



Gifford Park's Pride

Gifford Park Neighborhood: A Great Place to Live, Work, Learn and Play
www.giffordparkomaha.org

January/February 2009

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Cynthia Shuck - 2008 GPNA Neighbor Of The Year

The GPNA was proud to honor **Cynthia Shuck** as its 2008 Neighbor of the Year. She was recognized at the 20th annual **GPNA Holiday Banquet** hosted again by **Creighton University Medical Center** on December 11. Words people use to describe Cynthia are friendly, dedicated, hard-working, innovative, self-sacrificing, forward-thinking, involved with most GPNA activities, hands-on, great with children, concerned for the environment, and promotes and represents our neighborhood well beyond our physical boundaries (with other organizations). She has used her architectural talents to create beautiful places within our neighborhood that are functional as well; not an easy balancing act. Cynthia has a real passion for gardening, trees and greening projects. In fact, her goal is to have our area be designated as a "Neighborhood Arboretum". This past year Cynthia received the distinguished "Johnny Appleseed" Award from the Nebraska State Arboretum for her efforts in promoting tree-planting.

Cynthia has been interested in architecture since she was a teenager. She graduated from Kansas State in 1998 with a degree in Architecture. She then worked a year in New York for an architectural firm before moving into her current residence in 2001 at 35th & Cass Street, a cute bungalow with lots of plantings of course. She got involved with the community garden right away. Starting in 2003, Cynthia served as GPNA vice-president for 2 years, then as president for 2 more years. Through mid-2008 she continued to perform presidential duties when the GPNA had no official president. As past GPNA presidents know, responsibilities include doing a lot of things not always fun, and that require a lot of time and attention.

Her leadership and hands-on involvement demonstrate her dedication to our neighborhood. Most GPNA projects involve a great deal of legwork before, during, and after to be successful. Some of the events and activities she has been involved with are neighborhood and park cleanups, tree-planting, park benches, painting over graffiti, park plantings, identity garden, business district flower pots, Easter egg hunts, Activate Omaha, Address

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Next General Meeting
Thursday, February 12
7:00 P.M.

Topic: What's Happening In The Gifford Park Neighborhood

Creighton University
Med Center
Morrison Seminar Room

Executive Meeting:
Thursday, February 26
At The Flint's
152 North 35th St.

Annual Restore Omaha Conference: Ideas & Solutions For Older Properties

- **Need inspiration to tackle some of your old-home projects?**
- **Have questions on the best products to use in restoring and preserving your older property?**
- **Looking to meet and learn from other owners of historic buildings?**

Come to **Restore Omaha**. Through networking and educational sessions, the annual Restore Omaha Conference offers professionals and enthusiasts information on restoring, renovating and preserving older properties.

In partnership with **Metropolitan Community College Foundation**, the conference is scheduled for **Saturday, February 28**, at **Metro's South Campus at 27th and Q Streets**.

This year participants can select from 16 sessions to attend. Topics include porch restoration, repairing plaster, painting exterior woodwork and window and

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GPNA OFFICERS**PRESIDENT**

Dana Carlton-Flint* 346-4575

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Sandy* & Roger Freeman 557-2914

PUBLIC RELATIONS

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WATCH GROUP

Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

WEEDS & LITTER

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

WELCOMING

Julie Kalkowski* 342-2103

* denotes new officer, board, or committee member

Editor's note: If you have something that would be of interest to our neighborhood, we encourage you to submit an article for our monthly newsletter. Editorials must be approved by the GPNA Executive Board. Articles can be mailed to P.O. Box 31462 Omaha, NE 68131; please include your name and phone number. Contact Sue Wilwerding (342-2795) or Chris Foster (342-6006).

President's Column

It's a New Year in Gifford Park

Many of our members have already been hard at work, organizing, preparing, and implementing projects for 2009. We will all soon see the progress of our efforts.

- Our board has met with Destination Midtown about a possible project centering around Gifford Park.
- We are in discussion with MNA (Midtown Neighborhood Alliance) about gathering together neighborhood leaders and city officials to clean up our neighborhoods - that includes trash, vandals, crime, and gangs.
- We will be getting neighbors together to complete our Neighborhood Scan which will lead to getting many of our dilapidated properties repaired.
- Neighborhood gardeners met to plan for the future of our neighborhood garden.
- The board is coordinating a Candidates Forum to inform our members and MNA neighbors of each candidate's plans for Omaha and more specifically Mid Town.
- Pike House members are ready to start an official Neighborhood Watch.
- GPNA has secured a grant to add lighting to dark areas of our boundaries.

It is amazing what we can accomplish when we set our minds to it. Again thanks to everyone who has participated in the projects listed above. And as promised, 2009 is going to be the year of the Gifford Park volunteer. Please be thinking of how we can use your talents to make Gifford Park a better place to Live, Work, and Grow!

by Dana Carlton-Flint

Candidates Forum Planned

Mayoral and City Council candidates have been contacted to come and participate in a Candidates Forum hosted by the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association at the **March 12th** general meeting. Each candidate will be given time to speak on his/her plans for Omaha if elected to their respective office. The attendees will be given an opportunity to ask questions of each candidate. This meeting is expected to last 2 hours. The GPNA is opening up this meeting to all MNA neighborhoods. Come early to get a good seat! See the March newsletter for further details.

Community Bike Shop Update

While many cyclists have given up their bikes during these cold, icy months, the **Community Bicycle Shop of Omaha** has remained open through the winter. The CBSO has remained open **2:00-4:00 pm on Saturday afternoons** to help with repairs and the Earn-A-Bike program. For those of you dreaming of the warmer months to come and need to get your bike in top shape for summer cycling, stop in for a visit.

We're also gearing up for our 3rd annual **Spring Open House**. Mark your calendars for **March 21**. It's a chance to meet our board and volunteers, see the shop's progress and learn about our activities for summer. Watch for details in the next GPNA Newsletter or on our website: www.omahabike.org. We hope to see you there!

Community Affairs - February 2009

The Neighborhood Center is once again hosting **Neighborhood Builders**, a free series of workshops held every Saturday in February to increase leadership capacity in Omaha. Sessions topics include "Assets in Your Neighborhood," "Inclusiveness in Your Neighborhood," "Social Advocacy," and "Conflict Mediation." Better futures are built on better neighborhoods! Follow the link from www.unomaha.edu/ncenter for more information and registration details.

Attention all tree huggers! A free workshop entitled "**Growing Tree Strategies in Nebraska Communities**" is scheduled to be broadcast across the state on February 11th for ReTree Nebraska Ambassadors. The goal of the ReTree Nebraska program is to plant 1 million trees between April 2007 and April 2017 within the city limits of Nebraska communities and on acreages for either the purpose of landscaping or protection of farmstead houses and rural community buildings. To learn more about how to count trees you have planted toward this goal or how to become a ReTree Ambassador and attend this workshop contact **Jessica Kelling** at retreenebraska@unl.edu or 402-472-0220.

Take your valentine to **From Shelterbelt with Love** at Midtown's Shelterbelt Theater. Check out www.shelterbelt.org for show times and ticket information for your chance to view these 9 short plays of love, laughs, loss, and relationships.

Are you interested in building a rain garden at home but need to know how-to? The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension and City of Lincoln, NE are hosting **Rain Garden Workshop** the morning of February 17th. This technical training session on rain garden basics will cover all the steps from planning, design, implementation, and maintenance of your rain garden. Registration applications are available at lancaster.ne.gov/CITY/pworks/watrsheed/educate/garden/workshop/pdf/021709.pdf *by Dana Freeman*

Investigate before you invest in pest control

Pest Consulting Services

- Termite & household pests
- Inspections & treatment consultations
- Ph.D. Entomologist

402-561-9260

Restore Omaha. . .continued from page 1

weather stripping along with sessions on landscaping, preservation basics, small commercial projects and a panel discussing the effects of development on historic neighborhoods. Morning and afternoon breaks along with a Restoration JAM! at the end of the day will allow opportunities to network and to gather ideas and solutions with other restoration-minded property owners.

Keynote speaker is **Kelly Sutherland McLeod, AIA**. Kelly served as project architect for the nationally-recognized conservation of one of the country's most notable Arts & Crafts homes, the Gamble House in Pasadena, California.

An opening reception at Prouty Place Dos, a renovated mixed-use building at 4825 S. 25th St., will take place Friday, February 27, from 7 to 10 p.m. A pre-renovation reception in the building was the highlight of the 2008 Restore Omaha. This year, attendees will have the opportunity to see the progress made. Reception cost is \$15.

Cost to attend the February 28th conference is \$35. Admission includes the keynote lecture, three educational sessions, lunch and the Restoration JAM! reception. Save \$10 by registering before February 13. Visit www.restoreomaha.com for full details and registration information. For questions call 402-457-2241 or e-mail **Hanne Kruse** at hkruse@mccneb.edu.

The conference is made possible with support from **Metropolitan Community College Foundation**, the **Omaha Chapter of the American Institute of Architects**, **B.G. Peterson Co.**, **Omaha Main Streets** and funding from the **Douglas County Historical Grant** and **The National Trust for Historic Preservation**.

*by Kristine Gerber
Eventive Marketing/Omaha Books*

Charles R. Kilgore Jr. Attorney At Law

**4913 Underwood Avenue
558-5000**

Personal Injury Law
Worker's Compensation
Injury
Auto Accidents
Insurance Claims

Greening Your 2009 New Year's Resolutions

We all like to begin the new year by pledging to make changes in our lives. Many of these resolutions are meant to improve our health by exercising regularly, finally kicking the nicotine habit, shedding those extra pounds gained during the holidays, or opting for a healthier diet. Let's just acknowledge that good health is in our best interest and developing healthier habits will extend the number of years left to us. Instead, we should look outside ourselves and try to improve the state of the world in general for future generations. The following are a few of the simple ways to accomplish this humanistic resolve:

1. Practice Good Housekeeping - 1) Incorporate a practical system of recycling in your home, office, and beyond. With innovation, it need not take up too much extra space or require more effort, and imagine the satisfaction and reduced weight of your garbage can when you have less than one bag of trash each week! 2) Try decreasing the number of paper products you use. Opt for towels with recycled content, and don't worry that they are brown. Like their processed white cousins, the au natural color will coordinated well with all of your kitchen accessories. 3) Reduce the amount of junky catalogs you receive each day. Take advantage of a free service like Catalog Choice (www.catalogchoice.org) that contacts the offending mailers for you. 4) Consider switching to green, non-toxic cleaners. You might have to break yourself of associating the smell of bleach with absolute cleanliness, of which I am truly guilty. Adding both chlorine bleach and a scoop of a powdered oxygen bleaching product/stain remover to your laundry is redundant. 5) Bear in mind your phantom load. Electronics plugged into an outlet continue using energy when not in operation or on standby mode. Employ a power strip for a cluster of items that can be switched off and on with ease. It's not necessary for the clock on your DVD player to be accurate. 6) Trade in older appliances for new ones endorsed with the government-backed ENERGY STAR denoting energy efficiency.

2. Improve Your Shopping Habits - 1) Fight your buying addiction. Remember that natural resources were used to produce that heated neck massager and question whether you really need and will use it more than once. 2) Before you go out and buy a new power tool, check to see if you could borrow one or find it used instead. The GPNA lends residents tools at little or no cost, and major home improvement and auto parts stores charge fees less than the price of a new item. 3) Each time you bring home a new purchase, recycle the item you just replaced. 4) Decrease the amount of useless clutter you have accumulated at home and benefit others simultaneously by donating items to a local charity. 5) Try to reduce the number of bottled and canned beverages you purchase. While those bottles can be recycled, energy is required to pick it up from your curb and process it, so take advantage of our local water supply. 6) Do you really need to drive-thru your favorite coffee shop every morning? Save time and money by brewing a cup of joe at home and taking it to go in your reusable steel travel mug. 7) Don't forget your reusable grocery bags in the car. Even state senators are giving them away for free, and you can save at least a nickel for each one you use at the supermarket. If you can remember to DVR your favorite TV show, you can remember your shopping bags. Besides, the ChicoBag comes in a variety of colors and will even fit in your purse!

3. Commune With Nature & Fellow Human Beings - 1) Leave your car at home at least once during the week. Make an effort to walk, bicycle, carpool, or ride the bus to work or run an errand. Reduce your driving stress, eliminate the need for road rage, and glory at the feel of the wind through your bicycle helmet 2) Buy locally, preferably organic. This improvement to your shopping rituals will get you closer to the food grower. You might even meet the person who grew your arugula at a local farmer's market! 3) Join a community garden or try gardening on your patio or in the backyard. Getting your hands dirty by planting seeds, weeding, and harvesting the fruits of your labor is immensely rewarding. There is no comparison between salsa made with your sun-ripened tomatoes and the jar of stuff you get from the store. 4) Compost your yard waste; sending big brown bags of your leaves away is wasteful. As an alternative, make your soil happy by amending it with decomposed vegetation. 5) Decrease the amount of apple peels and left-over green beans that are put in our waste stream. Let the worms eat 'em! 6) Construct rain barrels to locate beneath your downspouts and harvest the moisture that falls freely from the sky. Hook a soaker hose to the overflow and place in a nearby flowerbed.

Finally, increase your chance of success by telling everyone you know about your commitment. Global Stewards (www.globalstewards.org) offer many more environmental tips and sustainable solutions for a healthy Omaha and beyond. Good luck with your green resolutions and Happy New Year!

by Dana Freeman

Legislative Update



The new legislative session has begun and nearly 700 new bills have been introduced. This is the long 90 day session which will end in June. Clearly, the overriding issue this year will be the impact that the economic problems will have on our budget. The Legislature is going to face many very difficult decisions as we balance the budget.

I wanted to let you know some of the bills that I will be working on this session. At the request of several neighborhoods, I introduced LB 605 which would require additional weight be given to the concerns of neighborhoods when liquor license applications are considered by the Liquor Control Commission. I feel very strongly that who better understands the impact a liquor license has on a neighborhood than those who must live next door. After the hearings on the Infinite Stores this past year, it was clear to me that changes need to be made in how we grant licenses.

After the national attention brought about last year by the Safe Haven Law, I have been working with Governor Heineman to draft a workable plan to address the serious needs of older children with behavioral problems. There is a clear need for better accessibility for parents so that they do not have to go to the extreme of giving up a child.

I have introduced LB 95 again this session that would prohibit companies that have been convicted of knowingly hiring illegal workers from receiving tax breaks under the Nebraska Advantage Act. I do not feel these companies should be getting taxpayer support for breaking the law.

At the request of Attorney General Jon Bruning, I introduced LB 64 which addresses teen dating violence. Under the bill, schools would be required to adopt policies, curriculum and training to prevent dating violence.

I want to thank you for the opportunity that you have given me to represent you in Lincoln. I never forget what an honor this is. Please do not hesitate to contact me to let me know your thoughts or concerns.

Gwen Howard
State Senator
District 9
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402-471-2723
ghoward@leg.ne.gov

Cynthia Shuck . . . continued from page 1

It Now, National Night Out Block Party, Neighborhood Scan Program, Restore Omaha Conference, GPNA Holiday Banquet, CSO (Clean Solutions Omaha), Green master plan, Creighton master plan, Yates School, Destination Midtown, Midtown Neighborhood Alliance, business district revitalization, grant writing, Green Homes tour, community garden, youth garden program, and others. Cynthia's involvement with many other partnering organizations helps keep GPNA connected to make our neighborhood better. Cynthia got her boyfriend **John Barna** involved early and often the last couple years, and we appreciate his efforts in many of the above GPNA activities – thanks John!

Cynthia's involvement with children demonstrates her commitment to having a long-term positive impact on the neighborhood's future. One example: every Saturday during the growing season she helps with our community garden youth program. She takes time from her busy schedule to help children with life's challenges, whether it's gardening or other things – the kids love her! Cynthia is a great friend to my wife Sallie and me, and she has always supported our efforts, no matter how crazy the idea. Our neighborhood is lucky to have Cynthia. Congratulations, from all of us in the Gifford Park neighborhood!

by Chris Foster

2008 Holiday Banquet Highlights

Nearly 125 GPNA members, family, and guests attended our **20th Annual Holiday Banquet**. Those in attendance enjoyed an evening of good food, camaraderie among neighbors, and holiday cheer at **Creighton University Medical Center** in the Becic Dining Room. Tremendous thanks are extended to everyone who pitched in, from sending out invitations to clean-up, and made this yet another in our list of successful events!

Emcee and GPNA president **Dana Carlton-Flint** kept the event lively and cheerful. This year's theme was "**Snowmen**". Dana and vice-president **Stuart Shell** presented an entertaining slideshow tour of last year's events and activities. The 2008 Events & Activities Slideshow ran during the first half of the evening – thanks **Sallie Foster** for taking a year's worth of wonderful, award-winning pictures. **Ben Spahn** and **Jaquan Nance** received GPNA Youth Volunteer Awards for their outstanding volunteer service helping with the neighborhood; they each received a special certificate for their efforts. We also showed pictures from the first 10 years of the GPNA, part of celebrating the GPNA's 20 year anniversary.

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Happy Valentine's Day!



Neighborhoods Play A Role In Fighting Childhood Obesity

Unhealthy eating habits and a lack of physical exercise have created a dire situation among our youth. The statistics are worrisome to say the least – one in every three Nebraska students in grades K-12 is either at risk for becoming overweight or is already overweight. Research shows that overweight children become overweight adults. In Nebraska, three in every five adults (60.9%) are either overweight or obese.

Studies show that the majority of overweight kids already have at least one avoidable risk factor for heart disease. And, obesity is the single most significant factor in the dramatic increase of Type II diabetes in children and adolescents. The health effects associated with being overweight during childhood and adolescence are considerable and related to increased morbidity and mortality later in life, which has led to the prediction by some experts that the youth of today will live less healthy and shorter lives than their parents.

There is much that can be done in the home to help prevent or reverse child obesity, such as proper portion control and following the 5-4-3-2-1 daily prevention rule of: 5 fruits and vegetables; 4 glasses of water; 3 servings of low fat dairy; no more than 2 hours screen time; and 1 hour of physical activity. However, as obesity research advances, it is beginning to recognize the important impact that the built environment – the man-made aspects of communities – also has on both physical activity and eating patterns.

Key built environment factors include sidewalks, bike paths, street layout, recreational spaces – both indoor and outdoor, proximity of offices and stores within walking distance of homes, safety of communities, urban sprawl and availability of neighborhood stores and restaurants offering healthy food choices.

As such, neighborhoods play an important role in promoting health among our children. For instance, neighborhoods can organize a walking school bus, clean up a vacant lot for kids to play, make sure that existing playgrounds and walking paths are safe and easily accessible, and start a community garden – all of which will promote physical activity and healthier eating habits.

Activate Omaha Kids is a community-wide coalition of concerned leaders and organizations in the metro area that came together in 2007 to fight childhood obesity in our communities. Their mission states that by 2011 all Omaha children will achieve measurable improvements in nutrition, physical activity and healthy living supported by community collaboration and the environments in which

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California Bar And Package

510 North 33rd Street
402-449-9138

Happy Hour Discounts - Mon thru Fri - 5 to 6 pm

Nightly Specials - 7 till Close

Package Liquor, Beer and Wine

Welcome to your Friendly Neighborhood Bar!

In My Opinion . . .

Another town hall meeting, another candlelight vigil . . . and in the meantime our people live in fear and our leaders tell us that Omaha is in a lot better shape than other cities. Not exactly what we want to hear. We don't live in Chicago or Detroit. We live here, in Omaha, and here is where "OUR" children and young people are being shot and killed. Here is where muggings and armed robberies and physical assaults, and population intimidation goes undaunted. It really doesn't matter what part of the city you live in, the truth is, criminal activity happens and is on the rise, here, where we live. For a long time now, I've seen one neighborhood after another react to vicious crimes by calling for town hall meetings, and politicians and community leaders attend these meetings, and guess what, nothing really happens. The criminals continue to do what they do. Children as young as 12 years old and most likely even younger, are living in unhealthy environments where they are exposed to, and have free access to guns. And they're using them!

I am told that even in our own neighborhood, a twelve year old boy freely struts around the intersection of 33rd and California dealing drugs and wielding a gun in broad daylight. What is this, the Wild West? The police are called, and they know who this youngster is, and yet; nothing happens! How shameful is that?! I guarantee you, something will eventually happen. Something sad and predictable will happen, and another town hall meeting won't bring anyone back from the dead, and another candlelight vigil won't stop more murders, muggings, or assaults from happening.

It's time the Omaha Police Department, the members of the City Council, the Mayor, the candidates for mayor – all of them, offer the people of Omaha concrete solutions, and more importantly, actions, to attack this crisis. No excuses. No more studies. We need action, and we need it now. We need a pro-active response to criminal activity. We need preventative measures to keep guns out of the reach of "OUR" children. We need city leaders who do more than just give lip service to our most pressing problems.

by Mike Caban

Can You Dig It? Gifford Park Garden News

Even though it's snowy and cold outside, community gardeners in Omaha don't rest—we've been busy planning and dreaming of warmer days. The Gifford Park Community Garden (GPCG) held its **2009 Strategic Planning Session** on Saturday, January 17, from 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM at the Yates Elementary School Community Room. Many thanks to **Reverend Stephanie Ahlschwede** from BIG Garden Project for facilitating the meeting with great results. Great dialogue and brainstorming took place that will help direct GPCG through the next five years.

The next GPCG meeting is planned for **9:30 AM on February 21, 2009**, at the **Yates Elementary School Community Room**. Everyone is invited again to attend this much shorter meeting as we review minutes from last month's strategic planning session and devise action steps to implement our ideas. Also, the GPCG needs an Assistant Director. To learn more about this position or to nominate yourself or someone else for this unpaid but thankful **job**, please email Dana (dana.freeman@gmail.com).

The Green Omaha Coalition's Green Neighborhood Council's Food Choices Committee hosted the successful "**From Here to Community Garden**" panel at the Neighborhood Center on Saturday, January 24, 2009 from 10 AM to noon. A standing-room-only crowd learned about community gardening in Omaha from local experts, including Gifford Park's **Chris Foster** and **Dana Freeman**. Other panelists included **Stephanie Ahlschwede** from BIG Garden Project, **Norita Matt** from Omaha's City Planning Department, **Andy Jameton** from City Sprouts, and **Dave Lampe** from the corporate garden at Lamp, Rynearson, & Associates. Special recognition goes to **Trilety Wade** and **Jody Baines** for their hard work in planning and organizing the event. There is a movement afoot to ensure that all Omahans are educated about and have access to healthy food choices, of which community gardening is a part. Your involvement in Gifford Park Community Garden helps our neighbors have such an opportunity. Thanks for growing in Gifford Park!

by Dana Freeman

Holiday Banquet . . . *continued from page 5*

Rodney Hay's time and culinary expertise in preparing turkey was greatly appreciated. Rodney, as most of you know, bakes, smokes, and deep-fries the turkeys for us every year. (Note: it was great having Rodney back this year; he was unable to attend last year due to an eye injury suffered during snow removal.) **Sodexo** made it complete with a buffet of traditional holiday fare, including pumpkin pie for dessert!

Again this year **Jean Peck** with help from her mother **Marlene Wilwerding** hand-crafted the wonderful centerpieces. Sadly, Marlene passed away last fall, but she was still with us at the banquet in spirit. We again offer our sincere appreciation to **Creighton University Medical Center** for their enormous support by hosting this event.

Chris Foster introduced "**Neighbor of the Year**," **Cynthia Shuck**. It was nice to hear Cynthia's comments as she recognized a long list of friends and others she has volunteered with since

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California Tacos & More

Homemade Mexican Food

342-0212

33rd & California Street

Dine In or Carry Out

Hours:

Monday - Saturday: 11a.m. - 8 p.m.

Closed Sunday

California **Tacos
&
More**



Childhood Obesity . . .

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they live. To date, over 200 community volunteers and more than 90 organizations are helping implement several initiatives that will directly fight childhood obesity among our youth, including implementing walking school buses, improving structured recess, the mapping of access to healthy foods, organizing Club Possible afterschool programs, and conducting a survey of Douglas County kids to assess their physical activity level and eating habits.

Activate Omaha Kids would like to learn about what your neighborhood needs to support healthier living among our kids and/or what you are already doing to support physical activity and healthy eating. For more information on Activate Omaha Kids or to learn more about how you can become involved in fighting childhood obesity, please visit www.activateomahakids.org or contact Mikki Frost at mikki.frost@alegent.org

What's New, Pussycat?



Many companion dogs and cats are becoming forgotten victims of the current economic crisis. Many people who have lost income, jobs, or homes are surrendering or abandoning their companion animals in terrible and unprecedented numbers, believing that they can no longer afford to feed their family pets. But “yes, we can” all help!

First, if you or someone you know is experiencing hardship, never abandon an animal; it’s illegal and cruel, and our pets don’t know how to fend for themselves. If abandoned they suffer and may die. Also, avoid surrendering your animal friend to a shelter or pound (including NHS) unless the shelter assures you that your pet will not be put to sleep for lack of ~~space at that time~~. **Instead, contact a rescue group Gifford Park Cats (GP Cats) 553-3736.** We are working with a local rescue group to establish a food bank to help people affected by hard times keep their furry family members. And remember, GP Cats also extends a helping paw to dogs!

Next, please, if you can, donate tax-deductible gifts of animal food, or funds to purchase and/or transport food. (One generous source of donated pet food must be collected from Illinois.) Call 553-3736.

Most importantly, volunteer! Foster families are needed more than ever for rescued or abandoned animals, until they find their forever homes; and to care temporarily for pets of people who’ve lost their homes until they’re back on their feet. Help with food may be available for fosterers. If you can open your heart and home to a cat or dog in need as a fosterer, please contact GP Cats, 553-3736; if you want to adopt, please contact Gifford Park Cats or the Humane Society. (GP Cats is seeking a home for an adorable basset hound, as well as for felines.)

Also, it’s a cold winter, and more animals than ever are having to weather it. Please consider feeding the strays and the birds. If you are already feeding, please don’t stop. Again, help may be available at need. Phone 553-3736 for info.

Lastly, help shape public policy! You can go to www.whitehouse.gov, click on “Contact us,” and write a brief message requesting that a pet-food food stamps program be set up to help people going through hard times to keep their **pets**. Time magazine reports that “food stamps work well as an [economic] stimulus.” (Jan. 28, ’09.)

by Clarinda Karpov 553-3736

 Low-cost vaccination clinics for cats and dogs will be held at Christie Heights Recreation Center, 5105 S. 37th St. (37th & P), February 7 and March 7; and at Sherman Community Center, 5701 N. 16th St., February 14 and March 14. All clinics are Saturdays, 1-4 p.m. Available are 1-yr. rabies (\$5); 3-year rabies (\$10); distemper combo shot, dogs (\$10); distemper combo shot, cats (\$7); kennel cough (\$5); feline leukemia (\$10); microchipping (\$25); and NHS licensing. (Licenses are due by March 15.) Cash only, and please, no children under 10.

Yates School Is New Site For Free Tax Help

The site for the annual free tax assistance is **Yates School, 32nd & Davenport St.** Tax help will be available every **Monday (except March 23)** from **1 to 4 p.m.** through the tax season (**April 15**). Everyone is welcome! AARP representatives will provide free tax help for our neighborhood for the 15th year in a row. Processing of basic tax returns and electronic filing will be available. No appointment is necessary; individuals will be helped on a first come, first serve basis. Please call **Jackie** at **551-3629** for more information. To be able to provide assistance, persons will need to bring the following:

1. Valid Picture I.D.
2. Copies of ALL W-2, 1098, 1099 Forms and the amount of other income received by you and your spouse
3. Tax Identification Number (example: Social Security Number, Individual Tax Identification Number) for you, your spouse and any others shown on the tax return.
4. Provider’s address and Tax Identification Number for Child/Dependent Care Credit
5. Form 8332 or copy of divorce decree for non-custodial parent claiming child
6. Proof of Account Number and Routing Transit Number of the financial institution for direct deposit into a savings or checking account.
7. Copy of prior year’s tax return, if available.

Holiday Banquet . . .

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moving into the neighborhood in 2001. She has been involved with almost every event and activity of the GPNA in a relatively short amount of time. We could all learn how to be better neighbors by following her example. The night was brought to a close by the drawing of door prizes and distribution of children’s gifts all donated by members and VIP’s- **Lois Baumhover, Gwen Howard, Jim & Liz Vokal, Subby & Janice Anzaldo, Brad Bogard, Dana Carlton-Flint & “Design With You In Mind,” and Stuart Shell & Dana Freeman.** Thanks to all for a wonderful, memorable evening!

by Chris Foster

P.S. Due to space limitations in this edition of the newsletter, the Holiday Lighting Contest winners will be announced in the March issue.

**Presidents' Day
February 16**

At The 2008 GPNA Holiday Banquet . . .



Chris Foster introduces Ben Spahn and Jaquan Nance to the GPNA members present at the Holiday Banquet. The boys received Youth Volunteer Certificates of Recognition.



2008 GPNA Neighbor of the Year, Cynthia Shuck, listens as Chris Foster reviews the many contributions that she has made toward improving the neighborhood and community.



State Senator Gwen Howard assists the "junior" members of the GPNA in choosing and opening their door prizes.



Stuart Shell and Dana Freeman help distribute the many wonderful door prizes that were given out at the banquet.

As with any event in Gifford Park, the list of people who extend their generosity and support is widespread, and unfortunately, cannot all be listed here. The GPNA would, however, like to recognize and extend its sincere gratitude to those on the Holiday Banquet Committee: **Dana Carlton-Flint & Rod Flint, Dana Freeman & Stuart Shell, and Chris & Sallie Foster.** We are always looking for new recruits! Until the 21st Annual Holiday Banquet when we will again share a meal together, we'll see you around the neighborhood.

What's Happening In The Neighborhood . . .

Attention women and high school age girls! Have you ever been a bit leery walking alone to your car or home from school? Ever wished you knew self defense? JCNA, Gifford Park and Bemis Park neighborhood associations have partnered together to offer a one night class in self defense on **Thursday, February 12th**, from **7:00 pm to 9:00 pm** at **Yates School at 32nd and Davenport**. The class would be taught by **Claudia Brown Jackman** from **Sarpy Aikido**. The class will dispel myths about techniques women think they know or have been taught incorrectly, be shown and allowed to practice techniques that are designed to be executed effectively and effortlessly regardless of your size, strength or athletic ability. There will also be a defense session on sexual assault but this is optional and those uncomfortable with this portion of the session can leave before this part of the class begins. The class is \$10.00 per person. If you are interested in the class please call **Margie** at **554-0775** by **February 10th**.

And speaking of Yates, the former neighborhood elementary school has been the site of increased activity - from neighborhood meetings to a variety of educational endeavors. Contact **Stuart** at **216-1235** if you have any additional ideas for how we can utilize the building. OPS is working closely with the community to see that we're empowered to make Yates the school WE want it to be!

Congratulations to **St. Cecilia's Cathedral** for receiving the first **Spirit of Midtown Award** from **Destination Midtown**. The presentation took place at a parish breakfast on January 11. The award recognizes the cathedral's vital commitment to Midtown Omaha.

Although the winter has been fairly mild relatively speaking, you never know when a blizzard could be around the corner; therefore, it's a good idea to review the city's snow removal rules. A **Snow Emergency** means that no vehicles may be parked on the streets where you see an Emergency Snow Route sign. Crews will plow these streets first. If cars are left parked on an Emergency Snow Route during a snow emergency, the cars will be subject to a fine and may be towed at the owner's expense. Radio and TV stations will broadcast all necessary information. Omaha's Municipal Code requires **all sidewalks to be shoveled within 24 hours after a snowstorm**. Walks left unshoveled may be cleared by City crews at the expense of the property owner. For more information, or if you have a comment or complaint, please call the **Street Maintenance Office** at **444-4919** (24 hour line).



Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA)

P.O. Box 91462, Omaha, NE 68131-0462



Membership Application

*Note: The GPNA membership year runs from June 1 through May 31

Today's Date: _____

Type of Membership: Single (\$10.00) Family (\$15.00) Business (\$26.00)

If Business, Name of Business: _____

Name: _____

Spouse: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES I am interested in helping out with... (Circle Interests):

- | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Chairperson | Newsletter Delivery | Community Garden | Easter Egg Hunt |
| Membership | Book Club | Youth Garden | Boiling Cleanup |
| Social Activities | History | Tree Planting | Tall Cleanup |
| School Liaison | Wash Group | Youth Activities | Neighborhood Walks |
| Tool Lending | Cal. Committee | Lawn Program | Holiday Banquet |

**For City Services,
Information, or
Complaints
Call: Mayor's Action
Office
444-5555**



**TOOL
LENDING
HOTLINE**
Chris 342-6006

Mowers - \$5
Rent for most tools - \$3

