



Gifford Park's Pride

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

September 2013

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

20th Annual Youth Tennis Program Highlights

By Chris Foster

Like last year we had hot weather (including a heat index of over 100 degrees for the finale) for this year's 20th annual August Youth Tennis Program in Gifford Park. This year we had nearly 80 youth participants with nearly 40 youth with perfect attendance.

Ingredient gave us a good deal providing 15 pizzas for our program "finale" on the last day. Neighborhood volunteers also provided delicious treats, including a very special tennis court-decorated cake, baked by none other than the Stanley family – it was quite the creation! Many thanks go to all the wonderful instructors for their support and dedication to this program: Rick & Jane Hines, Jim Wilson, Vince Emery, Roger Freeman, Kirk Peck, Jackie Foster, Jenny Waltemath, Jonathan

Next General Meeting
Thursday, September 12

Topic
"Neighborhood Conversation and
the Art of Neighboring" with
Eric Purcell & David Collie

7:00 pm
California Taco
33rd and California Street

Braden, Scott Slezak, Brett Slezak, Calvin Webster, Laurie Bolte, Allie Gardner, Cole Bartley, JT Christian and Chris & Sallie Foster. Thanks also to our neighborhood youth who helped teach: the Stanley girls (Dawn, Crystal, Justine, & Whitney)
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719-5108

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From the President

By Eric Purcell

Thank you all for your kind feedback from my article last month. What I heard from folks over and over is that we don't want to live in fear. But more importantly, I heard that we resonate with a view of the world where we eradicate fear, not by power or policy alone, but by friendship, service to each other and the art of neighboring. A friend of mine recently posted this on his facebook page:

“Our police chief just told everyone watching the news today that we should all be suspicious of everyone you do not know. I simply do not agree that we should live in fear and cast judgment on people we do not know. This will not help our society move toward health. Be safe and wise but do not think the worst of all the people you cross paths with today.”

I understand why Chief Schmaderer would advise folks to “be suspicious.” The police need our help in identifying problems in the city. And they don't want people to become victims. Very often, people ignore suspicious behavior because we don't want to get involved

or don't know what to do. If something looks suspicious, it's a good idea to call 911.

But that won't fix anything by itself. The true power of transformation comes in relationships. And unless we know our neighbors and are willing to take a risk to walk across the street to build a relationship with someone, we'll never feel safe.

In light of all of this, I want to invite you to join us at our September General Meeting on September 12. We're going to meet at California Taco this night and have a discussion around how to be good neighbors. We'll talk about what is going well in Gifford Park and what isn't. And we'll talk about our hopes for our neighborhood and some possible ways to get there. Please join us!

On another note, it has been great to see a growing group of folks gathering to play soccer in the park each evening. Maybe a Gifford Park Soccer Club isn't too far off!?

See you in the neighborhood.

Gifford Park Soccer Club

A few friends in the neighborhood are in the beginning stages of dreaming about a Gifford Park Soccer Club. If you've noticed a group of 15 or 20 folks playing soccer on the east end of the baseball diamond, you're watching history in the making! So far it's mostly men, but women are invited too! If this is something that you are interested in please give Pablo Saavedra a call at (402) 301-1573.



Editor's note: If you have news of interest to the Gifford Park Neighborhood, we encourage you to submit an article for the monthly newsletter. Editorials are subject to approval by the GPNA Executive Board. Please include your contact information. Articles may be submitted by email to jill.lynn.westfall@gmail.com.

20 years Gifford Park Tennis

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and Ari Manzo. Also during June and July, volunteer instructors Jim Wilson, Lou Harrison and the Stanley girls taught small group tennis lessons on Wednesday mornings in Gifford Park - this was the 6th year for this free program for kids with a strong interest in tennis. Because of Jim Wilson's years of outstanding dedication to Gifford Park tennis, we gave him a special "Most Valuable Player" award this year. Justine Stanley, 17 years old, was given special recognition for 12 years of perfect attendance with the August tennis program – great job! Justine gave a wonderful speech in front of everyone about her love of tennis and the people she wanted to thank – we included her words in this newsletter.

Special thanks go to Jan Franks, Brittney Rubek, Betty Slayden, Tyffaney Reichert, and Kayleen Tran for help with registration, awards and lots of other administration duties – the program could not happen without your help year after year. Thanks to Frankie Hamburger who (on very short notice) took excellent pictures at the finale. Thanks also to the Omaha Tennis Association, the Nebraska Tennis Association, the United States Tennis Association, and the City Parks & Recreation Department for their generous support (including restriping the courts!) over the years. We appreciated the encouraging words of wisdom during our awards recognition from Senator Sara Howard and Omaha Police

Officers. If anyone who participated in the tennis lessons is interested in more advanced lessons, please contact Chris Foster at 402-290-8187.

Lastly, I want to personally thank everyone who has been involved with and supported our Gifford Park Youth Tennis Program during the last 20 years. There are a few names mentioned above who have volunteered EVERY year – my wife Sallie, mom Jackie and sister Jenny, Roger Freeman, Kirk Peck, and Betty Slayden. Others who have contributed in a variety of exceptional ways are Ric & Jane Hines, Jim Wilson, Lou Harrison, Jan Franks, Bette Tanner, Tyffaney Reichert, Kayleen Tran, Buddy Hogan, Paul & Lindsey Johaneck family, Donnie Gildon, Scott Veitzer, Ed Hubbs, Bill Roach, John & Mary Schuele family, Stanley family, Susan Mayberger family, Nancy Gaarder, Vince Emery, Mike & Judi Caban, and Dante Simone. In particular, my sister Jenny had the great ideas from us volunteering with the Tennis Our Way inner city youth tennis program started by Dante Simone - he donated to us racquets, balls and support in the early going. A big thanks to the broader Omaha tennis community for its generosity and support. And last, I'd like to recognize my dad Willie who passed away a few years ago – he shared his competitive spirit, sportsmanship and love of tennis with our family and his many friends; my dad always left it all on the court.



10th Year of Youth Garden Program

By Chris Foster

Now in its 10th year, 2013 was another great year for the Gifford Park Youth Garden (GPYG) program. It began May 11 with our "Season Opening" event and ended with our "Pizza Garden Harvest Party" August 24. In between these dates we had over 60 registered youth participants gardening on 44 raised beds (each 30"x30" plots), a few children shared their plots. Amazingly there were no rainouts again this year.

Last newsletter I gave an update through week 10, here are highlights of the last five weeks of activities: Week 11 was Family Show and Tell. We had instrumentalists, singers, crafters, dancers, pet owners, and campers! Thanks to the families (Carlson, Purcell, Sara Stauffer and Tyline Cookman-Booth, Pierce, Stanley, Foster) who participated and shared their talents, skills, and knowledge with us, and special thanks to Rose Carlson for organizing this session. Mike Caban organized a Garden Scavenger Hunt for the kids, yo-yo's were given as prizes to the winning team members lead by Megan Kriegler. Week 12 we learned what to do with all of those veggies we're growing: Turkey Tacos! We welcomed the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) as our guest presenters for their "Cooking Matters" session. The kids learned the importance of healthful eating and the benefits of learning to cook! The kids also helped prepare the turkey tacos - adding, stirring, and grating ingredients. The presentation was educational, entertaining, and delicious! Week 13 we learned a great deal about seed saving from Betsy Goodman (she started Omaha's Common Soil Seed Library). Besides Betsy's leadership, Ali, Ricky, Matt, and Brent from Big Muddy Urban Farm spent the morning teaching us about the cyclical nature of seed saving and how to utilize this process in our own gardens. Week 14 was all about canning and preserving our harvest! Eric and Annemarie Noll and their sons Preston and Lucas taught us how to make refrigerator pickles - as well as a myriad of other vegetable/herb combinations! Big Muddy Urban Farm also helped the kids explore their garden for additional vegetables and helped provide preparation of vegetables and herbs for everyone! It was exciting to learn a quick, easy way to save vegetables for later use! And we learned about the wonderful benefits good nutritious food provides to our body and mind. Week 15 we celebrated another wonderful year of programs at the Gifford Park Youth

Garden on Saturday morning with a Harvest Party! We enjoyed homemade pizzas prepared by the kids and Big Muddy Urban Farm's Ali, Brent, Matt, Ricky, and Dan. Each pizza was topped with an assortment of bountiful veggies harvested from Big Muddy's Pizza Garden! While the pizzas were baking the kids participated in a Team Scavenger Hunt - the key was finding the (very small) toy frog! After all the pizzas were ready, we enjoyed each others' company while we enjoyed the harvest and sang "This Land Is Your Land"! At the end everyone received a refrigerator magnet of a youth garden photo, and another garden buck to spend at the Friday Night Neighborhood Market.

Tremendous THANKS to all our volunteers including but not limited to: Frankie Hamburger, Megan Kriegler, Rose Carlson, Sara Stauffer, Ricky Green, Aidan Hoehl, the Stanley family, Monica Lehn, Eric & Lisa Purcell, Dave & Jen Collie, Paul Pellerito, Jackie Foster, Sallie Foster, Big Muddy Urban Farm (Ali Clark, Brent Lubbert, Matt Cronin, Dan Egan) and the dedicated parents and family members who participate with their young gardeners. Special thanks to Mike Caban for his dedication to this program and the community garden project, neither would be the same without his leadership - thanks Mike! Please contact Chris Foster (402-290-8187 or foster3413@cox.net) or Mike Caban (402-341-4722, caban3321@cox.net) if you have questions about GPYG program.

Community Garden update

The dry (and lately hot) weather of the past couple months has again this year made for extra challenges with anyone trying to maintain a healthy garden, the Gifford Park Community Garden at 35th & Cass is in the same boat. Luckily we have benefited from having our own water supply to occasionally run sprinklers to water most of the garden areas including family plots, youth garden plots and flower beds.

Ours was one of a nine host community gardens during the recent 2nd annual Tour de Garden event Sunday September 1st, over 60 bicyclists took part. Participating community gardens on this bicycle tour included: City Sprouts, Farnam Farm, Dundee, Benson, Gifford Park, Root Down & Creighton Blue Jay, The Big Garden, John Pollack's Urban orchard, and Hands to Harvest. Of note, Matt Cronin w/Big Muddy Urban Farm made salsa for the Tour de Garden after party salsa contest (between each participating com-

munity garden on the tour) at the Benson Community Garden. At least 50% of the ingredients had to come from the community garden. "Gifford Park's Biker Bait" salsa was voted BEST SALSA! Thanks to Gifford Park's own Ricky Green for organizing the event again this year.

Our next pot luck dinner for our community gardeners, youth gardeners, volunteers and their families will be Saturday, September 14th at 5:00 PM Socialize, 5:30 PM Dinner at 35th & Cass Streets. Also special thanks to Roger Freeman for his special attention to the front flower gardens with weeding, watering and

maintaining them. And, Roger weeds and waters the Gifford Park flower beds – great work Roger!

We continue to have work nights Wednesdays 6 to 8 PM through the growing season. During these times water and garden tools will be available. It's a good time to stop by the garden to see what's growing or see neighborhood friends. Contact Mike Caban (402-341-4722, caban3321@cox.net) for garden plot information, and Chris Foster (402-290-8187, foster3413@cox.net) for any other community garden questions.

Gifford Park Neighborhood Market

Only four more weeks remaining before the "best neighborhood market" in Omaha comes to a close. This year we have some great vendors and every Friday evening this summer it's been a unique mix. The variety of products has included the market staple of fruits & vegetables but one can also find jams, pickled and canned goods, cheese from our neighborhood "Fromager," hand-made items, baked goods, vintage clothing, and the list goes on. We encourage you to stop down and visit. It's a great place to catch up with neighbors and friends while supporting a great neighborhood event.



A Look Back in Time - 25 Years of GPNA

The GPNA was formed in 1988, so in celebrating 25 years we wanted to reprint GPNA Chairman (President) Jim Windorski's Report – "Summary of first year of the GPNA" from the January 1990 newsletter. This article provides a historical perspective of the great efforts and dedication of the early GPNA founders, leaders and volunteers. Our neighborhood is forever grateful for their vision and commitment to building a great place to live, work, learn and play!!

"December 1988 – GPNA was named and boundaries were decided.

January 1989 – Bylaws were presented and discussed. Neighbors were invited to view preliminary drawings for 30th and Webster St. Medical office at St. Joseph's.

February – Membership fee established (\$3) and first discussion of proposed grocery store at 33rd & California. Our membership totals 9.

March – First meeting at St. Joseph's Seminar Room. Meeting changed to the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm.

April – First newsletter hand delivered to neighborhood. Members assisted city in sweeping of streets in our area. KOB (Keep Omaha Beautiful) kickoff on April 7, GPNA won the award of \$50. Our cleanup was April 15, persons on house arrest helped with our cleanup. We were given special assistance from Public Works Department. Met with Councilman Subby Anzaldo and appeared at city council meeting in support of JNJ Grocery.

May – Police Community Relations Representative attended meeting. Neighborhood concerns brought to their attention. Mayor Callinger presented \$50 from KOB. GPNA won \$100 at KOB Thank You. Members were invited to participate in Police ride-along.

June – GPNA met at park with Larry Foster, Parks, Recreation & Public Property Department to discuss needs in park. Representatives from Creighton University met with us at our June 1 meeting. Bylaws were approved. JNJ Grocery opened on June 2. Voted to support Ashford proposal to Joslyn Castle.

July – First "Neighbor of the Month." Proposed bylaw amendments.

August – Nomination for officers. Garage sale at Bogard Drug Building netted approximately \$800. John Lynch volunteered to make GPNA presentation for COX Cable Neighborhood Salute. Voted on bylaw amendment.

September – Mike Kohler of COX Cable announced we were the Grand Prize winners in the COX Cable Neighborhood Salute. We received \$1,000 and a one half hour documentary. Election of officers. Park improvements made: grading of bank, installation of picnic tables and grills. Lighthouse Pentecostal Church – 34th & Burt St. invited GPNA to pancake feed.

October – Councilman Subby Anzaldo was guest at meeting, drew winner of football raffle which netted Association \$368. Tickets were donated by Mr. Anzaldo. Mini-cleanup held at park on October 21. JNJ Grocery and 7-Eleven furnished hotdogs and drinks for workers. GPNA gave away about 250 pumpkins to neighborhood children.

November – Senator John Lindsay was our guest at November 2 meeting. Members of Joslyn Conservatory for the Arts were also present. Community Service Bureau of OPD meets with GPNA Board monthly. Christmas Lighting contest announced.

December – We were guests of St. Joseph's Hospital for Santa's visit on December 6. Guests at banquet at St. Joseph's on December 7, 48 members attended. A very large box of food donated to the Yates School Food Drive was collected at the banquet. Our members totals 166.

Reflecting on 1989 it is going to be difficult to accomplish as much in 1990, but I am sure that we will. With all the willing people who step forward we can't help but become better with added experience and effort.

The following are the priorities of the GPNA Board for 1990: Information to our neighborhood via newsletters and meetings; Revitalization of 33rd & California Business District; Additional Neighborhood Watch participation; Development of a Master Plan for Gifford Park improvements; Enhanced housing code enforcement in our neighborhood; Strengthening neighborhood pride and awareness.

We are going to start the New Year looking into recycling. Perhaps with the help of our city and others we could develop a recycling effort for our community.

It appears that the 30th & Webster Medical building will be started in 1990. This will be the first major development on the west side of 30th Street by Creighton University. An update of this project will be given at our January 4th meeting by Dr. Fred Salzinger.

Any suggestions, criticisms, or advice would be welcomed at any time. Please call me. Remember this is our neighborhood.
~Jim Windorski"

Gifford Park Mural Nearly Complete

The mural project with Kent Bellows Art Studios on the south wall of the KNJ Grocery Store at 33rd & California continues to take shape. The youth from Kent Bellows have received input from the neighborhood for design ideas to enhance our business district. The painting is nearly complete, so watch for details on a dedication ceremony coming soon.



Stop by and check out their progress!

Gifford Park in the News

Don't wait until it's written in the World Herald or reported on a local television station to find out about all the great things happening in the neighborhood. Lately, Gifford Park has had the attention of our local media outlets and giving us some great reviews and press coverage. Here's a list of a few of them:

SNAP Productions – Received a great review for the theatre production of *Other Desert Cities* on Wednesday, August 24th in the OWH.

Marrakech Gourmet – Received a great review and photos of their restaurant on Friday, August 16th in the OWH.

Roots Down Community Garden – Introduced themselves to us in an article on the front page of the Midlands Section Saturday, August 31st in the OWH.

Gifford Park Neighborhood Market – KMTV Channel 3 did a live broadcast from the market.

LOCAL – WOWT Channel 6 did an interview with Margie Magnuson and Chris Foster discussing the Good Neighbor Ordinance (Alcohol Ordinance) that they, along with others, worked hard on and now the city of Omaha has used for the first time.

50 Young Professionals – The Omaha Chamber of Commerce brought in 50 young professionals for a tour of the neighborhood and businesses in June.

Big Muddy Urban Farm - The Omaha World-Herald featured Big Muddy Urban Farm on the front pages of the Sunday, September 8th Living section.

Before you miss out on the next big story and you have to hear it from your friends, take some time and adventure around the neighborhood. We have so many great things happening in our neighborhood that it's a shame someone from outside Gifford Park has to remind us.



Community Bike Project Omaha

Charles Mitchell, Shop Manager

The Community Bike Project Omaha now has an outdoor repair station in front of the shop at 525 N. 33rd Street! The station, which is the first publicly located station in Omaha, includes a bike stand, hex wrenches, tire levers, wrenches, and a floor pump. As an important extension of the Bike Project's mission, this repair station makes bike tools available to the general public. It allows those who rely on their bikes as transportation to always have the tools necessary to keep their bikes running strong and neighborhood youth a place to top off their air pressure at any time. So whether you need to pump your tires, adjust your brakes, or dial in your derailleur, the Bike Project has you covered all day, every day. If you're still not comfortable working on your own bike, don't forget to stop by during our Open Shop hours to get some help or assist a volunteer mechanic.

Thanks to bands UUVVWWZ, No, I'm the Pilot, Mean Streets, and musician Simon Joyner for participating in the fundraiser that made the repair station possible!



Current Shop Hours:

Sunday: 3-6pm – Open Shop

Monday: 3-6pm – Open Shop

Wednesday: 6-8pm – Kids' Night +

Thursday: 4-6pm – Open Shop (16+ year olds)

Saturdays: Noon-2pm – Open Shop

Playground Cleanup and Celebration

The Gifford Park Playground is celebrating its one (and a half) year anniversary! Join us for a quick cleanup of the area and celebration!

What: Gifford Park Cleanup and Playground Celebration

Who: Open to the whole neighborhood

Date: Saturday, September 21

Time: 10:00 AM park cleanup
11:30 AM refreshments

Where: Gifford Park playground/shelter near 35th Ave & Davenport



At the garden



Justine Stanley Completes 12 Years of Perfect Attendance

These are the kind words Justine Stanley spoke August 28th after she received special recognition for 12 years of perfect attendance in the Gifford Park youth tennis program.

By Justine Stanley

"I just want to start off by thanking Jesus and each and every one of you for being a part of this moment with me. Twelve years might seem like a lot to some of you, but it's nothing compared to how many more years I plan to play this wonderful game. I'm a big sports fan, but there is just something special about tennis. Team sports seem like a great deal of fun. Having said that, when you're playing with a really good doubles partner, nothing is stronger than that bond. I have always been very fortunate to have at least three amazing doubles partners that I can always play with.

Truly, the reason I started to play tennis in the first place was and still is to spend more time with my sisters. It was all fun and games then. Now when we play, we really wear each other out. There really is no better challenge for me. We are all so equal, which is why they are my toughest opponents.

I also owe thanks to a lot of other people. Mr. Jim (Wilson), for being such a great friend. And for teaching me every dirty trick I know in the game. Mr. Roger (Freeman), for keeping me humble, honest, and for keeping me up to date on all the latest gossip. Ms. Jackie (Foster), for the constant encouragement to never give up. My Mom and Dad for always believing in me. Ms. Jenny (Waltemath), who taught me how to serve. And I think she has showed us all, that you can be a very tough opponent while remaining a very beautiful and soft spoken lady. Mr. Kirk (Peck) for never giving up on me, even when I couldn't hit a volley to save my own life. Mr. Donnie (Gildon), for teaching me how to remain so energetic, even when I'm losing. Mr. Scott (Slezak), because even though I just met him, he already taught me so many things about improving my game. Mr. Lou (Harrison), for being so blunt and honest with



me, with no fear of hurting my feelings. Ms. Jane (Hines) and Mr. Ric (Hines), for giving me my start and being some of the nicest people I know. Ms. Laurie (Bolte), for being so kind hearted and patient. Everyone at Hanscom Tennis Center. Plus a whole bunch of other people I have not forgotten, but I do wish to get to the cake (made by the Stanley family to celebrate 20 years of the tennis program). Last but probably the most, I would like to thank, Mr. Chris (Foster). He has supported me and been a great friend. And out of all the tennis players in the world, even the pros, I hope that I can play just like Mr. Chris. He is the best tennis player I know. Not just because of his amazing skill, but because of his never give up attitude and constant strive to keep improving. Tennis is something I will play for the rest of my life. But I will never forget where I first learned to play. Partly, because I will never stop coming to the program to help out. The last 12 summers have been remarkable. And I don't see why the next 12 should be any different."

Keeping the Gifford Park Neighborhood a great place to live, work, grow and play takes the constant efforts of neighbors like Roger Freeman. Roger, our unofficial park caretaker, recently recruited a few volunteers to help spruce up a few places around the park.



TOOL LENDING HOTLINE

Call Chris 290-8187

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



United Neighborhood Alliances of Omaha (UNAO) Forum

Please consider participating in one community forum this year and help neighborhood alliances identify the best way to serve your needs. Neighborhood and Alliance leadership was surveyed last month and now we want to hear from folks not affiliated with an association or group. The times and locations of each of the community forums are finalized and listed below.

Benson-Ames: September 11th, 7pm at the Benson Community Center

Midtown: September 17th, 6:30pm at the UNO Alumni House

South Omaha: October 3rd, 7pm at the Salvation Army Kroc Center

Northwest Omaha: October 10th, 7pm at the Northwest Precinct Headquarters

Southwest Omaha: October 17th, 7pm at the Millard Public Library

North Omaha: October 24th, 6pm at Turning Point Campus

For any questions, email the United Neighborhood Alliances at omahaneighborhoods@gmail.com.
About UNAO: The United Neighborhood Alliances of Omaha (UNAO) is a coalition of leaders from Omaha's six neighborhood alliances working to pave the way for a new era of neighborhood development and advocacy in Omaha after the February closing of the Neighborhood Center.



Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
 PO Box 31462
 Omaha, NE 68131



Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Membership Application

The GPNA Membership year runs from January 1 to December 31.

Type of Membership: Single (\$10.00) Family (\$15.00) Business (\$25.00)

Today's Date: _____

Name (person 1): _____ Email: _____

Name (person 2): _____ Email: _____

Name (person 3): _____ Email: _____

Name (person 4): _____ Email: _____

Name (person 5): _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Volunteer Opportunities! I'm interested in helping with....

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanup/Beautification | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Delivery | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Easter Egg Hunt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Block Captain | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Spring Cleanup |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Planting | <input type="checkbox"/> Fall Cleanup |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landlord/Tenant Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Watch Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Walks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Liason | <input type="checkbox"/> Call Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Banquet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tool Lending | | | |