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# MIDDLETOWN



## Meet the Middletown Green Team!

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Photo by Aleda Talmage

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# Meet the Middletown Green Team!

By Robin Maliszewskyj • Group photo by Aldeda Talmage Photography.

Green Team members not pictured: Doug Martin, Jamie Moore, Erin Carney, Jessica Edler and Mark Carney. Other photos courtesy of Bernadette Roche.

**M**iddletown established the Sustainability Committee in 2016, when the Green Team (created April, 2015) became a standing committee. But names stick, and the Green Team ([www.greenmiddletown.com](http://www.greenmiddletown.com)), a dynamic group of volunteers, forms a family that does great work for Middletown. Co-chaired by Town Planner Cindy Unangst and Commissioner Kevin Stottlemyer, the Green Team's mission is "to conserve Middletown's shared natural resources, including land, air, water, open spaces, and viewsheds."

The Town and the Green Team together have established numerous practices and programs that support sustainability: e.g., yard waste program, stream restoration, pet waste program, rain barrel program, and promotion of native plant species. The Green Team earned Sustainable Maryland Certification, established a lecture series, sponsored tree-planting events and the annual "Green Expo," obtained Tree City USA, Bee City USA, Mayor's Monarch Pledge, PLANT award, and Tree City Growth Award designations, and much more.

Cindy loves how enthusiastic the Green Team family members are. "They are so much fun to work with and have so many ideas!"

With the team about five months, Kevin said, "I'm still just getting to know the members, but they're clearly a close knit group of individuals."

Serving as web developer, Gene Fleeman said he loves "being a productive and active member of his community," adding, "Communication between members is open and honest. Input is encouraged and professionally considered."

Bill Spare said he personally enjoys "the camaraderie of being part of a team dedicated to preserving and enhancing the local natural

environment." He added, "When people on the team say they will do something, they do it!"

Sean O'Keefe has been with the team since its inception. He said, "The members and supporters are an awesome and enthusiastic group of people who care deeply about our environment and educating our community for a better future. One member who now lives in Florida contributes and brings her energy via email. Many of us have different backgrounds, knowledge, and skills, but we come together with a common purpose."

Members are deeply passionate about the objective. Pam McDonald, acting secretary for the group, said, "I believe that climate change is one the gravest dangers to humanity. I am committed to raising awareness and helping people know there are small things that everyone can start doing to make a difference."

Things that Pam has personally done include putting solar panels on her home, composting, recycling, avoiding pesticides and fertilizers, eating vegetarian, using hybrid and electric vehicles, installing native landscaping, and shopping local, to name a few.

Agnesanne J. Danehey said, "I joined because I believe people are the custodians and guardians of this planet we call earth, and that responsibility spurred me to advocate for earth-friendly policies and practices at national and international levels, as well as to act locally, so we can maintain this planet for my children and the generations to come. This is the arena where I can participate to make a visible change for the better right where I live."

Sean said, "I think even small steps we all make now may have a large impact on our environment and health later, whether or not we are around to see it."



Bill said he joined the Green Team “over a concern for nature and the environment in our town.”

Agnesanne said one of the Green Team subgroups is called the “Loraxers,” after Dr. Seuss’ *The Lorax*, who “speaks for the trees.” She said, “Our purpose is to increase the tree canopy, which not only supports healthy wildlife, but plays a critical role in regulating local, regional, and global climate, because it is the principal site of the interchange of heat, water vapor, and atmospheric gases.”

Pam said, “Since Middletown is a small town, there is only so much our local government can do. With the Green Team, we can take on community projects and offer opportunities for residents to learn more about the importance of being ‘Green.’”

Both Pam and Agnesanne mentioned a video project the Green Team recently undertook, which really brought out the family nature of the group. Pam said, “It gave me a chance to see first-hand other Green Team members’ gardens and see them speak with passion about the efforts they have done to make their property beautiful and native-creature-friendly.”

Agnesanne said, “It took a lot of effort and time from our members. We had those who could access critical information on the topic, members who shared their stories, members who ‘volunteered’ their children to design and perform a puppet show, a member who had professional experience with video editing; and then,

another member who uploaded the video to our newly-developed website.”

Kevin said being on the Green Team is a great learning opportunity, and, “through their initiatives, the committee wants to make Middletown a better place to live.”

Agnesanne said, “When you belong to a volunteer group there are two critical qualities that I look for: strong and valued purpose to the group, and some sense of belonging. The Green Team has both.”

Cindy put it simply, “We truly work so well together, which is why we’ve been so successful.”

**Do you know** a neighbor who has a story to share?

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