

Earth Day Awards 2022

AWARD 1 — PRESERVATION CHAMPION

The first time Joey Fernandez saw overgrown and neglected gravestones he thought about the family and friends who visited a cemetery to mourn their loss of a loved one. And once he began repairing and restoring gravestones, he was hooked.

Over the years Joey Fernandez honed his skills and coordinated the restoration and preservation of hundreds of memorials throughout Macon's historic Rose Hill cemetery with a team of volunteers — from Civil War veterans and slaves, to prominent citizens.

Whether the headstones require repair because of Mother Nature, age, or vandalism, Joey Fernandez's work is renowned. Honored by Historic Macon for his devotion to this work, Fernandez is proud to honor those who came before us and says that once he started gravestone restoration work, it has consumed his life.

For that commitment, the Earth Day Committee awards Joey Fernandez the PRESERVATION CHAMPION AWARD for his ROSE HILL CEMETERY PRESERVATION.

AWARD 2 — SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

The Bibb County school system is committed to protecting the environment & they've proven it by earning Energy Star Certification. Bibb schools use less energy, operate more efficiently & less expensively, & emit fewer greenhouse emissions.

Bibb schools scored in the top 25% based on Environmental Protection Agency ratings with 30 buildings recognized for superior energy performance — the 3rd most ENERGY STAR K12 certified buildings in any Georgia school district. ENERGY STAR is the only energy efficiency certification in the United States based on actual, verified energy performance.

The Earth Day Committee awards the BIBB COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM with its SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE for its progressive, earth-friendly policies, and its recognition by the EPA, America's Environmental Protection Agency.

AWARD 3 — COMMUNITY ADVOCATE

In January 2021, Macon-Bibb County Mayor Lester Miller, Commissioners, Keep-Macon Bibb Beautiful, the Historic Pleasant Hill Neighborhood, & crews from Public Works, Solid Waste, and Parks & Beautification announced *Clean Streets Matter* to clean up our city and encourage residents to host neighborhood cleanups.

Since then, departments & partners have worked together weekly. Four county-wide cleanups have been held, bringing the total number of clean-ups to more than 270. Together, nearly 20 million pounds of litter, trash, leaves, dead animals, downed trees, eviction material, debris, & more has been cleaned up from Macon's streets — including cleanups of more than 525 illegal dump sites — and on more than 450 miles of road.

The Earth Day Committee is proud to bestow the COMMUNITY ADVOCATE AWARD on CLEAN STREETS MATTER for its groundbreaking work.