Hillsborough Township

Hillsborough, NJ

Mayor John Ciccarelli

Pledge Summary

Hillsborough Township, located in Somerset Country, is centrally located in the state of New Jersey with a population near 50,000. Hillsborough spans over 50 square miles and offers over 15 public parks through the municipality. Mayor Ciccarelli and the Township Committee have committed to supporting the Mayors Monarch pledge through action item projects accomplished throughout the town. Hillsborough's plans include to not only continue the beautification of its parks, but to also provide natural habitats for the monarch butterflies throughout the community.

Action Items Committed for 2025

Communications and Convening

- Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat. This proclamation must incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.
- Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)
- Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.
- Engage with gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.
- Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.
- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.
- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Catherine Payne	2026	3/31/2026	
Mayor John Ciccarelli	2025	3/30/2025	Leadership Circle

Action Items

In total, how many individuals have been reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan-Dec)? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field below (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.).

1583.0

Of the total number of individuals engaged, how many youth (0-18) were reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan. - Dec.)? If none, please write 0." (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.)

150

In total, how many acres of monarch habitat have been created in your city in the last 12 months? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 3). Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

2

Where was the habitat created this year? Example locations may include residences, schools, places of worship, rights-of-way, roadsides, community gardens, shared public spaces, and more.

3 Gardens planted at the Hillsborough Municipal Complex & 3 Gardens planted at Ann Van Middlesworth Park

How are you leveraging the Mayors' Monarch Pledge program to engage marginalized communities, such as low-income communities or communities of color?

We hope this is another reason to encourage residents to visit the parks fitting health and wellness into their lifestyles. Not everyone is into sports, hiking, playgrounds, etc. - So, being able to say we have monarch pollinators gardens is another draw. The amount of families we saw with young children looking for butterflies was incredibly wholesome and satisfying.

What was your community's motivation for taking and continuing to work on the Mayors' Monarch Pledge?

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Dedicated individuals from the Neshanic Garden Club & Hillsborough Township collaborated and ended up realizing the good Hillsborough can contribute in prodiving this natual monarch havens.

What resources have been most helpful to you thus far and what new resources would you like to see to help meet your goals? What resources would be useful to help expand equitable engagement in community processes and access to high-quality, usable nature?

The Mayors Monarch Pledge website, specifically the F&Q page as well as the Reports and Webinars have been invaluable resources.

What else should we know about your monarch butterfly conservation efforts over the last year?

While we joined this intiative for the first time this year, this is something we have worked into our future operating budgets allowing us to continue providing monarch safe havens. I'm specifically grateful to have learned about this pledge as it has been extremely educational for our entire department learning about the Monarch Butterflies.

Selected Action Items

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

How many people attended your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

What species were collected or propagated?

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to host the event?

Please describe the milkweed seed collection and propagation effort that you hosted.

Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat. This proclamation must incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.

Date of Proclamation:

3/25/25

Title of Proclamation (i.e. – Monarch Day or Pollinator Week):

Hillsborough Township to Plant Monarch-Friendly Ecology Gardens

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

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Press Releases - 2025 - 03-25-2025 Hillsborough Township to Plant Monarch-Friendly Ecology Gardens.pdf

Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Email to Hillsborough Businesses.png

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

NeshanicGardenClubSign.jpg

Please describe the groups you engaged with and how you engaged with these groups below.

Neshanic Garden Club began planting milkweed pollinators in the AVM Park Sensory Garden this year, a garden that is township owned but maintained by the Garden Club. Additionally, we have contacts all local nursery's educating them on the Mayors Monarch pledge, the initiatives we're working to accomplish as well as kindly suggesting to stock specific pollinators. Unsurprisingly, all vendors contacted already stock the requested pollinators!

Engage with gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

WorkerPlantMunicipal.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

MayorJimWorkerCar.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Mayorplantingobserve.jpg

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Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

JimJohn.jpg

How many community organizations and groups participated? Please list them below.

Hillsborough's Neshanic Garden Club, Local nursery's.

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and their monarch butterfly conservation efforts.

The Neshanic Garden Club were key contributors in making 2025 a success. For years and still the case today, Neshanic Garden Club has always volunteered to maintain the Sensory Garden located in AVM Park. When the club learned that Hillsborough wanted to participate in the Mayors Monarch Pledge, the outpouring of support was unmatched. All Spring & Summer volunteers would assist in the planting of various new pollinator gardens throughout the community. When we hosted our Planting Demonstration, the Club provided equipment, educational material and even a guest speaker who was able to shed his knowledge on this topic. Additionally, we had contacted local nursery's encouraging them to sell specific milkweed pollinators, which many already did. They additionally were provided material on the Mayors Monarch Pledge to include at their places of business. Groups such as Belle Mead Co-op, Central Jersey Nursery, Bountiful Gardens and East Coast Natives.

Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Butterfly Art Contest.png

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

MonarchPosterWinner (1).pdf

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

MonarchPosterSrestaMGrade5.pdf

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

MonarchPosterSaanviaJGrade6.pdf

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Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

WelcomeMonarchssign.jpg

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to host the event?

Hillsborough Township Parks & Recreation/Administration Office

How many individuals were engaged in this effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 50).

1

Please describe the community art project that was implemented in your community and how it contributed to cultural awareness and recognition (e.g., number of art installations, type of art).

Hillsborough hosted the "Save The Monarch Butterflies Poster Contest" for ages 18 and under. Children in Hillsborough had the opportunity to submit a poster to the Parks & Recreation office, with Hillsborough's summer camps also participating and creating posters. We ended with just under 100 submissions. At the end of the year 1-2 submissions will be selected to be in the 2026 Hillsborough Township Calendar. These posters were on display for a week in June, with additional Monarch & Pollinator information close by to give residents some additional information regarding this initiative.

Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)

Please describe the methods of public communication below (e.g., printed materials, social media, print media).

Active communication with residents via Social Media, Mayors Newsletter/Proclamations, official township website & local news outlets. Please see links below. https://www.leaguelineup.com/miscinfo.asp?menuid=44&url=hillsboroughnjrecreation https://ecode360.com/documents/HI0602/public/753139506.pdf https://www.tapinto.net/towns/hillsborough/sections/community/articles/hillsborough-encourages-residents-to-plant-monarch-friendly-ecology-gardens https://patch.com/new-jersey/hillsborough/hillsborough-plant-ecology-gardens-help-save-monarch-population https://centraljersey.com/2025/05/12/township-begins-initiative-to-save-the-monarch-butterfly/ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LV2STrvcYt8 https://www.hillsborough-nj.org/news-announcements/1917-monarch-butterfly-poster-contest

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Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

IMG_5816.JPG

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

IMG_5823.JPG

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

IMG_5827.JPG

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

IMG_5829.JPG

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

IMG_5843.JPG

Where is the demonstration garden located and how does this location relate to the cultural significance of the monarch (if relevant)? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible)

Ann Van Middlesworth Park (17 Pleasant View Rd, Hillsborough, NJ, 08844). The demonstration took place under the pavilion. After the demonstration, we walked the attendees around the park to see the 3 new pollinator gardens at this park. **Video link attached on the Links & Uploads Page**

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

Neshanic Garden Club

What is the size of the demonstration garden (in acres)? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 0.5 acres). For reference, 1 acre = 43,560 square feet and is about the size of a football field without the end zones. Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

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0.05

Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

MajorJimMayormuniplanting.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

MajorJimPlantingwhitefence.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

MayorJimplanting.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

MayorRakeJimPlanting.jpg

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

Hillsborough Township Parks Department, Jim Bushong (Neshanic Garden Club President) & John Ciccarelli (Mayor)

How many plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

155.0

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

PD Connections Garden at the Police Department entrance was installed/planted by Hillsborough Townships Parks Department, Neshanic Garden Club President Jim Bushong & Mayor John Ciccarelli. Some of the pollinators planted are Blur Fortunes, Meadow Blazing Star & Orange Butterfly Milkweed. Yes, we made the Mayor get dirty! Through the six total gardens this year, a total of 155 pollinators were planted.

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

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BenchEcologySigns.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

butterlfyhomehavenecosign.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

DomeEcologyGardenSign.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

EcologyGardenPond.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

GreenPollinatorSign.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Honeybeeeecologygardensign.jpg

How many garden signs are being displayed and where are they located? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

6.00

Please describe the educational information on the sign(s), and provide any links to externally purchased sign(s).

-Hillsborough Municipal Complex (3 Gardens) -Ann Van Middlesworth Park (3 Gardens) **One sign at each garden**

Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Action#17.jpg

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Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Action#17 Image1.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Action#17 Image2.jpg

How many estimated individuals participated in your challenge? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 100).

15

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

Residents

When did this challenge take place?

8/20/2025

What is the total acreage of habitat created? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 2 acres). For reference, 1 acre = 43,560 square feet and is about the size of a football field without the end zones. Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

2.0

Please describe your challenge and the results.

Community Challenge shared with residents requesting them to share pictures of their pollinator gardens located at their home. The Facebook & Instagram Posts through Hillsborough NJ Parks & Recreation had 1,583 views.

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