



Your Volunteer Activity

Mardi Gras began in New Orleans in the 1830s and means many things to many people. It is celebrated in different ways every year; however, one item that is consistent and incorporated into all Mardi Gras parades is the tossing of Mardi Gras beads, which come in every size, shape, and color. It's these beads and other trinkets that spur crowds to yell, "Throw me something, Mister!"

Throughout the year, ArcGNO collects Mardi Gras beads as part of its recycling program. Special bins are set up around the city at grocery stores, libraries and other businesses who wish to help with the recycling program. This not only supports our goal of keeping discarded beads from ending up in the city landfill, but, it also helps support one of ArcGNO's social enterprises – the **Mardi Gras Bead Recycle Center**, which employs people with intellectual disabilities. During your volunteer project, you will be asked to sort large bins of beads into specific piles that are then banded and bagged. These beads are sold in our Bead Store during the Mardi Gras season to the public and various Mardi Gras Krewe members.

Beads, beads, so many beads! How do we sort all of these beads?

HOW TO SORT BEADS!

Beads come in a wide variety of colors, styles and lengths. We sort them according to these 5 categories.

5 Bead Categories:

1. **Short & "Petite" Beads:** shorter than the 33" beads & some have plastic fasteners; any color, shape or diameter
2. **Medium Beads-33"-36" long:** any color, shape or diameter
3. **Long Beads-48"-72" long:** longer than the 36", any color, shape or diameter
4. **Pearls:** long pearlized beads, usually white, but, also in other colors
5. **Krewe Beads or Medallion Beads:** beads with logos or letters on them. This could be part of the bead or something hanging from the beads, called Medallions. The medallions may be Krewe related or some other theme.

The Process:

- Sorters will start with a pile of beads in the center of the tables. Each table will have a large rolling **kiosk with pegs labeled 'Long', 'Medium', 'Short' and 'Pearl'**. Each table will also have boxes labeled for **'Krewe and Medallion Beads' and 'Toys and Trinkets'**.
- **Volunteer Sorters** will place separated beads on the appropriate peg.
- **Volunteer Runners** will go around to each table as the kiosks get full and band together the beads on the full pegs and place them in designated bags/boxes.
- **Broken Beads** will go into a bin placed on the floor at the end of each table.
- **Stuffed Animals, Balls, Toys, etc.:** anything that is not beads will go into the box labeled as such.
- **Specialty Beads:** fancy, blinking, or novelty beads will also go in a separate designated bin.

Feel free to ask questions! Arc staff will be everywhere!!