



Gifford Park's Pride

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

November 2015

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

20"/15mm Bike BuildaThon!

By Charles Mitchell

As part of our mission to make bicycling accessible, the Community Bike Project strives to refurbish and distribute as many bikes as possible each year. In 2014 we helped overhaul 340 bikes and return them to the streets of Omaha. After the success of last year, we set a goal for 500 bikes in 2015. With two months left to go, we are close to our goal with 415 bikes already fixed up and providing transportation and healthy activity for youth and adults.

We need your help to reach our goal! From November 11 to December 11, we are seeking volunteers to help us build 85 bikes that will be donated to local nonprofits in time for the holiday season. That's 2,125 pounds of bike in one month! If you're new to bike mechanics, consider stopping by for an hour or two during Open Shop and help us refurbish a bike for donation. If you're an experienced wrench, you can pick up a bike from the shop, fix it at home, and return it on or before December 11.

**Next General Meeting
Thursday, November 12**

**Topic
Strategy for Gifford Park's Future
ONE Omaha**

**7:00 pm
CHI Health-Creighton University
Medical Center
Morrison Seminar Room**

On Friday, December 11 we will end our bike-raiser campaign with a final weighing and tally of the refurbished bikes and will have awards for the mechanics who fix up the most bikes (by weight!). Before the awards, from 4PM - 8PM, we'll be working against the clock to finish any last minute bikes. Join us on December 11 for some fastpaced bike building, food, and fun!

SAVE YATES!



Upcoming Event

**Tuesday, November 10
6:30pm**

**Please come to a
community meeting at
Yates Community Center**

**Refreshments will be served
(details on page 5 & 6)**

2015 GPNA Officers

Luther Larson, President

402-616-9350 | lutherlar@cox.net

Eric Purcell, Vice President

402-719-5108 | eric.purcell@crmlleaders.org

Jill Westfall, Secretary

402-213-3105 | jill.lynn.westfall@gmail.com

Alexandra Goswami, Treasurer

847-477-2156 | omaha_beef@hotmail.com

Board

Mark Trampe, At-Large

402-332-6188 | supertrampe@gmail.com

Andy Wessel, At-Large

402-916-5030 | ajwessel13@yahoo.com

Charles Mitchell, At-Large

402-309-0777 | charlesalexandermitchell@gmail.com

Marie Hélène André, At-Large

402-769-9183 | mhandre34@hotmail.com

Martin Janousek, Business Rep

402-558-4070 | mjjanousek@leoadaly.com

Chris Foster, Landlord Rep

402-290-8187 | foster3413@cox.net

Opportunities – Contacts

GPNA General Meetings

Luther Larson, 616-9350

Community Bike Project

Charles Mitchell 309-0777

Community Garden/Youth Garden

Chris Foster 290-8187

Adventure Playground

Teal Gardner 402-875-1896

teal.gardner@gmail.com

Teen Market Garden

Cynthia Shuck 556-2090

dalilabush@cox.net

Gifford Park Market

Martin Janousek 558-4070

Yates Community Center

Susan Mayberger 557-2431

susan.mayberger@ops.org

Youth Soccer

Eric Purcell 719-5108

Youth Tennis

Chris Foster 290-8187

Spring Cleanup

Luther Larson 616-9350

2016 Officers, Board Nominees Announced

The GPNA Nomination Committee will present the following slate of officers and board members for the GPNA in 2016. Voting will take place at the November 12th general meeting. Please plan to attend since a quorum will be necessary for passage of this slate.

President -- Marie Hélène André

Vice President – Eric Purcell

Secretary – Eliza Perry

Treasurer – Alexandra Goswami

At-Large – Andy Wessel

At-Large – Charles Mitchell

At-Large – Luther Larson

Business Rep – Martin Janousek

Landlord Rep – Chris Foster

Community Garden Fall Cleanup

The unseasonably warm and dry fall weather have extended the growing season for some of our community gardeners. We had a garden cleanup Saturday October 24th. Volunteers cleared plants from their family plots and youth garden plots, weeded, mulched, moved compost piles, organized plant cages/fencing, and completed other tasks in preparation for “putting the garden to bed”. Rose Carlson provided hot dogs and cookies. Again this year thanks to Bob Hutton for “winterizing” our water supplies and backflow preventer in the community garden - this ensures water lines are free of water and pipes won't break. 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.

Save-the date!

Holiday Banquet



Thursday, December 3 - 6:00pm, Dinner at 6:30pm
CHI Health-Creighton Medical Center, Betic Dining Room

Join neighbors young and old for GPNA's 27th annual Holiday Banquet.

Must be a current GPNA member to attend.

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 brent.lubbert@gmail.com.

Gifford Park Neighborhood Market in Review

By Eliza Perry

Our season at Gifford Park Neighborhood Market could not have ended on a higher note. The Market partnered with Cure to bring Omaha's Backyard Chicken Show to our community on the last day. Avian flu regulations kept the birds from joining us, but we couldn't have had more fun dancing, squawking and celebrating all things chicken-related. Folks submitted their largest, smallest, and coolest eggs and Cure brought an electric skillet to fry up and judge the best tasting egg. Norah Purcell brought by far the smallest egg, while Allye Brooks took home the gold for largest. Competition was fierce among chicken callers, but judge Eric Purcell awarded Aderyn Lawse and Mike Caban the trophies for their impeccable chicken impressions. Kate Bodman and Claire Doll won the adult and child categories for best chicken dance, respectively.

In partnership with Yates Community Center and Omaha Community Bike Project, we hosted another 33rd Friday Block Party that drew even larger crowds than last year. The event featured Karen and Eastern European dance performances, a music set by the Hottman Sisters, crafts from cultures around the world, carnival games provided by Mike Caban, face-painting by Chelsea Taxman and Jenny Waltemath, and delicious food free to attendees from Selah's Sundries and Druk. Jim Kyler volunteered his decked out bus (no pun intended) replete with a balcony for anyone to sit atop and watch the festivities.

From June through September, we gathered weekly to showcase the handmade and homegrown products of Gifford Park and beyond, support diverse local entrepreneurs, and foster community. A giant and heartfelt thank you to all the volunteers and vendors that make this market happen. We are so excited to start up again next spring. In the meantime, reach out to the Market's manager, Eliza Perry (gpnmarket@gmail.com), to share feedback and your ideas for next year!



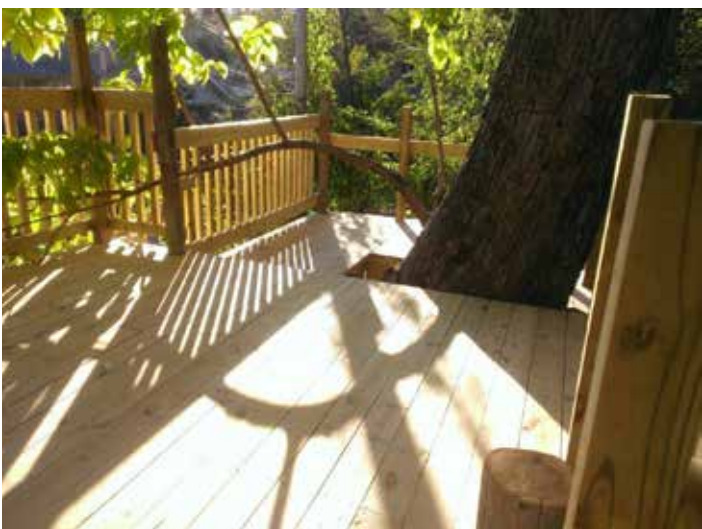
Community Garden Fall Clean-up



Community Garden Pumpkin Carving



Adventure Playground Treehouse Build



The Community Bike Project



Yates Community Center Update

The Yates Building located at 3260 Davenport is still providing early childhood programming for students and parent involvement programming for migrant and refugee parents. There are four Pre-K classes at Yates that serve approximately 70 students. There are 375 parents enrolled in the parent involvement programming with an average daily attendance of 180. The parent involvement programming is daily from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. This programming provides conversational English classes that includes topics such as parenting in the US, how to stay healthy and how to help your child in school. There are also two Family Literacy classes where parents that have young children come and learn English together with their children. The school also has a community garden in front of the building.

In addition to this programming, Yates is also available to the Gifford Park Neighborhood to use for meetings and other activities. There is a gym and 8 classrooms available. The school has hosted a Financial Literacy Class sponsored by Creighton, community meetings and Citizenship classes on Saturday. If anyone in the Gifford Park Neighborhood is interested in using the space for programming for students (Boy Scouts/ Girl Scouts, a basketball, etc.), they can contact Susan Mayberger, Building Administrator, at 402-557-2431 or susan.mayberger@ops.org to request a building permit. The building is open weekdays until 8:00 p.m. and Saturday mornings from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. for activities.

The new Gifford Park Elementary School

By Mike Caban

It's been a long hard road with many twists and turns, but thankfully the school bond passing last year assured that 17 million dollars are to be used for the construction and land acquisition for a new elementary school, here in the Gifford Park neighborhood. Those of us who have difficulty accepting no for an answer are very hopeful that Omaha Public Schools Administration and their consultants will be true to their words about exploring all options when it comes to the location where the school will be built. We have plenty of reason for concern that "group think" has already set in stone OPS's vision of the new school location without seriously considering our input, and we, the community will be relegated to decide color of halls, furnishings, and other cosmetic trivialities when they see fit to include us.

Our fear is that OPS plans to demolish the Henry W. Yates Elementary School building, on 32nd and Davenport, buying up surrounding housing stock to the west of the school, and building the new school on that footprint. Decades of experience at that location, for residents who have lived here and have witnessed the terrible and dangerous traffic problems with school buses

Continued on page 6

The new Gifford Park Elementary School

Continued from page 5

and parents' vehicles in the morning and at end of school day, we know this location will not be the safest for the 400 + children in attendance.

The community does not want the Yates building demolished. Especially when there's a better location potentially available on 32nd and Webster St. It is now owned by Creighton, who ate up housing stock in the neighborhood, buying out many of the homes between Burt and California, and 32nd to 30th streets, back in the early 90s... for parking. Everyone now knows they're selling the Med Center, and all that parking area (where homes once stood.) And who knows what will replace the hospital in the future.

Some of us have approached Creighton and OPS, hoping that something could be worked out between them, so that the new school could be built at that 32nd and Webster location. Needless to say, it's been like herding cats, trying to get these two bureaucracies to talk to one another. And there are some "whisperings" that actually OPS doesn't want Creighton to sell them the 3.3 acre parking lot on Webster St, mainly because they have committed themselves to demolishing the existing Yates building, and building the new school on that site. That way it eliminates having to keep the existing Yates building on the books, which wasn't in their plans (budget) from the get-go.

So, we are proceeding with the assumption of 2 possible options for the new School's location:

Option 1. (Our preference) The new "Gifford Park Elementary School" is built on the 32nd and Webster Street site. The Yates building stays and is used as it is currently, as a refugee/immigrant and pre-K learning center, and ultimately becomes a community center for the neighborhood sometime in the future... (our dream.)

Option 2. OPS demolishes the existing Yates building and builds the new school at the 32nd and Davenport location.

Either way, we win, because we get the new school for our neighborhood that we've been fighting for all these years, but sadly with option 2 we lose a historic building that could have continued to enrich the lives of children and adults in our community for years to come, as a community center.

Sure, we have high hopes for Gifford Park, some may say unrealistic hopes... but then 26 years ago a community garden with a children's summer gardening program was unrealistic; the mention of a neighborhood market on 33rd street would have been laughable back then; the tennis program, soccer, the block parties, the yearly cleanup campaigns, the Easter Egg hunts, the Yates/GPNA cultural events, the park beautification, the bike shop, the Holiday Banquet, one of the lowest neighborhood crime rates in the city of Omaha... all of that and more were just 'unrealistic' dreams in the summer of 1988. Look at us now!

A new safe school in the right location, with the right staff and resources, for our children and the future of our community, is very possible.

The School Effort

Here is what you can do:

Attend the community meeting on Tuesday, November 10th (starts 6:30) at Yates Community Center.

Attend the OPS Board Meeting on Monday, November 16th (6:30-7:30) at the TAC Building (3215 Cuming St.) to be a Gifford Park presence.

Have Omaha neighbors, family & friends sign letters of support. Call Matt at 402-515-2471 to receive a letter to sign.

Talk about this issue with neighbors, family & friends!

21st Annual Halloween Haunted House

Great dry, fall weather with cool seasonal temperatures around 50 degrees made for a nice 21st Annual Gifford Park Neighborhood Halloween Haunted House event held Thursday evening October 29th. On behalf of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA), a BIG THANKS to the Delta Zeta Creighton Sorority and the Phi Delta Theta Creighton Fraternity for organizing this very successful family fun neighborhood event! We appreciate their efforts to host the event at a new location (126 N 35th Street). In particular Maria Watson and Tyler Badding led their respective organizations. All activities and refreshments were free, they included the haunted house, face painting, popcorn, apple cider, baked goods, candy and other treats. Festivities started at 6:00pm and got scarier as the evening darkened. They guided children through the house to keep everyone in line! Thanks also to GPNA volunteers Mike Caban, Bob Hutton, Darryl Hutton and Chris Foster for handling Watch Group and safety duties. It seemed everyone including participants, parents and volunteers had a good time!





Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
 PO Box 31462
 Omaha, NE 68131

Place
 Stamp
 Here

**Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
 Membership Application**

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

Type of membership: ___ Single (\$10) ___ Family (\$15) ___ Business (\$25)
 Today's Date: _____

Business Name (if applicable): _____

Business Phone (if applicable): _____

Name (1): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name (2): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name (3): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name (4): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name (5): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Call committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Banquet | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Watch | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanup/Beautification | <input type="checkbox"/> Landlord/Tenant Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Distribution | <input type="checkbox"/> Tool Lending |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Memberships | <input type="checkbox"/> School Liason | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Planting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easter Egg Hunt | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Market | <input type="checkbox"/> School Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Garden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Walks | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer | |

Return completed form along with check or money order to:
 Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, PO Box 31462, Omaha, NE 68131.