Our volunteers proved once again they can be counted on to come together in a crisis. Back in 2012 you were among the first responders when Hurricane Sandy blew in as a destructive superstorm, wreaking havoc on Lake Erie and the Cleveland lakefront. Last fall, thousands of you stood in solidarity to confront a new crisis: toxic algae in Lake Erie.

A 2 ½-day drinking water ban in Toledo, coupled with similar bans elsewhere along Western Lake Erie and toxic algae blooming in other parts of the Great Lakes, left many wondering how this could happen here — home to a fifth of the world’s surface freshwater. Problems like this aren’t solved in a day, but many of you did your part to keep the conversation going in social media, posing on shorelines from lakes Superior to Ontario with posters that read “It’s our water: protect it.”

There were times when you admitted to feeling overwhelmed by it all, like Jean Girsky of Pennsylvania, who came upon a sea of debris when arriving for a beach cleanup at Presque Isle: “Here was man’s legacy all washed up before me.” Her poignant words hit home with what many feel when confronted with daunting environmental ills. Then Girsky did what also comes naturally for many of you: She rolled up her sleeves and got busy.

There were visible successes as well. It’s not often we see our volunteers’ work take dramatic shape in a matter of months, but such was the case with a shoreline makeover along a portion of Detroit’s popular Belle Isle that concluded last fall. In New York, you painted picnic tables in public parks, pulled invasive plants and planted native ones to replace them. In many cases, it was all in a day’s work.

Sometimes change is more gradual. At South Shore Beach in Milwaukee, you helped community leaders create an inspired plan to transform the blighted beach to one that will eventually boast cleaner water and a better experience for beachgoers. Similarly, in Michigan City, Ind., plans are under way for a demonstration project to protect Trail Creek — beloved for its boating and fishing opportunities — against the ravages of eroding rains.

These are just some of the many simple and extraordinary acts of stewardship that we now invite you to celebrate with us inside these pages.
**Stewardship 2014**

Eight states, five Great Lakes — and you!

### ILLINOIS

S
enior at Fermilab High School, located in the

### MINNESOTA

S
enior at Star Prairie High School, located in the

### NEW YORK

W

### PENNSYLVANIA

P

### WISCONSIN

A

### OHIO

C

### MICHIGAN

T

### NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS IN 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Volunteers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>11,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>15,327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>2,182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>6,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>3,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>1,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>2,707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>9,207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>9,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>3,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>5,357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>4,250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TOTAL

14,507

### “ANY DAY THAT ENDS WITH SANDY FEET IS A GOOD DAY!”


### STewardship NUMBERS FOR 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total Volunteer Hours</th>
<th>Pounds of Debris Collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>1,961</td>
<td>14,807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1,081</td>
<td>3,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>1,081</td>
<td>3,493</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
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<td>3,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>3,493</td>
<td>3,493</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### “THESE PROGRAMS NOT ONLY GIVE STUDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THEIR OWN PHYSICAL CONNECTION TO THE GREAT LAKES, BUT ALSO ALLOW THEM TO FORM EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS WITH THEIR ENVIRONMENT THAT WILL FOSTER A GREATER SENSE OF STEWARDSHIP”


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**Stewardship 2014**

Eight states, five Great Lakes — and you!

### ILLINOIS

Senior at Fermilab High School, located in the

### MINNESOTA

Senior at Star Prairie High School, located in the

### NEW YORK

We do you when you look at a public park in

### PENNSYLVANIA

A 20-year vision for a lake area where people come

### WISCONSIN

A decade shy of its 100th anniversary, the pride

### OHIO

Cleveland Brewery has found ways to bring a

### MICHIGAN

The largest city in the U.S., with a population of

---

**“AS WE WERE CONDUCTING OUR CLEANUP, PEOPLE WERE COMING UP TO US, THANKING US AND HANDING US SOME GARBAGE”**


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**Stewardship 2014**

Eight states, five Great Lakes — and you!
**STANDING UP FOR CLEAN WATER**

From Minnesota to New York, September Adopt-a-Beach™ volunteers showed they support clean water after a 2 1/2-day drinking water ban in Toledo only weeks before. Volunteers posed with and shared posters on social media to send a strong message to decision makers: “It’s our water: protect it.” Toxic algal blooms have plagued Western Lake Erie communities each summer and reached a crisis level in 2014.

**VOLUNTEER DATA DRIVES RESEARCH ON PLASTICS, OTHER DEBRIS**

Typical Adopt-a-Beach™ volunteers probably don’t think of themselves as generating data sets when they arrive at the beach with trash bags, gloves and litter-monitoring forms in hand. Yet, “Each event people participate in generates a set of data,” says Olga Lyandres, Alliance research manager. “It may not seem all that important by itself, but you put it all together and it paints a picture.” That picture is compelling enough for scientists to use Adopt-a-Beach™ data to further research on Great Lakes debris in two different studies published this spring in the peer-reviewed Journal of Great Lakes Research. Canadian researchers from the University of Waterloo in Ontario drew upon the data in their study of plastic pollution in the Great Lakes. And Adopt-a-Beach™ data is at the center of a Loyola University study that aims to better understand the origins of Great Lakes litter and ultimately, how we can begin to understand why they’re there, and in what amounts, so that we need to know what types of items are of the data gathered by volunteers. “We need to know what types of items are there, and in what amounts, so that we can begin to understand why they’re there and then try to develop ways to curb them,” she says. “Collecting data helps us answer these questions, and doing so at a regional scale is a critical piece of that. It would be challenging for any one researcher to collect such a data set.”

The study notes that Adopt-a-Beach™ data, which dates back to 2003, was ripe for the picking when it came to contributing to the research project, in part because of volunteers’ continued efforts to return to their favorite spots, collect the data and share it with the Alliance. Among the study’s findings was a correlation between population density and higher concentrations of beach litter. Also of note: The more time volunteers spent cleaning a beach, the more litter they found. In other words, “The beach can always benefit from more people cleaning it up,” says Lyandres. “It’s never trash-free.” And that adds up to plenty more work for Adopt-a-Beach™ volunteers and in turn, more data for researchers to mine in the future.

**AVEDA OPENING EYES TO GREAT LAKES’ BEAUTY**

Kate Hodges, master stylist with an Aveda salon in Sheboygan, Wis., hopes to “open some eyes” to the beauty and importance of Lake Michigan when her salon stages a Walk for Water fundraiser in April. “The breathtaking views a few blocks away from our salon inspired us to take the opportunity to educate our local clients that we need to do more to help keep this gem stay exactly as it is,” she says. “We hope to at least touch a few people and open some eyes to this great asset our community often takes for granted.” Hodges’ Enourage Salon and Spa is one of many salons around the region hosting walks, cookbook sales and fashion shows to raise money locally for the Great Lakes. Events like these add up to big dollars collectively, with Aveda donating more than $390,000 to the Alliance last year and more than $2 million to date since 2007. Globally, the international salon and beauty products chain has raised $32 million for clean water initiatives, all part of Aveda’s annual campaign to raise funds for clean water around the world during Earth Month in April. “They’re getting the message out to thousands of people, including some who might not necessarily be thinking about the importance of clean water or the Great Lakes,” says Michelle Liebetreu, Alliance institutional development manager. See area Aveda Earth Month events at www.greatlakes.org/AvedaEarthMonth2015.