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cleanup Photo: Shehzil Zahid

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VOLUNTEER TURNOUT BOOSTS CLEANUP INITIATIVE

By Shehzil Zahid () / November 23, 2019



(<https://huntspointexpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/cleanup2-scaled.jpg>)

Participants in the Hunts Point Neighborhood Cleanup group. Photo: Shehzil Zahid

The third Hunts Point Neighborhood Cleanup saw 60 eager volunteers prepared to brave the November cold to clean up the neighborhood. Armed with rakes, dustpans and garbage bags and bins, volunteers split into three groups of 20 to tackle garbage and debris on Hunts Point, Garrison and Lafayette avenues. Even with the wind against them, volunteers young and old persisted, stuffing garbage bag after garbage bag.

Jamine Williams, community coordinator for [Urban Health Plan](https://www.urbanhealthplan.org) (<https://www.urbanhealthplan.org>), coordinated with the Healthy Livable Community Initiative to see this year's event through. The two groups collaborated to identify the community's needs with smaller cleanups in July and September.

"I was really excited about the turnout today," said Williams. "We had a lot of residents come out willing to help make their community a cleaner place."

"I'm local to the community and I feel a certain kinda way when I see the garbage the kids have to walk through. It's a bad representation of who we are," said Jenty Velez, 29. "If you can't take care of your community, if you don't care about your living space and environment, then where are your moral principles?"

Sol Rivera, 36, was compelled to volunteer because she was tired of seeing garbage on her streets every morning.

SPECIAL PROJECT: AFTERSHOCKS



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The Bronx didn't elect Donald Trump, but it will see the effect of his policies in everything from diminished clean air standards to more aggressive immigration enforcement. [Read more>](#) (<https://aftershocks.motthavenherald.com>)

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 BY SUNNY NAGPAUL () / FEBRUARY 14, 2023

“I know that every morning when I wake up and walk down the avenue, there’s garbage everywhere,” including syringes, said Rivera. “I don’t think it’s a good environment for our kids to be around.”

For younger volunteers, the cleanup was an opportunity to get involved in the community.

“Helping the community feels really good—it’s like you’re teaming up with God and the community to keep the streets clean,” said Matthew Ron, a student at St. Ignatius School. “It makes me feel like a superhero, cleaning up the streets—it’s like, each piece of garbage is a bad crime and I’m cleaning it up and saving the world!”

Despite his enthusiasm, Ron, 13, felt unsure about spending hours of his Saturday cleaning up when he could have been playing with his friends instead.

“It’s a Saturday. People need to relax after a long week of school but sometimes helping the community is better,” said Ron.

After the cleanup, volunteers assembled at [The Point Community Development Corporation \(https://thepoint.org\)](https://thepoint.org) (CDC) for lunch, which was provided by the [Hunts Point Alliance for Children \(https://www.huntspoint.org\)](https://www.huntspoint.org) (HPAC). Turn by turn, volunteers approached the kitchen at The Point for a helping of sweet and sour chicken, prawn rice, fried chicken and noodles.

Volunteers also went home with bags of fresh produce provided by Councilman Rafael Salamanca’s office, which also connected Urban Health Plan with [Wildcat Service Corporation \(https://wildcatnyc.org/get-to-know-us/\)](https://wildcatnyc.org/get-to-know-us/), a group that services community needs.

The Point’s Bascom Catering also provided hot beverages.

Williams hopes to schedule another cleanup effort in April. Given the success of her third cleanup, she expects even more volunteers to sign up next time around.

“It’s beautiful to see how the community has come together to just be a part of this effort,” Rivera said.

<https://huntspointexpress.com/2019/11/23/volunteer-turnout-boosts-cleanup-initiative/> (mailto:?)
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