



Annual Report 2008 Annual Report 2008 **Annual Report 2008** Annual Report 2008



*Planting Pride in Our Communities*

# Board of Directors

America in Bloom® is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of 10 volunteers:

**Evelyn Alemanni**  
ALL EA Consulting

**Jonathan Bardzik**  
American Nursery & Landscape Association

**Jack Clasen, Ph.D.**  
State Farm Insurance

**John Holmes**  
OFA - an Association of Floriculture Professionals

**Dr. Marvin N. Miller**  
Ball Horticultural Company

**Delilah Onofrey**  
Meister Media Worldwide

**Alex Pearl**  
Warren Correctional Institution

**Ron Pierre**  
Express Seed Company

**Stan Pohmer**  
Pohmer Consulting Group

**Katy Moss Warner**  
President Emeritus,  
American Horticultural Society

**Laura Kunkle**  
Executive Director

## Message from the President

# Helping Keep American Cities Vibrant

America in Bloom® believes that connecting people to plants at a fundamental grassroots level is an important contributor to everyone's quality of life. Studies show that connecting with plants has far-reaching effects and is important for good mental, physical, and emotional health. Many studies have shown that ornamental horticulture can provide multiple benefits in terms of the economy, environment, and human lifestyles.\*

Economic benefits ranging from reducing heating and cooling costs to improving property values, from improving privacy and security to reducing maintenance costs have been documented, as has the potential for deriving new economic benefits from parks, sporting facilities, and increased tourism. Environmental issues include the ability to moderate urban climate extremes, ameliorating air, soil, water and wastewater pollution, flood and erosion control, reduction of noise pollution, and more. Certainly, plants' ability to sequester carbon and produce oxygen is important. Lifestyle enhancements include plants' proven ability to aid in stress reduction, improve productivity, reduce hospital recovery times, improve concentration, reduce aggression and violence, improve the overall quality of life, provide recreational habitats, and the ability to foster pride.

2008 marked America in Bloom's seventh year of helping to improve the quality of life in American towns and cities. To date, AIB has invested more than \$1.2 million to support its mission to connect people with plants, and touched many lives through earned media exposure of over a quarter billion impressions. In addition, in-kind contributions and countless hours of volunteer work have leveraged our mission's reach even more.

Participants continue to tell us that being part of the program changes lives, helps improve the community, and makes a visible difference in their towns. Attendance at our national symposium and awards continues to grow and provides inspiration to people who are passionate about their hometowns and plants.

We are indeed grateful for the support of all our participants, judges, sponsors and staff - all of us volunteers - who work together to strengthen the fabric of American cities and towns. Literally 100% of your contributions support our mission, and nearly all of these dollars go directly to program costs.

Together, we help plant pride in our communities.



Dr. Marvin N. Miller  
President, America in Bloom®  
Board of Directors

\* Literature Review of Documented Health and Environmental Benefits derived from Ornamental Horticulture Products - Final Report. George Morris Center. March 2007

Making America a better place to live one community at a time.

## An Independent, Non-Profit Organization

America in Bloom® is an independent, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to promoting nationwide beautification programs and personal and community involvement through the use of flowers, plants, trees, and other environmental and lifestyle enhancements.

America in Bloom® provides educational programs, resources, and the challenge of a friendly competition between participating communities across the country.



# Judging Criteria

Floral Displays | Landscaped Areas | Urban Forestry  
Turf and Groundcovers | Environmental Awareness  
Tidiness | Heritage Preservation | Community Involvement

## Judging Sectors (all sectors are evaluated)

### **Municipal**

Includes governmental facilities, parks, public properties, schools, institutions, churches, sports facilities

### **Commercial**

Includes shopping centers, stores, office buildings, business parks, industrial sites, manufacturing, business groups and associations, and other commercial establishments

### **Residential**

Includes residences of all kinds, efforts of service groups and societies

...it's a whole different kind of urban renewal.

## Cornerstones of Accomplishment

**America in Bloom® connects people to plants at a grassroots level through education and participation. The three main components are contest participation, the symposium, and community-building resources.**

### **Participation**

To date, 159 communities from 37 states have participated in our annual beautification contest; the lives of 21 million people have been touched in some way by America in Bloom®. When you add to that the people in neighboring towns, our remarkable reach has touched the lives of millions more Americans. Several cities have participated year after year. Some winners have moved on to international competition to learn from the success of towns in other countries. We have come to define our reach, and indeed our success, by the number of cities that continue to embrace our program's goals, whether or not they are active participants in the contest in any one year.

Participating cities and towns compete against those of similar population size. Communities are evaluated by specially trained judges on eight criteria, in three sectors: municipal, commercial, and residential (see above). Participants have ranged in size from the smallest, Echo, Oregon with a population of 650 to Chicago, Illinois with more than 2.7 million residents.

While the program is holistic, encompassing the many facets that enhance quality of life, our America in Bloom® cities know that flowers, trees, shrubs, turf, and groundcovers of the right kind in the right place make a visual impact. Our cities know the economic importance of having their main streets landscaped, as they serve as the welcome signs inviting folks to spend time in the city. They know that well-maintained parks are good, not just for a healthy environment, but for healthy citizens.

Communities also realize that these efforts are enhanced by attention to tidiness, environment, and heritage preservation. To do all these things requires the synergy that comes from an engaged and active community, which combines the efforts of the municipal and business partners working in cooperation with the citizenry.

The phenomenon of the "AIB bug" that infects people who have become involved with the program is palpable. Once citizens experience the true community spirit that results when everyone pitches in to make visible improvements, there is often no turning back. Indeed, we have a number of stories of city administrations that have attempted to cut back on beautification efforts or community enhancements only to face voters' wrath at the next election. Citizens come to relish the community as it has been transformed - it's a whole different kind of urban renewal.



## Symposium

Each year the symposium and awards are held in a different city. Participants, and those who are interested in learning more about America in Bloom® and its programs enjoy outstanding presentations from industry experts, meet like-minded people from around the country, and showcase their accomplishments. Inspirational educational offerings include seminars, panel discussions, and presentations on each of the criteria and more. Tours are offered to showcase excellent accomplishments by the host city and allow participants to experience firsthand examples of successful and innovative city beautification projects.

Criteria awards are given to recognize the “best of the best” across all population categories for excellent achievements in each of the eight judging criteria. These awards are sponsored by various companies

and industry organizations. The symposium ends with a gala dinner where winners in each population category are announced. Most important, though, is the realization that each town that participates is a WINNER, because through their efforts, they have made a visible difference and important improvements in their community.

## Resources

America in Bloom® plays the important role of resource for all communities. During evaluations, our judges offer consulting services, sharing with towns what they have learned from other communities of like size, using a “best practices” approach. The judges also prepare a report of considerable detail recognizing strengths and offering important suggestions for improvement.

## Cumulative List of Participants through 2008 (Communities in bold are 2008 participants.)

- |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p><b>A</b> Akron, OH<br/>Allegan, MI<br/>Amelia, OH<br/>Annapolis, MD<br/><b>Arroyo Grande, CA</b><br/><b>Artesia, CA</b><br/>Ashland University, OH<br/><b>Aurora, IN</b></p>  | <p>Coeur d’Alene, ID<br/><b>Colleyville, TX</b><br/><b>Collierville, TN</b><br/><b>Columbia, MO</b><br/>Columbus Avenue Business Improvement District, NY<br/>Columbus, IN<br/>Columbus, OH<br/>Corning, NY<br/>Cynthiana, KY</p>                      | <p><b>H</b> Haverhill, MA<br/>Hershey-Derry Township, PA<br/>Hoffman Estates, IL<br/>Hofstra University, NY<br/>Horseheads, NY<br/>Hudson, OH</p>  | <p><b>Michigan City, IN</b><br/>Middlefield, OH<br/>Milledgeville, GA<br/>Modesto, CA<br/>Monroe County, NY<br/>Montgomery, IL<br/>Montrose, IA<br/>Mount Rainier, MD</p>  |
| <p><b>B</b> Barberton, OH<br/>Bartlett, TN<br/>Batavia, IL<br/>Bay City, MI<br/>Bay Village, OH<br/>Belleville, MI<br/>Beloit, WI<br/><b>Bemidji, MN</b><br/>Berea, OH<br/><b>Bexley, OH</b><br/>Blanchester, OH<br/>Bolingbrook, IL<br/>Boston, MA<br/>Bowling Green, OH<br/>Brecksville, OH<br/>Bremen, OH<br/>Brigham Young University, UT<br/>Buffalo, MN<br/>Burton, OH</p> | <p><b>D</b> Des Moines, IA<br/>Dixon, IL</p>   | <p><b>I</b> <b>Incline Village General Improvement District, NV</b><br/>Indianapolis, IN<br/><b>Ironton, OH</b><br/>Ithaca, NY</p>   | <p><b>N</b> Naperville, IL<br/>New Bedford, MA<br/>Newburyport, MA<br/><b>North Manchester, IN</b><br/><b>Northfield, MN</b><br/>Northglenn, CO<br/><b>Norwich, CT</b></p> |
| <p><b>C</b> Cadillac, MI<br/>Camp Hill, PA<br/>Charlevoix, MI<br/>Chicago, IL<br/>Cleveland, OH</p>  | <p><b>E</b> Echo, OR<br/>Elfin Forest, CA<br/>Encinitas, CA<br/><b>Eureka Springs, AR</b></p>  | <p><b>K</b> Kalamazoo County, MI<br/>Kettering, OH<br/>Kirkwood, MO</p>  | <p><b>O</b> Oberlin College, OH<br/>Oberlin, OH<br/>Ocala, FL<br/>Olmsted Falls, OH</p>  |
| <p><b>F</b> Fairhope, AL<br/><b>Fayetteville, AR</b><br/>Flemington, NJ<br/>Forest Park, OH<br/>Frankenmuth, MI<br/>Frankfort, IN</p>  | <p><b>G</b> <b>Gallipolis, OH</b><br/>Gardendale, AL<br/>Glen Carbon, IL<br/>Glen Ellyn, IL<br/>Goderich, ON<br/>Goshen, NY<br/>Grand Central Partnership - New York City, NY<br/><b>Greendale, IN</b><br/><b>Greendale, WI</b><br/>Greenfield, IN</p> | <p><b>L</b> <b>Lafayette, IN</b><br/>Lake Oswego, OR<br/>Lapeer, MI<br/>Lavonia, GA<br/>Lee’s Summit, MO<br/>Lewes, DE<br/><b>Ligonier, IN</b><br/>Lincoln Square Business Improvement District, NY<br/>Logan, OH<br/>London, KY<br/>Loveland, OH<br/>Lynden, WA</p> | <p><b>P</b> Peoria, AZ<br/>Peru, IL<br/><b>Point Pleasant, WV</b><br/>Portland, ME</p>   |
| <p><b>M</b> Madison, AL<br/>Manchester, VT<br/>Mason, OH<br/>Mecklenburg County, NC<br/>Meredith, NH</p>   | <p><b>Q</b> Qualicum Beach, BC<br/>Quincy, MA</p>  | <p><b>R</b> Rancho Santa Fe, CA<br/>Red Wing, MN<br/>Reston, VA<br/><b>Richmond, KY</b><br/><b>Rising Sun, IN</b><br/>River Edge, NJ<br/>Riverside, CA<br/>Rockford, IL</p>  |  |



## Best Practices Book

We have compiled a 90-page book (*Best Ideas*) of best practices in

each of the eight criteria, derived from the best ideas implemented in all our participating cities. This book is made available at no cost to all interested parties from our website, [www.americainbloom.org](http://www.americainbloom.org).

## Website

People use [www.americainbloom.org](http://www.americainbloom.org) as a starting point when developing plans to improve their communities. Besides offering the *Best Ideas* book, our website contains links to more than 100 related sites organized by the eight criteria. At a time when an internet search can yield millions of “related” hits, it’s an important time-

saver when people can be directed to the most valuable resources. The site also offers many downloadable resources, including studies on the value of landscaping to all aspects of a town, PowerPoint presentations, and toolkits that help guide towns through the participation process.

## In-kind Resources

Many horticulture industry publications are committed in-kind sponsors. Among their activities are running in-kind publicity in their magazines and on their websites about our programs, articles highlighting cities and/or businesses involved with beautification efforts, and even the publication of a mini-magazine.

As an example, *Planting Pride* is an independently produced mini-magazine from Meister Media Worldwide. The July issue

showcases beautification efforts in a variety of settings and promotes symposium attendance, while the November issue reports competition results. Distribution is more than 30,000 copies, twice each year. Recently *GrowerTalks* and *GPN* featured the full page ad (shown below at left) to promote the symposium.

We are grateful to all the media for their outstanding support.



- Rockton, IL
- Rocky River, OH
- S** Sackets Harbor, NY
- Sandusky, OH
- Saratoga Springs, NY
- Sequim, WA
- Silverton, OH
- Spokane, WA
- St Clairsville, OH
- St Paul, MN
- Stratford, CT
- Stuart, FL**
- Sylvania, OH
- T** **Tipp City, OH**
- Toledo, OH**
- Tupelo, MS
- U** University of Arkansas - Fort Smith, AR
- University of Massachusetts- Amherst, MA
- University of Missouri- Columbia, MO
- Utah State University, UT
- V** Vermilion, OH
- Vernal, UT
- W** **Warrenville, IL**
- Warwick, NY
- Washington Court House, OH
- Waterloo, NY
- West Lafayette, IN**
- Westlake, OH
- Wheat Ridge, CO

- Wickliffe, OH
- Williston, VT
- Willoughby, OH
- Winchester, MA

## America in Bloom Cities



than one quarter-billion media impressions



## Judges

America in Bloom® judges come from a cross-section of backgrounds: horticultural, arborial, civic, business sector, and more. They receive special training each year.



“As a former Loveland Council member and Mayor, plus being on the beautification committee since 1988, I can honestly say that the 25 page AIB document that we had received from our judges was the most extensive, indepth and well written evaluation of the City that I have ever seen. It was better than other city-hired, well paid consultants’ reports that I have received over the many years of my city government service.”

- Donna Lajcak  
Loveland, Ohio

Our judges also spend time coaching cities and consulting with them on improvements they can make. They continue to be available after judging for further mentoring.

After visiting a town, judges write a detailed evaluation highlighting strengths and listing areas for possible improvements. Many communities have stated that they have received greater value from their AIB evaluations than from expensive consulting reports.

Our judges also often speak at industry conferences.

The commitment of our judges is phenomenal. We estimate the judges’ donation of time during the past year to be at least 6000 hours. Activities by staff and board members may well double that number.

# 2008 Judges

**Evelyn Alemanni**  
*Writer, Consultant, Community Activist,  
Former Mayor*

**Darlene Blake**  
*Retired, Community Volunteer*

**Patrick Bones**  
*Landscape Designer*

**Diane Clasen**  
*Business Owner, Community Volunteer,  
Master Gardener*

**Jack Clasen**  
*Business Owner, Community Volunteer,  
Master Gardener*

**Leslie Croyle**  
*Floral Designer, Community Volunteer*

**Mary Ann Fink**  
*Landscape Designer, Certified Arborist*

**Bill Hahn**  
*City Arborist, Akron, OH*

**Jana Kattenhorn**  
*Retired Science Teacher and Horticulturist*

**Norm Kleber**  
*Territorial Sales Manager, Reinders*

**Art Ode**  
*Former Executive Director, Cox Arboretum*

**Ed Rhinehart**  
*Retired Business Owner,  
Community Volunteer*

**Bruce Riggs**  
*Garden Writer, Consultant,  
Formerly of New York Botanic Garden*

**Julie Riley**  
*Horticultural Extension Specialist,  
University of Alaska*

**Matt Rosen**  
*City Horticulturist, Community  
Activist, Des Moines, IA*

**Katy Moss Warner**  
*President Emeritus, American  
Horticultural Society*

## Volunteers

Volunteers are the sustaining heartbeat and lifeblood of cities and towns. America in Bloom® galvanizes volunteers from all walks of life, providing a framework for enhancing communities. Volunteers come from every demographic,

every age group, schools, service groups, scouts, churches, and business associations, who join in bringing communities together, creating a synergy of positive efforts with the joy of collaboration for permanent improvements.

Mayors have told us time after time that America in Bloom® is the best community building tool they've ever experienced; through participation in the program, all sectors have collaborated for the first time. That's the lasting power of America in Bloom®.

The power and passion of volunteerism is true for the America in Bloom® organization as well. Our judges and Board of Directors are all volunteers. OFA staff contributes their time as volunteers to be our America in Bloom® staff.

Far more exciting is contemplating the countless volunteer hours donated in each of our participating cities. One year, Logan, OH tracked volunteer hours and tallied more than 100,000 donated hours.

That's remarkable for a town with less than 7,000 residents!

Imagine the value and power of all the combined hours donated in all the cities. As icing on the cake, consider the value of all the in-kind contributions: the hardware stores who donate paint, builders who offer construction materials, newspapers who sponsor garden makeover contests, nurseries who help with civic plantings, people who grow plants for the town in their greenhouses or backyards.

The list is daunting. This kind of grassroots energy takes on a life of its own and has a carryover effect. We have been told by many cities that they continue with their beautification efforts long after the competitive spirit wanes.





# Spreading the Word

## In the Media

America in Bloom® enjoys significant press coverage, generated by our public relations efforts and by our participating cities who work hard to assure that their community-building work receives extensive internet, newspaper, television and radio coverage. Industry trade press is very important, and even the *Wall Street Journal* included a short feature on our organization this year.

America in Bloom's reach is now estimated at more than 250 million impressions via many forms of media coverage.

Media considerations aside, cities tell us that the benefits of AIB participation bring to a city a much more positive and lasting effect.



## In Your In-Box

Nearly 14,000 people directly receive our monthly e-newsletter that features success stories from cities, encouragement from judges, interesting resources, news from participating cities, and more. In addition, we know of several organizations which receive our e-newsletter and forward it to their members, extending our reach even further.



## Person-to-Person Promotion

For America in Bloom®, a large part of our success is the buzz that occurs when cities have positive experiences and when the lives of citizens are affected. Word-of-mouth conversations are an important aspect in sharing the program's benefits. We often hear that a city considers the program after a neighboring city has entered. When successful municipalities reach out to neighboring cities and towns

and/or when neighboring citizens see the changes that occur in a nearby city and seek out the impetus of that change, the reach becomes all the more powerful.

Such is the nature of America in Bloom's achievement. We need each and every participant to share their stories with neighboring communities, so that good word-of-mouth communication can attract even more fans to the program.





# Fundraising Efforts

Sponsorships, both financial and in-kind, sustain our efforts. Much of our promotion is possible via in-kind donations from several industry magazines. Other

sponsors provide monetary funding for our activities. We aggressively leverage our modest budget through volunteer efforts, in-kind donations and industry

financial support. If you would like to be a corporate supporter, please contact us. Our programs are made possible by the companies listed below.

## America in Bloom® Stewards

### Platinum

- American Nursery & Landscape Association
- Anthony Tesselaar Plants
- Ball Horticultural Company
- Ball Publishing
- Blackmore Company
- Branch-Smith Publishing
- Green Circle Growers
- Meister Media Worldwide
- Myers Lawn & Garden Group
- OFA – an Association of Floriculture Professionals
- Proven Winners
- Scranton-Gillette Communications
- The Scotts Company

### Gold

- Dummen USA
- East Jordan Plastics
- Farrand Enterprises
- Griffin Greenhouse Supplies
- Kube-Pak Corp.
- Zaunserb Marketing Inc.

### Silver

- BFG Supply
- Eason Horticultural Resources
- Garden Centers of America
- Goldsmith Seeds
- Kinney Bonded Wholesale
- Masterpiece Flower Co.
- Metrolina Greenhouse
- Paul Ecke Ranch
- Poppelmann Plastics
- Vis Seed Company
- Walnut Springs Company

### Bronze

- Agrinomix
- AMA Plastics Ltd.
- BioWorks Inc.
- C Raker & Sons Inc.
- Cincinnati Flower Growers Association
- Fafard Inc.
- Landmark Plastic Corp.
- MasterTag
- Plant Products
- Syngenta
- Wallitsch Garden Center
- WoJo's Greenhouse

### Friend

- Bell Nursery
- Moeller Greenhouse & Garden Center
- Plantland Garden Center
- Waldo & Associates Inc.

### Raffle

Purchasing tickets for the annual raffle is another way to support the program.



## Symposium Host Cities

- 2002 Reston, VA
- 2003 Chicago, IL
- 2004 Indianapolis, IN
- 2005 Cleveland, OH
- 2006 Eureka Springs, AR
- 2007 Rockford, IL
- 2008 Columbus, OH
- 2009 Hershey, PA

## 2008 Symposium Sponsors

- |                                |                                  |  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| American Floral Endowment      | Experience Columbus              | Meister Media Worldwide                            |
| American Horticultural Society | Gardens Alive!                   | OFA – an Association of Floriculture Professionals |
| Anthony Tesselaar Plants       | Hyatt on Capitol Square Columbus | Project EverGreen                                  |
| Ball Horticultural Company     | J Frank Schmidt & Son Co.        | SafeLawns  |

## 2008 Criteria Award Sponsors

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Floral Displays<br>Ball Horticultural Company | Turf & Groundcover Areas<br>SafeLawns                   | Heritage Preservation<br>Meister Media Worldwide |
| Urban Forestry<br>J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co.  | Environmental Awareness<br>Gardens Alive!               | Tidiness<br>America in Bloom®                    |
| Landscaped Areas<br>Project Evergreen         | Community Involvement<br>American Horticultural Society |  |

# Touching Towns, Touching Lives

## See America in Bloom® at these events:

National League of Cities

American Nursery and Landscape  
Association Management Clinic

OFA Short Course

Southeast Greenhouse  
Conference

Association of Chamber of  
Commerce Executives

International Master Gardeners  
Conference

*We also participate with several  
state and national master gardener  
organizations and have a presence at  
many other events.*



Administrative Costs

Fundraising

Symposium, Awards, Other Education

## The Numbers

Through the commitment of our sponsors, we are able to maintain our website and our outreach activities, develop educational resources, host the Annual Educational Symposium and Awards, and send judges to all participating cities.

It is important to note that America in Bloom's programs

are implemented solely with volunteer efforts—not just from our board, staff, and judges, but by the thousands of volunteers in participating towns and cities. Our program is making a difference all across America.

Ninety-four percent of all contributions go directly to programming costs.

**“While winning brings about a measure of well-deserved recognition, the competition itself is a remarkably rewarding and satisfying experience regardless of the outcome.”**

- Alfred C. Cerullo III  
President/CEO Grand Central Partnership  
New York, New York

# Our Annual Expenditures



**Our annual expenditures of \$225,000 break down as follows:**

Administrative Costs	3%
Staff and Overhead	0%*
Fundraising	3%
Program Costs	
Contest	66%
Symposium, Awards and Other Education	28%
Total:	100%

\*Overhead costs are "in-kind" contributions from OFA - an Association of Floriculture Professionals, Columbus, OH. This organization provides a home base for AIB. In addition, OFA staff volunteer as AIB staff.





## Giving to America in Bloom®

America in Bloom® is an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization committed to promoting nationwide beautification programs and personal and community involvement through the use of flowers, plants, trees, and other environmental and lifestyle enhancements. America in Bloom® provides educational programs, resources, and the challenge of a friendly competition between participating communities all across the country.

All of our programs and services are made possible through the generosity of organizations and individuals. If you would like to make a gift by using your credit card or become a corporate supporter, please contact us.

*Photos courtesy Evelyn Alemanni*



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