

Welcome Center “Adopts a Spot” to Keep Cincinnati Beautiful

East Walnut Hills looks a little brighter these days, thanks to GCB’s Welcome Center “Adopt a Spot” Team. About twice a week, members of the team head out to Myrtle Street, which runs between Woodburn Avenue and Victory Parkway behind the GCB building, to work their magic. Armed with gloves and bags, the Welcome Center Team makes their way up the street, across the parking lot and often back down Madison Road, picking up the litter that spoils the view of this highly-traveled stretch.

“Adopt a Spot” is a division of “Keep Cincinnati Beautiful”, a City of Cincinnati Department of Public Services program. Its goal is to improve neighborhoods by cleaning up litter and maintaining green space. Groups who adopt an area must commit to at least one clean-up a month for a period of three years and pay a small fee to receive the identifying signage.

GCB’s Welcome Center is a psychosocial day program within the organization using the Club House Model, and offers an opportunity for clients to develop social skills and relationships. Welcome Center Psychosocial Supervisor Eric Binford said the idea for the Adopt a Spot team came to him one day when he noticed an outdated adoption sign for a organization that was no longer on the block. He brought the idea back to the group, and found there was a lot of enthusiasm to improve the area.

Lisa Nichols, GCB Peer Support Advocate who coordinates the clean ups, said she had clients eager to join the team. “I told them ‘We’re doing beautiful things here [at the Welcome Center]’,” says Lisa, “You are an entity of this organization; you can make it beautiful outside, too.” Sometimes a team member gets proactive, suggesting that perhaps the team needs to get out more often. “Audrey is always pointing out the need to make an extra trip around the block,” Nichols says with pride about a particular client of the Welcome Center.

As the Adopt a Spot Team grows, there may be plans to add some additional enhancement to the area, including some flowering pots and landscaping. “Our clients love doing it,” Binford says of the beautification program. “It makes them feel active in their community.”