

2023 EMC Environmental Excellence Award Winners

The [Erie County Environmental Management Council](#) (EMC), an advisory board to the County on environmental issues, announced the following 2023 Environmental Excellence Award Winners:

Environmental Ambassador Summit. This Niagara River Greenway project created a program that funded student environmental projects from eight high schools, which were presented at its Environmental Ambassador Summit on February 9, 2023. The event allowed the high school students to discuss their projects with environmental professionals and learn about pathways to environmental careers. The resulting projects include wildlife habitat restoration, pollinator garden planting and maintenance, trail restoration, education initiatives, and community cleanups among others. <https://www.niagararivergreenway.com/>

Plant the Future of Farming and other programs. These Providence Farm Collective programs supported community-rooted agriculture and food systems for under-resourced people in our community. Highlights included: supporting 22 farm groups in 2022, welcoming new farmers from the Ethiopian and Bangladeshi communities, launching of its own farmers market in the City of Buffalo, providing assistance to farmers in the procurement of culturally-relevant vegetables by the Buffalo Public Schools, and partnering on a Plant the Future of Farming campaign to protect prime farmland for these programs. <https://providencfarmcollective.org/>

Refugee Women's Workshop and other programs. These Stitch Buffalo programs reduce waste and increase reuse in the textile industry. Its work includes operating a drop-off donation site for textile materials which rescues 15,000 lbs of material annually, some of which are then used by its Refugee Women's Workshop in their work creating handmade items for resale to our community, and by its Community Class program, which training to community members interested in textile arts. These programs provide refugee women with both social and economic empowerment. <https://www.stitchbuffalo.org/>

Buffalo Freedom Gardens. Buffalo Freedom Gardens provides support and free materials to local residents in under-resourced neighborhoods to create home vegetable gardens, building urban food resiliency and supporting the availability of healthy locally-grown food in our community. The program has provided materials for about 50 raised garden beds to Buffalo residents annually for the last three years. The program lifts up the gardening and farming expertise of Black growers, including gardening and nutrition

expertise, information about growing food and herbs, and resources for self-care and COVID safety. <https://www.grassrootsgardens.org/>

If you have any questions about the EMC, please contact P. Josh Wilson at peter.wilson@erie.gov.