

**Montgomery Housing Partnership, Inc.**  
**Silver Spring, MD**  
**GRIT Green Project**  
**Budget: \$7,650**



[Montgomery Housing Partnership, Inc.](#) (MHP) and its Glenville Road Interdepartmental Team (GRIT) have embarked on a public education campaign to remediate ongoing problems associated with improper trash disposal. To unite the community in a cleanup effort, the Silver Spring, Maryland-based organization has hosted two festivals focused on appropriate trash and recycling procedures.

A recent festival, held June 13, 2009, featured a work session in which about 20 volunteers picked up trash and tended gardens around the neighborhood. Afterward, the volunteers enjoyed a resident-prepared lunch and presentations from the local police department and the local farmer's market.

During the first festival last November, volunteer community leaders distributed trash procedure information and recycling bins to their neighbors. They also sparked the interest of the community's youth by hosting a craft table where children decorated their bins with markers, paint and stickers.

The GRIT team plans to make the festivals regular events in the community and will continue to engage youth with a field trip to a recycling center this summer. Fundraising Director Patty Reed hopes the activities will act as community building tools to "empower residents to become active stewards of their neighborhood."

MHP began the project with a community survey that indicated the residents' most pressing concern was the presence of rats in their neighborhood. Based on the results of the survey, the GRIT team held community meetings during which community leaders came forth to tackle the rodent problem by first removing the trash littering their community.

The team has noticed a visible reduction of trash on the streets, and a second community survey recently indicated that 85 percent of respondents now use proper trash and recycling practices.

Although a lingering rodent problem remains, the GRIT team is now working with local homeowners, Montgomery County government and ASAP Pest Control to formulate a plan for eliminating the health hazard.