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BETHESDA GREEN

2025  
ANNUAL  
REPORT



[www.bethesdagreen.org](http://www.bethesdagreen.org) / 202.350.0642 / [hello@bethesdagreen.org](mailto:hello@bethesdagreen.org)

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**Bethesda Green is powered by people.**

**We are deeply thankful to our mentors, volunteers, board members, advisors, partners, and community supporters who give their time, wisdom, and care to Bethesda Green. Your commitment makes this community possible – and reminds us that sustainability is built together.**



# Letter from the Director

Dear Friends,

Since its relaunch in 2023, Bethesda Green has defined each year with a guiding theme:

**2023 – Stabilize, 2024 – Mobilize, and 2025 – Catalyze.**

Bethesda Green has always been more than a set of programs. It's a living experiment for how communities come together to solve real problems. In 2025, that experiment hit its stride.

Our Incubator found its rhythm. Our Green Business Certification program continued to grow, our community work deepened, and our food initiatives took important steps toward a more resilient local system. The Innovation Center became what we hoped it could be: a place where sustainability isn't just talked about, but done.

None of this happened by accident. It happened because of people – the staff, board, entrepreneurs, partners, funders, volunteers, and community – who believe that a sustainable future is something we build together.

When so much feels uncertain, I find hope in this work.

Bethesda Green is proving that sustainability isn't some niche or a future aspiration – it's a practical, collaborative, and very human endeavor.

As you read this report, I hope you see not just what we did in 2025, but where we are headed. We are laying the groundwork for something bolder, more connected, and more impactful than ever.

Thank you for being part of this journey.  
With gratitude,

**Dave Feldman**  
**Executive Director, Bethesda Green**

Educate

Incubate

Initiate



# INCUBATOR

*The Green Business Incubator: From Relaunch to Community*



In 2025, Bethesda Green's Incubator moved into its next phase.

In 2025, our Incubator found its rhythm. We supported mission-driven companies working across clean energy, water, food systems, workforce development, and nature-based solutions. What distinguishes our approach is how we support them: through peer learning, practical mentorship, and regular opportunities for reflection and connection.

Rather than a one-size-fits-all model, we emphasize:

- Peer learning and trust-based relationships
- Practical mentorship from experienced practitioners
- Regular opportunities for reflection, feedback, & connection
- A shared commitment to environmental and social impact



Throughout the year, entrepreneurs participated in **monthly roundtables**, **targeted workshops**, **mentor office hours**, and **pitch preparation sessions**. These activities balanced accountability with support – helping founders move their businesses forward while grounded in purpose.

A highlight of the year was the Entrepreneur Showcase, which brought together entrepreneurs, mentors, investors, and community leaders to celebrate progress, share lessons learned, and open new doors for collaboration.

Another highlight was the launch of our 'Conscious Leaders in Action' speaker series. Each session featured a respected entrepreneur or civic leader sharing real-world lessons on building a successful, mission-driven business. Speakers included: Seth Goldman, Just Iced Tea and Honest Tea; Andy Shallal, Busboy and Poets; and Ben Parry, of Compost Crew.



# COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

*Serving People Across the DMV*



In 2025, Bethesda Green delivered a diverse slate of educational programs, community events, and place-based sustainability projects. What ties them together? A belief that sustainability happens when people can see themselves in the work—whether that's students leading climate conversations, neighbors learning practical skills at a fair, or artists turning pet waste stations into public art. Here are some highlights.

## **Climate Education & Public Dialogue Facing Climate Change Series**

Bethesda Green hosted a three-part *Facing Climate Change* series, offering accessible, science-based information about climate impacts and local solutions. The sessions strengthened community understanding of the links between climate change and everyday decision-making while encouraging informed civic and personal action.

## **Youth Leadership & Engagement Youth Climate Summit**

The Youth Climate Summit brought together over 50 high school students from across the region for workshops, peer learning, and youth-led discussions on climate solutions. The event helped build leadership skills while empowering students to see themselves as active contributors to climate action.

## **Community Sustainability Events 10th Annual Montgomery County GreenFest**

Bethesda Green co-planned the milestone 10th Annual GreenFest, engaging hundreds of residents through interactive sustainability education and outreach, and connecting attendees with local environmental resources.

## **Green Living Fair**

Bethesda Green hosted the Green Living Fair as a flagship community event, welcoming 250 attendees and more than 30 vendors for a day of hands-on learning. The fair showcased sustainable products, services, and practices while giving residents practical tools to adopt greener lifestyles.

## **Place-Based Environmental Impact**

### **Kensington Mews Stormwater Project**

Bethesda Green completed the Kensington Mews Stormwater Project, a green infrastructure installation designed to reduce runoff and improve local water quality, demonstrating how nature-based solutions can strengthen neighborhood resilience.

## **Watershed Protection & Creative Engagement**

### **Bag Today to Save the Bay – Pet Waste Station Project**

Funded by the Chesapeake Bay Trust, this initiative promotes watershed protection through education and the installation of pet waste stations in downtown Bethesda. A community art contest held in August resulted in seven winning designs that will appear on the stations, combining environmental messaging with public art to drive behavior change.

## **Food Systems & Film-Based Learning**

### **“Save the Farm, Save the Future” Documentary Screening**

A well-attended screening sparked discussion about farmland preservation, agrivoltaics, and the future of local food systems, highlighting the connections between climate action, food security, and regional resilience.

## **Waste Reduction & Circular Economy**

### **Got Sneakers Recycling Drive**

Bethesda Green launched a sneaker recycling drive with Got Sneakers, collecting hundreds of pairs of gently used shoes that would otherwise go to landfill—demonstrating strong community commitment to reuse and responsible consumption.



**“Save the Farm, Save the Future” Screening**



**Got Sneakers Recycling Drive**



**Youth Climate Summit 2025**

# SUSTAINABLE FOOD & AG

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*Building a More Resilient Local Food System*

Through our Food Working Group, we convened stakeholders from across the local food ecosystem, including farmers, food access organizations, sustainability leaders, and mission-driven businesses. Together, we focused on three interconnected priorities:

## **1. Increasing Local Procurement**

We explored opportunities to expand institutional purchasing of locally and regionally produced food – supporting farmers while collaborating with distributors and aggregators to build a more resilient supply chain.

## **2. Reducing Food Waste**

Our work highlighted opportunities to reduce food waste upstream and better utilize surplus food through composting, recovery, and smarter systems design.

## **3. Supporting Local Food Enterprises**

We continued laying the groundwork for a strong local food economy by supporting values-aligned food businesses and producers. This included exploring the creation of a local Naturally Network chapter (Bringing Naturally Network to DC) and launching a pop-up display of locally made MoCo Made food products in our Innovation Center.

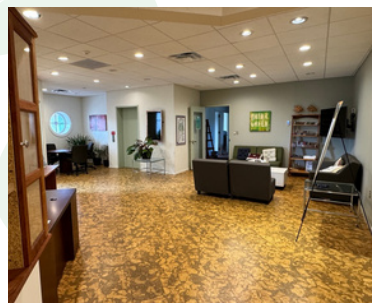
# INNOVATION CENTER

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*The Innovation Center: A Place Where Sustainability Lives*

In 2025, Bethesda Green's Innovation Center came into its own. What began as a physical renovation of our working space has become something much deeper: a shared home for sustainability-focused work, ideas, and relationships. The Center hosts coworking members, entrepreneurs, meetings, workshops, public events, and informal conversations that often prove just as valuable as formal programming in advancing sustainability ideas and initiatives.

This reinforced a simple truth: place matters. When people share space with intention, collaboration follows.



# GREEN BUSINESS CERTIFICATION

*Green Business Certification: Strengthening Local Leadership in Sustainability*



In 2025, Bethesda Green brought the Montgomery County Green Business Certification Program in-house. A new certification methodology streamlined the process while maintaining rigor, reducing costs for businesses, and allowing Bethesda Green to offer a more personalized experience tailored to Montgomery County's business community.

The 21 newly certified businesses span multiple sectors, demonstrating that sustainability leadership is achievable across different business models.

Bethesda Green also hosted two Sustainable Business Meetings in 2025. These gatherings brought certified businesses together to share best practices, learn from peers, explore incentives, and identify new sustainability actions. The events reinforced that certification is not a one-time achievement, but an ongoing journey of improvement.



*"I am thrilled to have this honor, opportunity and recognition...we are always working on ways to make greener choices wherever possible. This means a lot to me, and I am excited to share the news with my team and community. We will wear that decal with PRIDE!"*

**— Juliana Stein, Barre3 Bethesda**  
[Montgomery County Certified Green Businesses Directory](#)

Storytelling and visibility were also key priorities. Bethesda Green worked with seven certified businesses to produce short videos highlighting their sustainability achievements. Shared through social media, these videos celebrated local leadership, amplified positive examples, and inspired other businesses to pursue certification.



# WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

## and Where We're Headed



The past year taught us something we already knew but needed to hear again: sustainability is community work. It's built on relationships, not just programs. On trust, not just transactions.

We saw resilience show up in unexpected places. In founders who kept going when markets tightened. In businesses that chose the harder, greener path. In neighbors who showed up for each other when it would've been easier not to.

We also learned to sit with uncertainty. Between economic shifts, technological disruption, and a changing political landscape, 2025 asked hard questions about what matters most and how we stay relevant. We don't pretend to have it all figured out. But we're asking the right questions and listening carefully to the answers.

Here's what we know: the need for this work isn't going away. If anything, it's becoming more urgent. As federal priorities shift and resources become less certain, local action matters more than ever.

Communities like ours — where people actually know each other, where businesses have names and faces — have a unique role to play.

So we're doubling down on what we do best: bringing people together, supporting the doers, and proving that sustainability isn't something you wait for permission to practice.

The work ahead won't be easy. But neither was getting here. And we're not doing it alone.