



Gifford Park's Pride

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

March 2016

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

From the President

By: Marie H el ene Andr e

Spring is the air! No doubt about it. We have had such nice and warm days already... Gifford Park Neighborhood slowly awakens from a long and cold winter. It is like a revival: days are longer, sidewalks are busier, neighbors don't hide in their heavy winter coat anymore, some have even already started working in their front yard and garden, the playground and the soccer field are 'invaded' as soon as school is over and during sunny weekends...

As for me, I like to go for a walk in the neighborhood. Walking around, I get a chance to meet some of you, to enjoy the old houses, the park and its mature trees, to look at some changes too. I also have the opportunity to notice what is often left unnoticed during snowy days, and that could be improved... What if each of us took the responsibility of keeping our neighborhood clean and attractive? What if every resident picked up trash left on the sidewalks, the street curb, and even in the park? What if the park and its surroundings were clean for the Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 26th? You may say I am a dreamer... but wouldn't that be a great improvement for Gifford Park Neighborhood? I count on your participation!

As I said, our neighborhood slowly awakens from the winter, and we have a first event coming soon: a special meeting on Wednesday, March 16th at 6:30 pm at the Yates Community Center. Two topics are on the agenda: the potential Dual Language program for the new elementary school and the housing development on 32nd and California St.

Special Meeting

Wednesday March 16

6:30 pm

Yates Community Center
3260 Davenport St.

Presentations:

**Potential Dual Language Program at
New Elementary School
- Susan Mayberger -**

**32nd & California St. Development
- Steven Held -**

As you know, one of this year's goals for the GPNA is to get a resolution on the new elementary school. Not only do we want a resolution, it is also important to start thinking about the program(s) that could be offered to our children. OPS School Board Member Marque Snow has talked about our new neighborhood school having a Dual Language program. GPNA has invited Susan Mayberger from OPS (as well as a member of GPNA) to talk about what a Dual Language program is and lead discussion of: Who is it for? Why in our neighborhood? Are there other such programs offered in Omaha, and where? How successful are the children who attend that kind of program?... You will have the opportunity to ask (almost) all your questions during this meeting. So, please join us!

Our second speaker will be Steven Held from Uptown Properties. During our general meeting last month, Steven presented his plans for the housing development on 32nd and California Street. These plans raised a lot of questions from our neighbors.

continued on next page

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Opportunities – Contacts

GPNA General Meetings

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Community Garden/Youth Garden

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Adventure Playground

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teal.gardner@gmail.com

Teen Market Garden

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Youth Soccer

Eric Purcell 402-719-5108

Youth Tennis

Chris Foster 402-290-8187

Spring Cleanup

Luther Larson 402-616-9350

From the President

Continued from page 1

They shared their concerns about the general aspect of the proposed development, and more importantly about the ‘closed’ character of the housing, which goes against Gifford Park Neighborhood’s philosophy of openness and inclusiveness. Steven was impressed at the involvement of the neighbors in his project! On March 16th, Steven will present the changes brought to the original plans. This is another chance to ask more questions and reiterate our wishes.

We are a community who wants to have a say in the future its neighborhood! Please join us to this special meeting and share the invitation with others who might be interested!

Finally, I hope to meet you at the traditional Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 26th in Gifford Park. By the way, we are still looking for volunteers that day...

Happy Spring!

Second Vendor Meeting Scheduled for Neighborhood Market

If you are a current or prospective vendor of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Market please attend the next informational meeting on **Sunday, April 17th; 2-3pm** at Omaha Whole Living (521 N 33RD ST). A market planning meeting held last month brought together new and returning vendors to talk about changes in market layout, schedule of the market and best ways to promote the market.

Restore Omaha Conference Recap

Gifford Park Neighborhood Association had a booth at the Restore Omaha Conference that took place March 4th and 5th at the Metro’s Institute for Culinary Arts. At the conference, a diverse crowd of owners of older homes, developers, neighborhood advocates, interested first time home buyers and talented trades people shared stories and techniques for maintaining and restoring older homes, which Gifford Park has its share of. A big thanks to Chris Foster and Marie Hélène André for tabling and talking about how Gifford Park is “a great place to live, work, learn and play.”



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.lubbart@gmail.com.

A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, WORK, LEARN AND PLAY

By: Mike Caban

Here we are hanging on to our little village while the world rushes past. People running after that dream job in Denver, Dayton, San Diego. People in those places running after dream jobs in other places too. They run from one city to another chasing jobs and the American dream, rather than staying put and making that dream come true where they live. So, what happens to community when folks uproot every 5 or 7 years chasing the dollar? The fabric of community that we have sown into our national DNA appears torn apart in so many places anymore, that it's heartbreaking.

Here, in this small midtown village, inside the footprint of the Omaha map, we thrive as the world rushes by, running to this or that promise of a better, richer life. Meanwhile we, the stubborn folk that refused to accept the demise of our traditional little village concept, hold firm. Against all the odds, we haven't abandoned this old village for the comfortable escape to the bigger is better and safer and cleaner and away from 'those people' suburbia. We love the people our children grew up with here, and played with and fought with in the playground, and went to school with and prayed alongside of on the Lord's day.

Oh yes, they told us it was hopeless to stay here and fight the official neglect, knowing that all the smart city money and attention, at the time, was being poured into the west/southwest and other areas where corn and wheat and woods and wilderness once stood. Where many of our old neighbors now live, and their old homes here in the village were sold to absentee landlords who cut up their insides, into small, multi-occupancy dwellings, for rent, where a family once lived and children grew up and made friends, and played, and fought, and went to school, and prayed alongside our kids.

We're still here. Never give up or give in, this small but hearty group of stubborn villagers still stand firm together. We have weathered the storms of the turbulent 80s, and kept the village concept alive through the 90s, fighting throughout the new millennium years, always fighting uninterested politicians, timid law enforcement, apathetic school officials and corporate neighbors. Fighting for what we know to be our home, the place we love and cherish. Roots were set here and lifelong friendships made, and we refused to leave them. Isn't that what makes a community, a village, a family?

We learned that we, the villagers could keep the village going strong. So we rolled up our sleeves and did what city officials wouldn't do anymore. We cleaned up the streets, and the park, and planted trees, and flowers, and walked the old business district at night, and embarrassed the cops with our patrols. We made a stink and showed them that we, the people who were left here, we cared about our old village still. And little by little some officials came along for the ride. New younger folks started moving into our little village as the word spread, and they were pleasantly amazed at the family atmosphere in our old inner city villager. So, they have been chipping in and helping to keep our old village concept alive and growing stronger day by day. Now, some of the old neighbors who moved away, back in the day, have come back to visit and see how we thrive, and wish they had stayed in their old village that felt so much like home.

So, I hear that there's rumblings going around about the gentrification of this area. Seems like our success breeds greed, and some outside money folks would like to cash in on our years of hard work. Got news for you, folks. This old inner city village can't be bought. You mess with us at your peril. We like our old village exactly the way it is and has been going for years now, and the diverse people who make our village so special cannot be priced out. Not here in Gifford Park.

Save Yates. But Why?

By: Dr. Adrian S. Petrescu

Who, or what is Yates? And why save it?

Everyone has seen the signs. They are jumping at your attention from everywhere. We counted at least 45 of them on California Street, between 33rd and 36th alone, on either side. Yes, save Yates. Everybody must have heard of the campaign. Have they? When you walk or drive through Gifford Park Neighborhood from outside of it you may not even know the name Yates, let alone what it means. It is the Yates Community Center, currently located in the old Yates Elementary School, closed (as a school) since 1997.

Why save just an old building? What is wrong with replacing it with a brand new school?

If this were a graduate class (or an ideal exercise) in strategic planning, we should of course start with a stakeholder analysis, and continue by drawing the stakeholders' map, by interest and power. The next step would be broad and deep stakeholders consultation while minding especially those stakeholders affected disproportionately high with a disproportionately low chance of being heard.

But this is not a graduate class. We can nonetheless mind especially those stakeholders affected disproportionally high by the potential closing of the Yates Community Center, and who have the least chance of having their voice heard.

Building a new school is great. We have been waiting for this for a long time. It is where you build it that is the problem. Building it where Yates Community Center is would simply make the current Center go away. And why would anyone want to do that?

Why is the Yates Community Center important to Omaha, to Nebraska, and yes—even to the world?

In so many ways the community center at Yates

is unique. It offers programming to adults who need to learn English, to refugees, to children after school. It teaches and reinforces community values to many who would otherwise feel excluded or would not have the support they need to integrate in our diverse society.

On national news we hear almost every day sad terrifying news. We all too often hear positions that make us not proud at all anymore about our humanity. We hear positions which are

exclusionary towards others, which make us sound less human and more... simply not appreciative and respectful towards our fellow neighbors.

At such sad times in national politics, the center is a beacon of hope to so many. The center should really be in the national media as a model, as a prime example of who we truly are: supportive and embracing of diversity, accepting and listening to all and even more so to those in need of help to integrate, to feel welcomed, to feel included and respected.

This is what we stand for in Gifford Park Neighborhood. This is what we hope Omaha Public Schools (OPS) can understand and can help us stand by as our core values in our community.

It only makes sense. After all, a Nobel Prize winner, Alan Heeger, went to school in eighth grade at Yates Elementary School. He went on to discover and develop the electrically conductive polymers, an invention that will certainly mark centuries to come.

Richard Florida, the famed professor of urban planning, found how strong the correlation is between diversity and inclusiveness of a community and how much creative and innovative and thus successful economically through entrepreneurship that community may become. We have in front of us a prime example of that: a place of highly creative, innovative success in the making. An example of what Boston Massachusetts, Silicon Valley California,

continued on page 6

27th Annual
Gifford Park Neighborhood - EASTER EGG HUNT



Where: Gifford Park

When: **Saturday, March 26**
Noon (Rain or Shine!)

Who: Children Ages 12 & Under

Bring Your Easter Baskets!

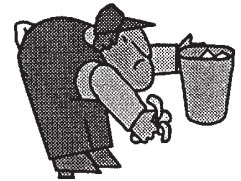


***Volunteers needed to help pickup litter in Gifford Park at 10:30am prior to the event

SPRING CLEANUP - Saturday, April 16, 9am to 2pm



**Neighborhood & Park Cleanup
 Trash Compactors in Gifford Park
 Membership & Donation Drive**



- * Neighborhood volunteers will monitor the dumpsters (NO commercial hauling!)
- * Items **ACCEPTED**: furniture, bulky items, appliances, metal
- * Items **NOT ACCEPTED**: yardwaste, rocks, concrete, paint, hazardous & toxic material
- * **Toxic materials** (paint, oil, pesticides, chemicals) can be taken to the *Under the Sink* facility near 120th & I Streets
- * **Tree brush** vouchers will be available
- * **Tires** may be dropped off for **FREE** at St. Vincent DePaul (southeast corner 22nd & Leavenworth)
- * **Tires** will be accepted at Gifford Park site at \$1 each
- * **Appliances** containing freon (refrigerators, A.C.) will be accepted at Gifford Park site at \$10 each
- * Gifford Park Neighborhood Association members will get highest priority for hauling items
- * If you can help with our neighborhood cleanup or if you need help hauling, please call:

Luther 402-330-3286 Chris 402-290-8187 Eric 402-719-5108

Community Garden/Youth Garden

This is the time of year folks start thinking about gardening. We are starting to plan for community garden projects and the youth garden program. Stay tuned for more updates in our April newsletter as spring approaches. If you have any questions or are interested in becoming involved with either the community garden or youth garden program, contact Chris Foster (402-290-8187 or foster3413@cox.net), or Mike Caban (402-341-4722 or caban3321@cox.net).

Save Yates, But Why?

Continued from page 4

or Austin Texas are all made of. We are after all Omaha Nebraska--a place maybe better than all of those combined. Let us keep Gifford Park Neighborhood and Omaha that way and let us continue to rip the benefits of diversity and inclusiveness over time. After all, it is up to us to show the world how much inclusiveness and acceptance of, and support for, diversity can mean and can improve the human condition itself.

Let's not tear down something that works. Let's keep Yates Community Center working and make it even better and stronger together.

We can simply build the "Gifford Park school" somewhere else. And why not, let's just call it "Alan Heeger Elementary School"...

Sallie Foster Adventure Playground Update

The Sallie Foster Adventure Playground will be hosting a few events prior to our official opening date of May 14.

1. A cleanup day! We will split into groups and give the playground a good sprucing up starting at 2 PM on March 19.
2. A birthday party! Jessyka (the dragon queen herself) will be having her party at the playground on March 26 at 2 PM. Come one, come all!
3. A volunteer training and orientation day. This date is TBD, but will occur in April. Look out for more info on that in the April newsletter!

The Sallie Foster Adventure Playground is a free, hands-on playspace in the Gifford Park Community Garden. We provide a supervised environment equipped with all kinds of creative fodder. Starting May 14th we will be open on Saturdays from 12-4PM.

Here is a current wish-list of materials to help us to prepare for the coming season of play:

Rope & string, Fabric for costumes, Fun hats, Masks, Acrylic paint, Paint brushes (over .5 inches in width), Nails, Hammers, Sand, Silver bubble wrap , PVC piping 3/4" width, A set of markers, Bamboo, Kid-sized work gloves, pool noodles, yogurt cups, c-clamps.

Please contact teal.gardner@gmail.com if you have any questions, or if you have a donation!

Gifford Parks Newest Members

GPNA Board and friends,

Mark & Sara Trampe are welcoming a baby girl to their family - Vivian Kathleen Trampe was born Friday 2/26/16 at 11:28am 6 lbs. 6 oz. 20.5"! Mark, Sara & Donovan - A big congratulations from Gifford Park!

Veronica Switzer and Grant Taylor are blessed to announce the birth of baby Sinoe. Born on Martin Luther king day Jan. 18th at 8lb 9oz and 21.5 inches. He is held and kissed daily by his Aunt Alex, Uncle Asit, Uncle Lowell and Aunt Erin who also live in and love the neighborhood.

Big Muddy Growers Academy

Big Muddy is offering two academies focusing on SOIL HEALTH and CHICKENS. Each academy is 5 sessions of in-depth discussion and activity, providing you with the essential skills and experience to improve your homestead gardening ability. Come to all five or drop in to one that is most interesting to you. For more info and to register visit bigmuddyurbanfarm.com.

Soil Health Academy

May 3 - Testing Soil and Soil Type
 May 10 - Techniques and Experiments
 May 17 - Compost, Manure and Teas
 May 31 - Nutrition Management
 June 14 - Cover Crops

Chickens Academy

March 30 - Choosing Varieties
 April 6 - Biology and Care
 May 11 - Coop Build and Release
 July 13 - Culling
 August 10 - Culinary

Witney Stanley is a finalist for Miss Teen Nebraska Pageant

Witney Stanley, 16, has been selected as a finalist for Miss Teen Nebraska pageant taking place on April 16th/17th at the Ramada Plaza CoCo Keys Resort.

Witney has participated and volunteered with most of our Gifford Park Neighborhood Association activities including the community garden, Youth Garden program, Friday Night Neighborhood Market at 33rd & California, the Easter Egg Hunt, neighborhood & park cleanups, park planting & mulching, the Youth Soccer Program, monthly newsletter stuffing & mailing, and of course the Youth Tennis program. Speaking of tennis, Witney has improved significantly over the years due to her talent, hard work and dedication, and the past few years she has been helping teach younger kids how to play tennis and demonstrate good sportsmanship.

She is also playing on the Central High School tennis team!

Witney's (and her family) volunteer efforts have help define not only the tennis program, but help define what our Gifford Park neighborhood is all about. She has made a big difference in the Gifford Park neighborhood with her positive attitude, hard work, and can-do attitude. Witney is an outstanding young woman who all of us in Gifford Park can be proud of. We are rooting for you Witney!



Get fresh and local vegetables, herbs and fruit every week of the summer from the Loess

Hills Collaborative CSA! We've partnered with Omaha Whole Living to provide a convenient pickup location in the Gifford Park neighborhood so your weekly bag of healthy food is only a short walk away.

For more details on how to join please visit our website

loesshillscsa.com

or pick up a flyer at Omaha Whole Living (521 N. 33rd St). Spring is coming!



Creighton Print Center
<http://printcenter.creighton.edu>

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 Murphy Building
 701 North 20th Street
 Omaha, NE 68178

creightonprintcenter@xerox.com
 tel 402.280.2515
 fax 402.280.2370





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.