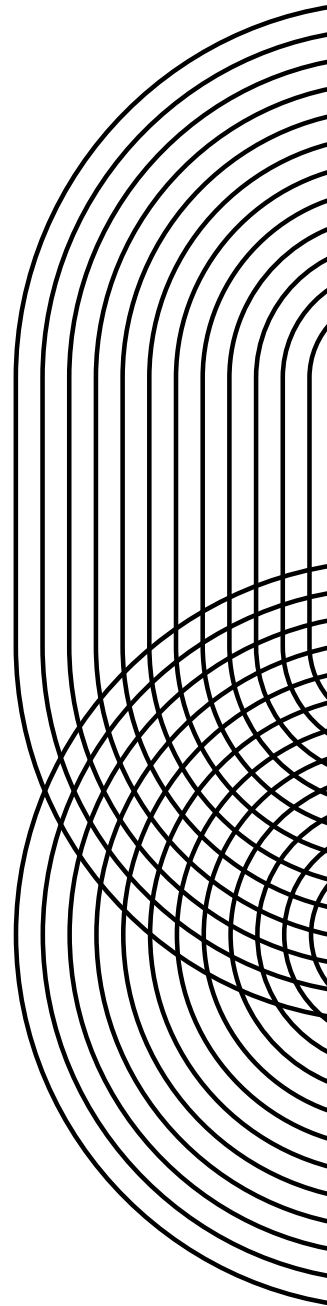
EXECUTIVE BOARD

PROJECTS

- Hosted PSI's inaugural **Sustainability Case Competition**, an opportunity for undergraduates to investigate a climate-related business problem and propose a realistic, research-backed solution.
- Directed an **Earth Week Working Group** supporting the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council (MPAC) and encouraging the University to divest from fossil fuels.
- Connected with other **environmental organizations** in Chicago.
- Strengthened **social connections** between PSI members.
- Transitioned leadership for the 2022-2023 academic year.

OUTCOMES

- Implemented the month-long **sustainability case competition** in partnership with **Ørsted** and the Energy Policy Institute at Chicago (**EPIC**), drawing over **100 registrants** and awarding almost **\$10,000**.
- Hosted **2 guest speakers: Claudia Geib** to discuss science journalism, and **Bronwyn Nichols-Lodato** to discuss the Midway Plaisance's ephemeral wetlands.
- Held a **PSI Member Talk**: "How can one engage with impactful science" by Cal Ledoux.
- Held weekly outdoor socials, called **"Fridays on the Quad."**
- Organized PSI's first **Formal**, complete with awards, slide shows, and catering from HPBP's partner restaurant, Saucy Porka.
- Created **10 divestment posters** for a 3-day installation on the Quad.
- Partnered with MPAC for a coupled social media campaign, drawing **over 400 likes and 500 shares** on Instagram, and cleanup event.



CAMPUS COMPOSTING

Campus Composting works to reduce organic waste produced by the University community through public education about waste sorting and the implementation of composting infrastructure on and off-campus.

PROJECTS AND OUTCOMES

RGGRRC Composting: *a dorm drop-off composting program.*

- Coordinated weekly compost drop-offs in collaboration with UChicago Dining for the program's **16 participants**.
- Produced a **video** for the Green Fund detailing our experience running the program.
- Received approval to create a **paid Metcalf position** to assist with the daily responsibilities of running the current program and any future expansions to other residence halls.

Student-Run Café Composting: *initiating institutionalized composting programs student-run cafés, administered by Parker McWatters and compost hauler The Urban Canopy*

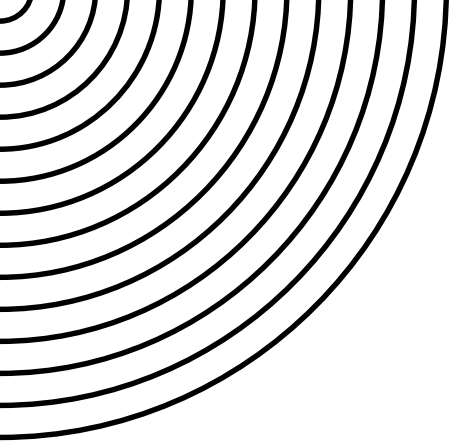
- Established communication between head of the student-run campus cafés, **Parker McWatters**, and our contact at the Urban Canopy. In order to institutionalize this project, Campus Composting & PSI are not going to be actively running this program next year, instead having Parker and The Urban Canopy communicate directly with each other.
- Planned for a **summer program launch** in Ex Libris, with expansion next year in **Ex Libris, Hallowed Grounds, and Cobb Café**.

Off-Campus Program continuation and expansion: *providing composting subsidies for UChicago's off-campus community.*

- Continued **running and promoting** the Off-Campus Composting Program
- Partnered with **Phoenix Farms** to set up a **compost drop-off** location by their urban garden, so people off-campus and the organization can compost for **free**. This program is still under development.

O-Week & Event Composting: *providing composting at orientation week and expanding to similar programming.*

- Discussed and finalized a **fully-funded** composting program at **Orientation Week** in September 2022.
- Continued talks about implementing composting at more **University-run events**.



CAMPUS WASTE REDUCTION

Campus Waste Reduction reduces different forms of waste campus-wide. The group works with campus administrators, campus facilities, residential houses, and the student population to raise awareness about sustainability and take actionable steps to reduce waste.

PROJECTS AND OUTCOMES

Clothing Donation Bin: *providing a permanent location for campus and community members a location to donate unwanted clothing.*

- Created a partnership with donation collector **Brown Elephant**, a local thrift shop supporting Howard Brown Health.
- Worked with Student Centers to secure a donation bin location, with aims for an **early-fall launch**.

Textbook Lending Library: *implementing a bookshelf to be used as a lending library where students can leave and take books they need for the quarter.*

- Established the connections and communications with Student Centers in Reynolds Club to install a lending library at the **start of the new academic year**.

Off-Campus Waste: *improving recycling accessibility in Hyde Park apartments.*

- Researched the **recycling legal landscape**, identifying areas where the off-campus community didn't have access to legally-guaranteed recycling.
- Compiled and shared recycling resources and documents on recourse to **report landlords** that failed to provide recycling.
- Developed and distributed a **survey** to collect data on off-campus community's recycling needs, identifying landlords, issues, and neighborhoods for targeting future efforts. These may include landlord reporting, autumn quarter workshops, tenant education, and reports of our findings in local media.
- Marketed and gathered survey responses, reaching **over 100 respondents**.
- Built relationships with **Southside Weekly** to work towards publicizing the lack of recycling access.

Student-Run Cafés — Reusable Cups: *incentivizing reusable cups through discounts.*

- Re-introduced a **discount** for using reusable cups and mugs in student cafes.
- Discussed a **punch card system** that may begin next year, working as a further incentive to use reusable mugs at student-run cafés.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Environmental Education engages with students in the Chicago Public School system and spreads knowledge about various topics related to the environment, our relationship with it, and sustainability as a whole. The goal is to enlighten students about ways that they can interact with and help our planet.

PROJECTS

- Continued our collaboration with Ray Elementary School, where we taught a 6th grade class of **25 students**, and Gary Comer Youth Center, where we taught a group of **10 high school students**.
- Created new presentations and learning materials for weekly lessons, with a focus on **interactive experiences**.

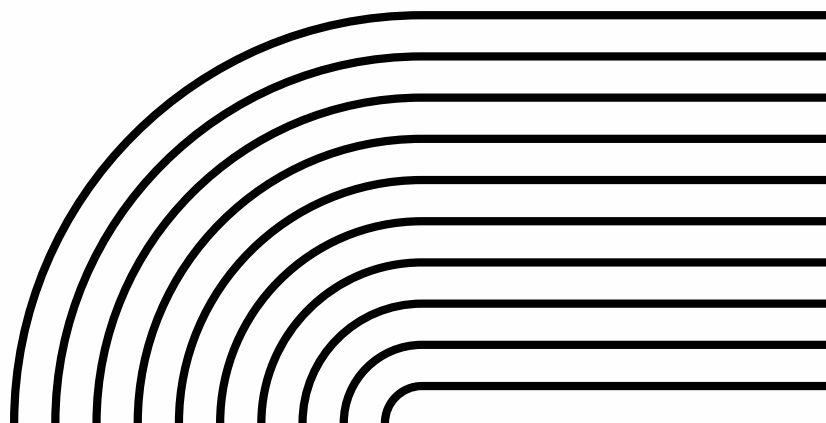
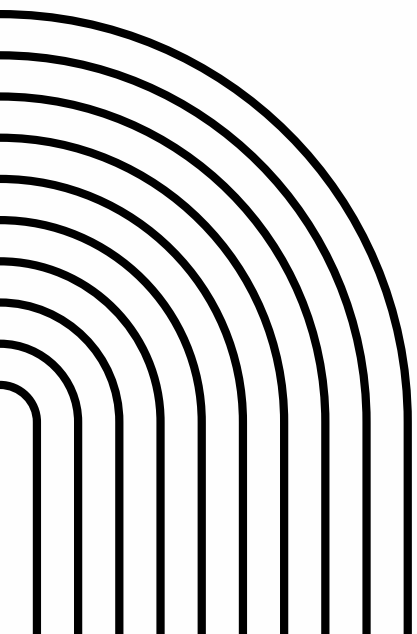
OUTCOMES

Gary Comer Youth Center:

- Hosted a **UChicago lab PI** to come as a guest speaker and give a presentation on **green careers**.
- Presented on the **college experience**, with project group leaders sharing their majors and research experiences.
- Lead a **walking tour** of UChicago's campus.

Ray Elementary School

- Lead a gardening activity, where students grew **pea plants** and planted them in the **school's garden** along with various other vegetable seeds.



GREEN DATA

The overall mission of Green Data is to merge student's passions for environmentalism with their interest in data science in order to cultivate a new perspective in students as they embark to tackle issues of sustainability in their professional or personal lives. Along the way, we will produce results that have a tangible effect on UChicago and the community at large.

PROJECTS AND OUTCOMES

Environmental Frontiers Data Transparency

- Researched other institutions' energy dashboards, creating a **rubric** with expectations for a quality energy dashboard.
- **Surveyed** the UChicago community about UChicago's and other institution's dashboards evaluations.
- Met with Facilities to **share findings, propose solutions, and centralize** our work.
- Summarized findings in a **final report**.

Urban Rivers

- Utilized Urban Rivers' fish survey data to **assess fish diversity** along regions of the Chicago River to study the impact of the **Wild Mile** and the **floating eco-parks**.
- Analyzed **fish census data** at different diversity levels, species, habitat, and diet guilds
- Communicated findings in a **presentation** and created figures and contextualization to be utilized by Urban Rivers in future meetings with community stakeholders.

Divvy Bike Share: Advocated for an expanded Divvy bike share program on campus via a subsidy in the style of the Lyft Ride Smart program.

- **Research:**
 - **Data Analysis:** Used Divvy's public-use trip history dataset to analyze **over 100,000 bike rides** in the UChicago area, including analyses on ride duration, distance, membership, path frequency, and station frequency.
 - **Qualitative Research:** Researched Lyft and Divvy to understand usage, structure, and impact on communities.
 - **Student Interest Survey:** Surveyed **100 students** to understand students' cycling habits and needs in order to compile evidence for a subsidized Divvy program.
- **Partnerships:**
 - **Transportation Services:** Established a connection with UChicago's Director of Transportation & Parking Services **Beth Tindel** to share project findings, with future steps being a formal recommendation, custom deals with Lyft, and Divvy data provision.
 - **Booth Pilot Program:** Reached out to administrators of a Booth pilot Divvy program.
 - **Undergraduate Student Government:** Established a **working group**.
 - **Dean Rasmussen:** Will be meeting with Dean Rasmussen in collaboration with Student Government to share findings and push for pilot program.

HYDE PARK BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

HPBP aims to continuously support and partner with businesses and organizations in Hyde Park in order to integrate and advocate for sustainable practices. Along the way, students will practice environmental consulting—implementing green practices in their community.

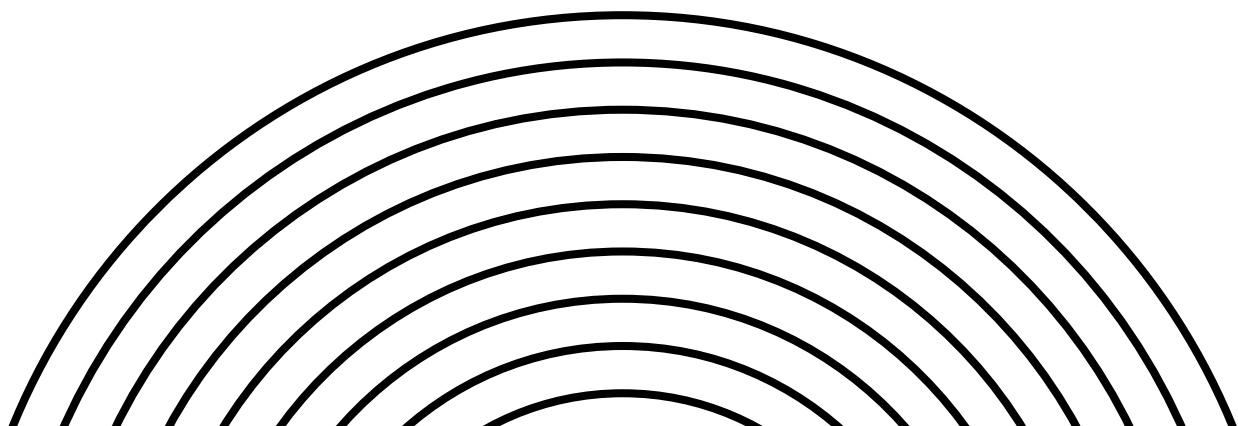
PROJECTS AND OUTCOMES

Sugar Bliss Bakery Consulting - Worked with downtown, female-and-minority-owned business Sugar Bliss Bakery to develop educational materials about proper recycling practices for Sugar Bliss's upcoming cookie product line to be sold at Walgreens

- Compiled resources educating consumers on why **soft plastic packaging** must be recycled at designated stores/locations.
- Created **posters and flyers** promoting proper recycling of this packaging.
- Compiled all materials for a potential **webpage** for Sugar Bliss, including referring the owner to a website showing Chicago **drop-off locations** for this type of packaging.

Fancy Up for Formal - Brought in local female and minority-owned business The UpScale Salon to provide subsidized no-heat haircuts/hairstyling to PSI members in preparation for PSI Formal

- **6 PSI members** received subsidized haircuts, trims, and styling from **The UpScale Salon**.
- Promoted ease of **no-heat hairstyling** and **eco-friendly hair products**.
- Strengthened **connection** with owner Amira with whom we did sustainable consulting in Winter Quarter.





PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public Engagement fosters green participation and environmental awareness within the surrounding community through diverse initiatives and collaborative efforts.

PROJECTS

Earth Day Sticker Sale:

We aimed to inform the broader campus community of topics within sustainability. As a result, we chose to sell stickers on Earth Day in Reynolds Club with topics related to **divestment, composting, and green energy.**

Midway Plaisance Advisory Council x PSI:

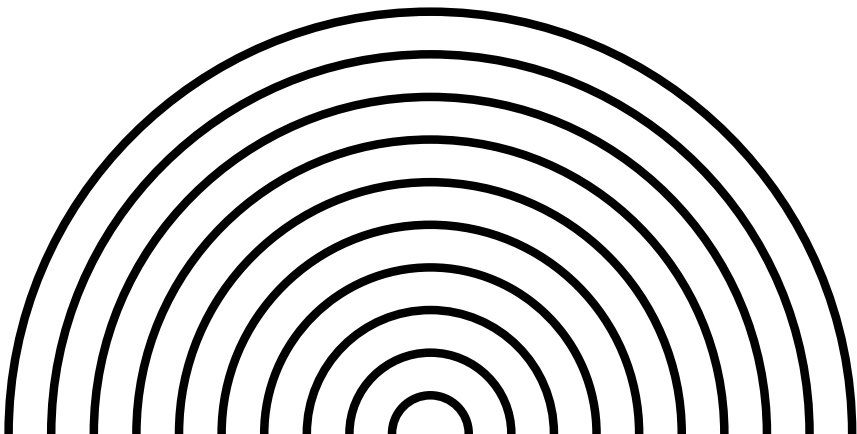
We worked with MPAC and **Bronwyn Nichols-Lodato** to organize a **speaker event** geared towards informing the campus community (both graduate and undergraduate) on the **draining of the ephemeral wetlands** due to the construction of the Obama Presidential Center.

OUTCOMES

Earth Day Sticker Sale:

- Produced **15** environmental sticker designs
- Sold over **100 stickers.**
- Donated the **\$160** of proceeds to People for Community Recovery.

Midway Plaisance Advisory Council x PSI:

- Hosted over **15 individuals** directly through the speaker event.
 - Reached over **50 profiles** through a Facebook event, drawing attention to the issue.
- 

SCIENCE, ART, AND SUSTAINABILITY

SAS aims to find creative ways to engage with the UChicago community and Hyde Park by combining science with artistic projects to create meaningful discussions and reflections on our role in current sustainable practices.

PROJECTS

Logan Center Art Installation

Wasted Ocean was a mural of ocean life that hung in the *Logan Center North Lounge*, **made entirely from colorful trash** collected by Phoenix Sustainability Initiative from students. The project was funded by the **Logan Center Collaboration Grant**. This project sought to present the gravity of sustainability as a fundamental social issue that we still don't know how to solve, and to contribute to the conversation around what UChicago's relationship to sustainability should be. Among other questions, the project sought to ask, *"Is sustainability possible in a world where single-use items are designed to ultimately find their home in the ocean?"*

OUTCOMES

- Displayed the project in the **Logan Center North Lounge** for a week. Students from around campus used the space to study and take pictures.
- Hosted **Dr. Amir Jina** for a conversation about his research and the arts. Dr Jina enthusiastically complimented the work, saying that "the power of art makes us aware and interested in our norms, attitudes, and behaviors." He pointed out that art asks us how we focus our lives, and directs what we pay attention to. He shared his own work in encouraging sustainability through finding the **social cost of carbon**.

SERVICE

The mission of the service group is to get students excited about sustainability-focused volunteer opportunities on campus and in the surrounding community. The service group can provide simple and enjoyable events to demonstrate to students that small actions can contribute to sustainability in their neighborhoods, and that serving others is more accessible than they might think and can become a regular part of their lives.

PROJECTS

- **57th Street Beach Clean Up (April 16th):** PSI-wide cleanup at 57th Street Beach.
- **Earth Day Midway Clean Up (April 22nd):** Promoted MPAC's Earth Day Cleanup on PSI social media, both PSI members and non-PSI students joined the group to clean up the Midway.
- **Nichols Park Clean Up (May 20th):** organized PSI-wide cleanup at Nichols Park, PSI members picked up trash surrounding both playgrounds and natural lawn spaces.
- **It's Your Park Day! (May 21st):** worked with Nichols Park Advisory Council to weed the invasive plants surrounding the lilies at Nichols Park floral display.

OUTCOMES

- Removed **multiple bags worth of trash**, including glass, plastic, and aluminum, at each clean up.
- Removed **65 pounds of trash** for the 57th Street Beach Clean Up.
- Successfully engaged the campus community in clean up efforts and **spread sustainability messages** in various realms of campus through Instagram and Facebook.
- Collaborated with the **Midway Park Advisory Council, Nichols Park Advisory Council**, and other groups within PSI, such as the **Earth Day Working Group**, to successfully promote their efforts.