



# The Gaia Movement

## 501 (c)(3) Nonprofit



# ANNUAL REPORT

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 3 – A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO & COO

Page 4 – ABOUT US

Page 5 – GAIA'S PROJECTS (GLOBAL)

Page 6 – GAIA'S PROJECTS (LOCAL)

Page 6 – GAIA'S SCHOOL PROGRAM

Page 7 – GAIA GIVES BACK PROGRAM

Page 8 – GAIA'S IMPACT

Page 8 – GAIA'S SCHOLARSHIPS

Page 9 – PARTNERSHIP INFORMATION

Page 10 – PARTNERSHIP INFORMATION CONT.

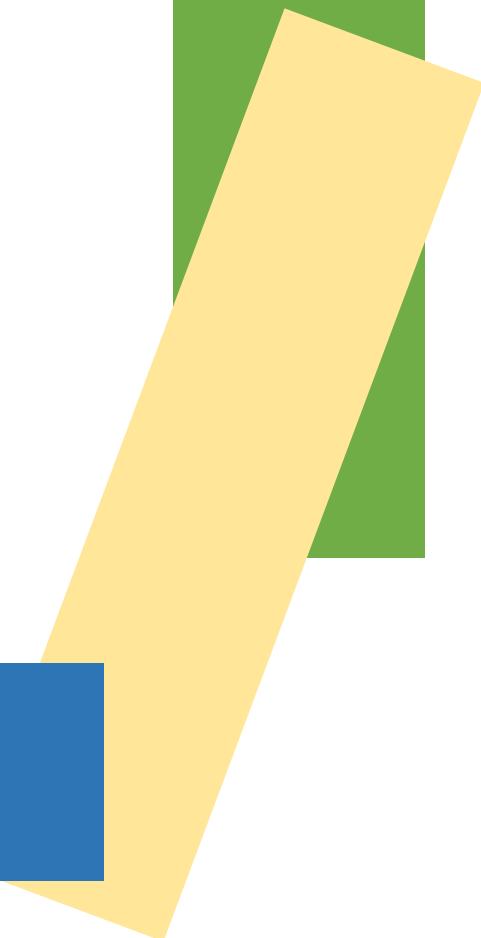
Page 11 – GAIA'S REACH

Page 12 – POUNDS COLLECTED

Page 13 – SPECIAL MENTIONS

Page 14 – FINANCIAL INFORMATION

PAGE 15 – CONTACT INFORMATION





# A Message From Our CEO & COO



## Gaia In 2023

2023 has been a year where Gaia has teamed up with more partners in our community. It's been amazing to discover so many organizations, large and small, who are doing good work in Chicago – ***creating community gardens, supplying fresh vegetables to the community, assisting residents and creating job opportunities, and taking part in many other sustainable activities.***

We need to join forces and develop this further.

In this regard Gaia implemented a program to give scholarships to young adults from the south side of Chicago to attend Richmond Vale Academy in the Caribbean. Here they will train to be community leaders and sustainability implementers. They learn skills that will help build up their own community.

## We Want to Thank You

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the people around Gaia for this year.

A BIG THANK YOU to all the employees in Gaia. Each and every one of you have worked diligently to: ***find new bin locations, plan and organize routes, collect and package donations, maintain the area around all bins, place and move bins, create a notable social media presence, increase community outreach by setting up and delivering donations to people in need, craft quality products in the warehouse, load the trailers, manage upkeep of company accounting, grow and tend to the food in the garden, and deliver fresh produce to Barbara's Market every week.***

We also want to give a BIG THANK YOU to all the people who have donated to our Gaia bins and contribute to making a lasting impact on communities all over the world, while also reducing their carbon footprint. Of course, another BIG THANK YOU to our network and partners who continue to grow and create momentous changes to uplift, empower, and strengthen our local community!

## Join Gaia In 2024

Let us continue this incredible work and create a sustainable future for all. Looking forward to continuing to grow and make positive sustainable impacts in the future. We welcome all future partners and collaborators who want to pursue a greener future.

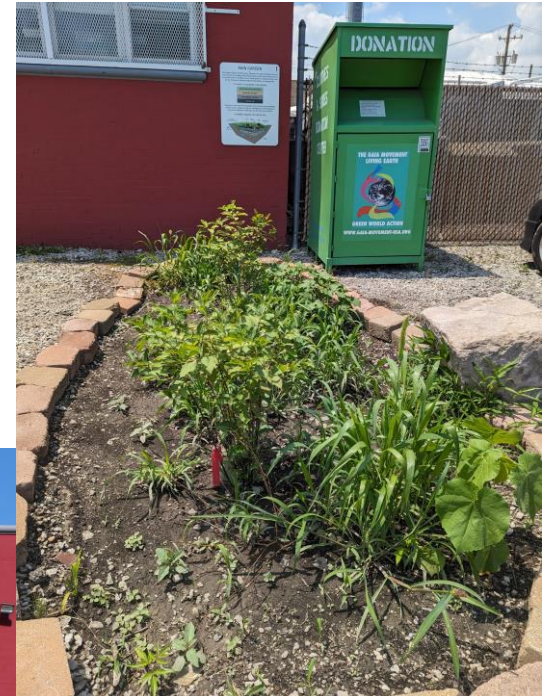
~ CEO Eva Nielsen and COO Marianne Thomsen



# ABOUT US

The Gaia Movement Living Earth Green World Action USA, The Gaia Movement USA for short, has a mission to create awareness about the ongoing plight of the environment and to educate the

public in caring for  
our planet,  
humanity,  
and the environment.



We operate a textile recycling nonprofit organization out of our Chicago headquarters. Proceeds from our textile recycling are sold at low costs to Central America and in-kind donations collected directly from Gaia drop boxes enable Gaia to support environmental projects, locally and globally. The clothes we sell to Central America make an impact on their economy by supporting small businesses and creating jobs for local residents that help to build up the economy.



# GAIA'S PROJECTS

Our global projects equip citizens in Mutasa and Chivi, Zimbabwe with the skills to perform sustainable actions in impoverished areas. One project we fund is *The Farmers' Club*. This project increases water security and food security through rain harvesting, irrigation systems, ecological farming, and training for sustainable crop growth, along with other sustainable methods.



A new project we funded in 2023 is financially supporting homeless children in Africa in the *Ponesai Vanhu Children's Home*. The children are equipped with practical skills, farming skills, and food security to survive after losing family members due to disease, famine, or violence.

**FUN FACT: In 2023, Gaia donated over \$180,000 to projects in Zimbabwe through Humana People To People. We continue to fund these projects to make a global impact in impoverished areas.**





# GAIA'S PROJECTS



We aim to provide for the communities around Chicago. Our goal is to support the growth and rehabilitation of the residents and the homeless populace, while uplifting and supporting them.

## SCHOOL PROGRAM

Gaia implemented a school program that took off in 2023. This includes free educational field trips for schools and ways for the school itself to become greener. Gaia created a new summer program that provides educational outlets for students during summer vacation; as well as year-round volunteer and internship opportunities for older students to gain experience!



These projects instill environmental knowledge and hands on activities that teach sustainable actions. Learn more about [Gaia's School Program](#)



# GAIA GIVES BACK

Through our Gaia Gives Back program we have donated to

over a dozen Chicagoland organizations including schools, churches, shelters, healthcare facilities, and homeless centers. We search for organizations in need and provide a variety of donations such as coats, clothes, backpacks, diapers, books, shoes, food, toys, and toiletries.



**FUN FACT:** Our in-kind donations continue to increase each year, as well as our partnerships with organizations. In 2023, Gaia donated over 200 bags and boxes of necessary items to local organizations.





# GAIA'S IMPACT

At the Gaia Movement we believe any chance to better the community and foster a change toward sustainability creates a positive impact.

Our partnership with *Illinois Department of Natural Resources* has allowed us to share necessary resources to Chicago schools and enabled the Gaia Movement Environmental Field Trips to associate as a grant covered field trip through the IDNR.



Illinois  
Department of  
**Natural  
Resources**



## SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

This year Gaia created their Caribbean and Africa Volunteer Abroad Scholarship program. This program affords youth in Chicago the chance to make life changing impacts on a global scale, as well as travel and learn about other cultures. After rigorous application processes, Gaia awarded the first 2 scholarships to residents of Chicago. Recipients will stay at RVA, studying and training to make a significant impact on impoverished communities in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the Caribbean. One of the recipients has opted for the longer abroad program and will do part of their hands on sustainable actions in St. Vincent and the other part in Africa.





# PARTNERSHIPS IN 2023

We aim to partner with like-minded organizations and businesses that want to go green! This year we developed a new partnership with the *Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Chicago Grows Food, and Stein Learning Gardens of St. Sabina*. We also built a stronger partnership with *Greater Auburn-Gresham Development Corporation (GAGDC)*. These partnerships unlocked the ability to collaborate on many new projects, which can be found in the [Gaia Eco-Education](#) on our website!



In addition to that, we developed strong partnerships with Porter County in Portage, IN and our outreach even spanned to local police stations and Chicago alderman offices with the influx of asylum seekers.



**FUN FACT: IN 2023, Gaia made 43 new agreements with businesses to host Gaia drop boxes. This encourages the business and the community to be more aware of what they dispose of and creates a greener environment!**





# PARTNERSHIPS IN 2023

Our partnership with ***Stein Learning Gardens*** gave us the opportunity to make weekly donations from our community garden to their fresh market to provide residents of Auburn Gresham in Chicago with access to fresh fruits and vegetables.



Our partnership with ***Recycle Porter County*** in Portage, IN allowed us to bring textile recycling opportunities to Portage, IN and surrounding areas via their year-round recycling events.

In partnering locally with GAGDC, we were able to host a booth at their annual 79<sup>th</sup> Street Renaissance Fair. This gave us the ability to talk with community members and explain the mission of Gaia and how we aim to do our part to better the environment and Chicago. We



are now active members in the ***Auburn Gresham Neighborhood Network (AGNN)*** to collaborate with local nonprofit organizations and businesses

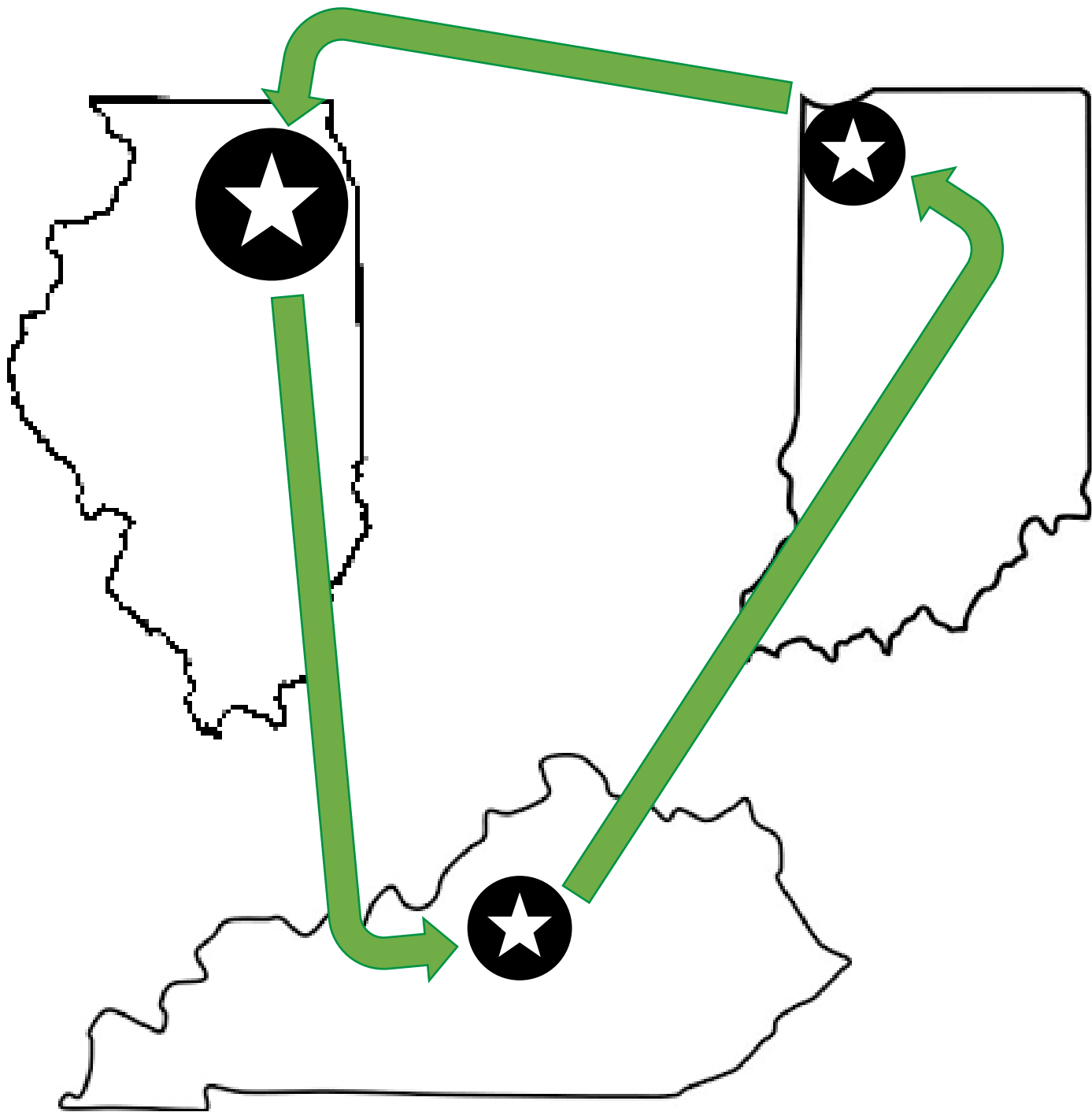
to build up the Chicago communities.





# GAIA'S REACH

In 2023, Gaia serviced textile recycling in Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky. Predominantly in Chicago and the surrounding suburbs, Northwest Indiana, and Northern Kentucky.

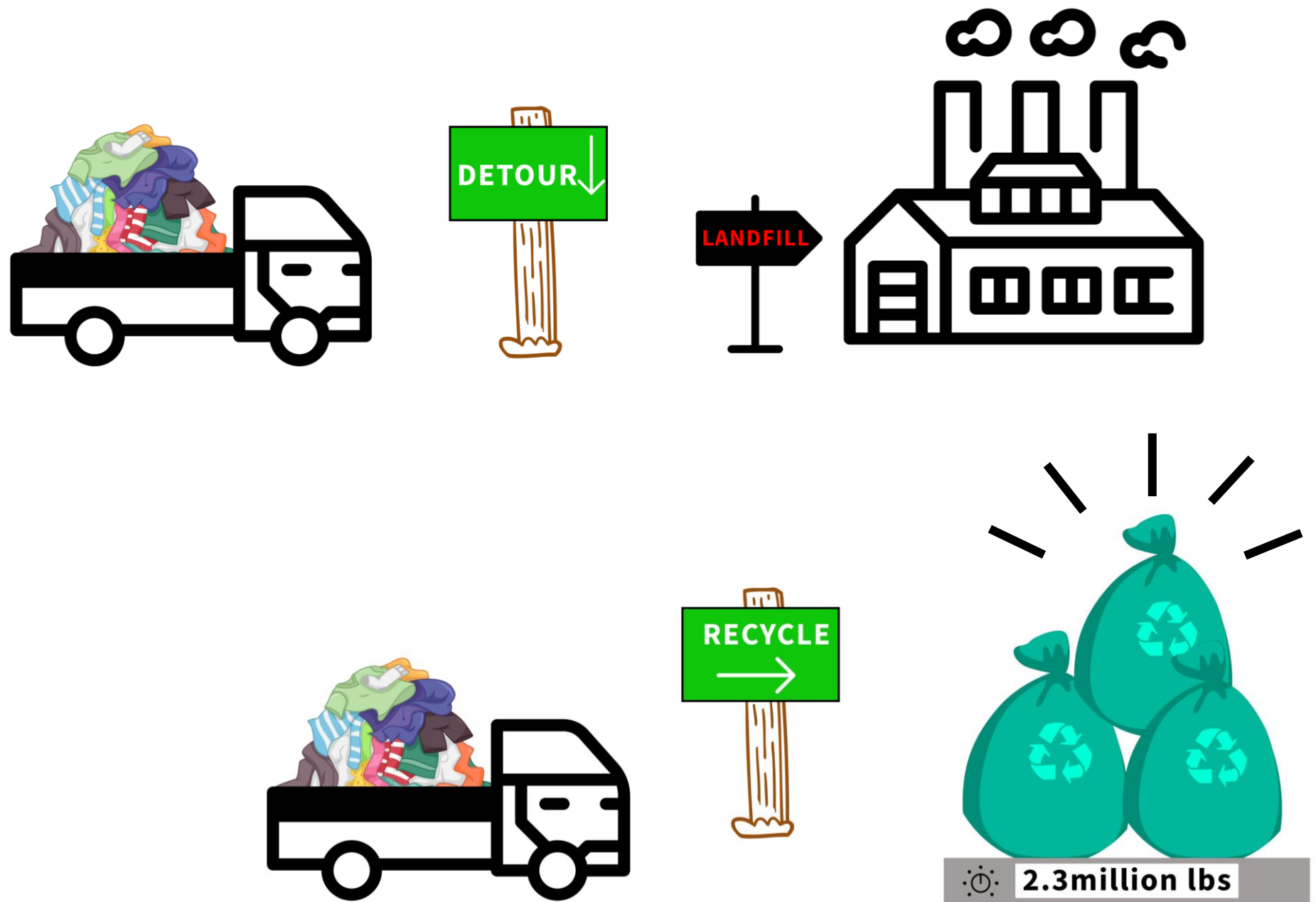


In 2024, we plan to expand more into Northern Illinois with our textile recycling initiatives!



# POUNDS COLLECTED

In 2023 Gaia collected 2.3 million pounds of textiles.



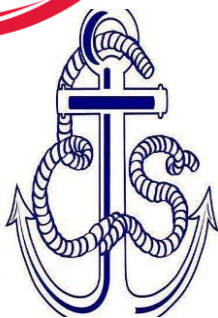
By collecting and distributing those textiles, they are diverted from landfills reducing pollution and toxic gases releasing in the air. This also reduces the need for the manufacture of more textiles which contributes to global warming.



# SPECIAL MENTIONS

We are so thankful for all the partnerships and drop box hosts, new and old. Thanks to the drop box hosts and our partners we can continue to do what we love year after year; reducing textile waste, supporting and providing for the underprivileged, educating the community on sustainable actions, and making a positive impact in Chicago.

There are a few drop box hosts that have been powerful allies in encouraging sustainable efforts in their community by collecting large numbers of textiles! We want to give them a special thank you!

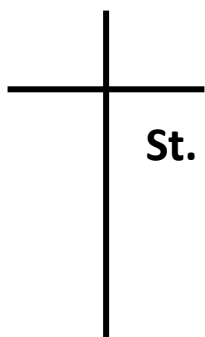


Columbus Elementary School



BROADWAY  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

bp



St. Henry Catholic  
Church



BANK OF AMERICA



# GRANT'S FOR GAIA

Gaia Movement earned a grant from **Illinois Solar For All** to install 15.5kW solar panels on the roof of our Climate Center for 2024.

These solar panels will be added to our existing panels to make Gaia a completely self-sufficient environmental center using renewable energy.



Gaia's public financial information can be found in our fiscal report. For more information it can be accessed in the below pdf document.

**[GAIA'S FISCAL REPORT PDF](#)**



# GET INVOLVED WITH GAIA

To get involved with Gaia by contributing to our mission or collaborating with us in 2024, check out resources on this page!

If you or your organization wants to make a change in a greener direction with Gaia, you can:

## HEADQUARTERS

8918 S. Green Street  
Chicago, IL 60620

## PHONE

773-651-7870

## EMAIL

[gaia.usa@gaia-movement.org](mailto:gaia.usa@gaia-movement.org)

## DONATE TO GAIA'S PROJECTS

## BECOME A DROP BOX HOST

## DROP OFF YOUR TEXTILES TO A DROP BOX

## BECOME A PARTNER

