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For Immediate Release



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Two West Akron Women Honored as Keep Akron Beautiful Volunteers-of-the-Year!

Adopt-A-Site volunteers Dorothy Francis and Sylvia Martin of West Akron were honored by Keep Akron Beautiful, starting an annual tradition that began at KAB's 35th Anniversary event and continued at this year's Green the Scene party.

Akron, Ohio – Keep Akron Beautiful honored Dorothy Francis and Sylvia Martin of Akron for their volunteerism with the organization. The two women have maintained an Adopt-A-Site flowerbed located in their West Akron neighborhood at Ely & Fairlawn Blvd. for 13 years, while occasionally participating in a variety of additional program volunteering, like Beautification Watch Canvassing and Arbor Day seedling delivery to schools.

The two women were recognized at Keep Akron Beautiful's *Green the Scene* party on Wednesday, August 30, 2017, at the Akron Art Museum in front of the 272 people attending the event. The women were each given a recycled glass flower vase from Weisenbach Recycled Products etched with their name and volunteer-of-the-year status. In addition, they were presented with proclamations signed by Mayor Horrigan, naming this 30th of August "Dorothy Francis Day" and "Sylvia Martin Day" in the City of Akron.

Jacqui Ricchiuti, CEO of Keep Akron Beautiful said, "Dorothy and Sylvia are examples of our longstanding volunteers who remind us how important a beautiful and clean city is to its residents. Countless neighbors and passersby have commented on the positive emotional impact the site's stunning beauty has on them. Besides their seasonal weeding, deadheading and other necessary maintenance for their Adopt-A-Site, they even decorate the Taxus for the holidays. The site is a year-round treat."

Flowerscape Director, Leah Heiser, said she had known of Dorothy Francis and her personal English garden prior to working for Keep Akron Beautiful and was thrilled to be invited to her home along with former Flowerscape Director, Polly Kaczmarek, and the KAB Flowerscape crew to learn tips on English gardening. Heiser personally commends Francis for her environmental friendly backyard that is a Certified Wildlife Habitat Area due to pollinator friendly plants, birdfeeders and fountains. As far as the Beautification Watch Award-winning *Sylvia Martin and Dorothy Francis* Adopt-A-Site, Heiser says, "Its beauty speaks for itself! KAB and the public really are lucky to have such knowledgeable and dedicated gardening volunteers and their recognition is well deserved."

Keep Akron Beautiful began their tradition of honoring long-time volunteers at their 35th Anniversary event when Daniel Zampelli and Tom Deuri were honored as Board Member of the Year and Volunteer of the Year respectively. Ricchiuti said the agency's milestone anniversary and littered history circa 1981 puts into perspective the need for every resident to do their part in beautifying their city and keeping it clean. "For many residents, it is the look of their personal property that motivates them, which Keep Akron Beautiful recognizes through Beautification Watch Awards mailed in September. For other residents, who are also our volunteers, there is a definite passion for community which drives them to, quote, *turn public spaces into beautiful places*," says Ricchiuti. She explained that the fitting quote is one borrowed from current Keep America Beautiful President, Helen Lowman, before continuing, "For that passion, we just can't thank our volunteers enough."

About Keep Akron Beautiful

Keep Akron Beautiful is a 501(c)(3) agency in its 36th year of serving the community by improving Akron's quality of life through beautification and responsible environmental management. For additional program information, visit www.keepakronbeautiful.org.