

# The Work and Values of Bridging The Gap

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Bridging The Gap (BTG) addresses global and local environmental issues by engaging 2700 Kansas Citians in more than a dozen initiatives ranging from recycling to biking to walking to tree planting. We teach, we act and we give people organized ways to get involved. Though our programs are diverse, our values unify us:

- **Bridging The Gap is authentic.** From our rooftop vegetable garden to our hands-on, get-dirty staff and volunteer corps, Bridging The Gap lives its values. Several of our employees don't own cars; others carpool or bike regularly; many are involved outside work in Food Not Lawns or Green Barn-raisings; we are locavores, vegans or vegetarians. But we have presented environmentalism in marbled corporate hallways all over Kansas City, and we're comfortable there, too.
- **Bridging The Gap is effective.** By engaging hundreds of well-trained and motivated volunteers, we are able to manage recycling centers and site trees at a lower cost than the city could. In a program touted and funded by the EPA, our Five Green Things™ identifies simple actions that can be undertaken immediately by any Kansas Citian and averts 4,000 pounds in carbon emissions per year, plus related air pollutants linked by Boston University to more than 200 human diseases.
- **Bridging The Gap is educational.** A common phone call at BTG is "I want to green, but I don't know how." "I'm on my company's green committee and we want to know how to start." We make presentations in churches, schools and stores; our business consulting group has advised Blue Cross Blue Shield, the Federal Reserve of Kansas City, Sprint and other distinguished businesses.
- **Bridging The Gap is action-oriented.** BTG always provides the means for people to immediately put what they've learned to work. We don't just teach the importance of retaining storm water – we help people make a rain barrel and go home ready to install it.
- **Bridging The Gap is hard working.** Our programs involve significant physical labor: removing trash from the city, digging holes for trees, removing invasive honeysuckle and carrying around recycling. We believe hard work keeps you healthy (last year's recycling Volunteer of the Year is in his late 80s!), and is the basis of changing the world.
- **Bridging The Gap is inclusive.** Nobody's better than anybody else, especially when it comes to the environment. We "meet people where they are" from Johnson County to the urban core, from environmental newbie to 40-year veteran. Someone's throwing trash out of a speeding Hummer while swilling bottled water? No judgments – Bridging The Gap will explain that a Hummer filled with people can be more energy-efficient than five Priuses driven solo, especially if they're making notes of the city's litter levels for our award-winning Litter Index.
- **Bridging The Gap is growing.** We grow trees and rain gardens and wildflowers; we grow new programs to help the environment like Walking School Bus and Five Green Things™ for Kids and Teens; we grew our volunteer corps from 2600 to 2700 this year; and we're growing awareness of the importance of the environment to the quality and security of life on earth.

