

Gifford Park's Pride

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

November 2016

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

NEXT GENERAL MEETING Thursday, November 10th, 7:00PM

Bus Rapid Transit Todd Heistand - NuStyle Development and Hospital Building Transition

CHI Health-Creighton University Medical Center Morrison Seminar Room

Give Your Input on Hospital Redevelopment at General Meeting By Martin Janousek

What's happening with the old Saint Joe's (a.k.a Creighton University Medical Center, Alegent, CHI hospital? That's a frequent question members of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Board get when out and about in the neighborhood. Over the past year, it was announced that Creighton University would be selling the hospital and surrounding property. Prior to this, the GPNA was already working to secure land for a new school after hearing on the street that a sale of Creighton land was possible. Then this spring, it was announced that NuStyle, a local developer, would be purchasing the property. Over the summer, representatives from the board were invited to participate in a 3 day Charrette (Brainstorming) exercise from NuStyle and got an early look at what might take place with the hospital.

Well, come November 10th at 7:00 pm in the Morrison Seminar room on the first floor of the hospital you'll have a chance to be one of the first to see plans of what our newest neighbor, NuStyle Development plans to do with the hospital, surrounding parking lots and site. Todd Heistand of NuStyle will be presenting their plans and answering neighbors questions. This is a great opportunity for all of us to meet Todd and for him to meet you. We'll have a chance to learn more about this large project and how it will impact our neighborhood.

That same evening right after NuStyle does their presentation, we will also hear what the plans are for our BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) route. Representatives will be showing the route and explaining how it will work. Bring your questions, this should be a very informative and fun evening.

UPCOMING EVENT Holiday Makers Market Thursday, November 19th, 12PM - 4PM Yates Community Center (details on page 8)

2016 GPNA Officers

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Opportunities – Contacts GPNA General Meetings Marie Hélène André 402-769-9183 **Community Bike Project** Adams Blowers adam@communitybikeproject.org **Community Garden/Youth Garden** Chris Foster 402-290-8187 **Adventure Playground** Chris Foster 402-290-8187 Teen Market Garden Cynthia Shuck 402-556-2090 dalilabush@cox.net **Gifford Park Market** Martin Janousek 402-558-4070 Yates Community Center Susan Mayberger 402-557-2431 susan.mayberger@ops.org **Youth Soccer** Eric Purcell 402-719-5108 Youth Tennis Chris Foster 402-290-8187 Spring Cleanup Luther Larson 402-616-9350

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 gpnewseditor@gmail.com.

From the President...

'Join us!' These two words come to my mind when I look at the GPNA calendar of events for the end of the year.

Join us at the General meeting on Thursday, November 10, at 7 pm to learn more about two projects that will shape the future of Omaha, and of our neighborhood in particular: the BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) system on Dodge Street, and the re-development of Creighton Medical Center by NuStyle. You have heard about the re-development of the Medical Center for a few months, and it is now time to meet with the developers and ask questions. It is time to take part in the discussion, and let them know what we wish for our neighborhood.

There is yet another good reason to join us at the General Meeting: the elections!... Not the ones we have all heard about for so long... rather, our local election: the election of the GPNA Board members. We may not have made the national news this year, yet it is important for us to get your approval to carry out the GPNA mission to make our neighborhood a better place to live. (By the way, you have to be a member to vote for the GPNA Board... you still have time to pay for your membership...;-))

Join us at the Big Muddy Urban Farm Seed Raising event on Sunday, November 13, from 2 to 4 pm. You will learn more about Big Muddy Urban Farm and the new Aspiring Farmers.

Join us at the first Gifford Park Holiday Market, on Saturday, November 19, from 12 to 4 pm, at Yates Community Center: a fun event with vendors, music, and much more!

And finally, join us for the Holiday Banquet, on Thursday, December 1, to celebrate yet another great year in Gifford Park Neighborhood! I hope to meet you at one of these events... or at all of them!

Join us! Marie Hélène

Save-the date!

Holiday Banquet



Thursday, December 1 - Social at 6:00pm, Dinner at 6:30pm CHI Health-Creighton Medical Center, Becic Dining Room

Join neighbors young and old for GPNA's 28th annual Holiday Banquet.

*Must be a current GPNA member to attend.

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22nd Annual Halloween Haunted House

Unseasonably warm and dry fall weather with temperatures around 70 degrees made for a spooky 22nd Annual Gifford Park Neighborhood Halloween Haunted House event held Thursday evening October 27th. 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 (138 N 35th Street). In particular Nancy He and Hank Elbert led their respective organizations. All activities and refreshments were free, they included the haunted house, face painting, popcorn, apple cider, baked goods, pumpkin pie, 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, and even let a few neighborhood kids help in the haunted house! Thanks also to GPNA volunteer Mike Caban for handling Watch Group and safety duties. It seemed everyone including kids, parents and volunteers had a great time!



20"/16mm Bike Build-a-Thon By Adam Blowers

Our mission is to improve Omaha neighborhoods by promoting the bicycle as a safe, viable, and lowcost form of transportation. One of the ways we accomplish this is by getting as many bicycles distributed as we can. Last year we got over 500 bikes overhauled and back on the road, this year we aim to surpass that goal. However, we've got some work to do and we need some help. So from November 9th to December 10th we are hosting a Bike Build-a-Thon. We are trying to overhaul 100 bikes (that's about 2,500 lbs of Bikes!) that will be donated to other local non-profits just in time for the holiday season and we are seeking volunteers to help. 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 "foster" a bike (or 2 or 3!) from the shop, fix it at home, and return it on or before December 10th. On the 10th from 12PM to 6PM we'll be working against the clock to finish any last minute bikes, so join us for some fast and hectic bike building fun. We will end our bike-raiser campaign with a final weighing and tally of the refurbished bikes. On December 16th we will have a end of campaign celebration where awards will be given to the individual mechanics, shops, and teams who fix up the most bikes (by weight!). As always, we are looking for great volunteers to get involved. Stop by the shop or email me at adam@communitybikeproject.org to get involved.

SNAP! Productions' Hand To God

By Colleen O'Doherty

SNAP! Productions (http://www.snapproductions.com) located on 33rd and California, right by California Tacos, is putting on another thought-provoking and fun show. Our current production, Hand to God, by Robert Askins is a dark comedy about a confused Christian teenager in Texas whose life is taken over by a foul-mouthed Satanic sock puppet who is completely out of control. All hell will break loose at SNAP! Productions as this hilarious and provocative new comedy lands direct from Broadway, where the New York Times hailed it "flat-out hilarious" and the New Yorker called it "Sesame Street meets The Exorcist".

We welcome the Gifford Park community to come and see this wonderful, fun production. Performances are at 8pm Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays and 6pm on Sundays. The final performance is at 2pm on Sunday, December 11th. We have student rush tickets for students who arrive 20 minutes early with a valid student ID. Check out our website or e-mail us if you are interested in getting involved. We're thrilled to be in the center of such a wonderful community. We look forward to seeing you all!

2017 Officers, Board Nominees Announced

The GPNA Nomination Committee will present the following slate of officers and board members for the GPNA in 2017. Voting will take place at the November 10th 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 L At-Large – Brent Lubbert At-Large – Tyler Magnuson Business Rep – Martin Janousek

Landlord Rep – Chris Foster

Yates NICE Program and New Artwork Ceremony

Photos below are from an event ceremony at Yates Community Center Friday, October 14th at 3:00pm where artist Therman Statom, Yates Building Administrator Susan Mayberger and others helped to unveil this great art work with the NICE (Native Indigenous Centered Education) program teachers and participants enjoying this beautiful artwork (stone/glass benches in a circle, and iron turtle which will be worked on further with involvement from the children in the program). PBS was there also to film this event and program.



National elections come and go, neighbors and neighborhoods stay. Forever.

By Adrian S. Petrescu

Every four years there is a spike in voter participation. It is a well-known and guite well researched fact. In these United States everyone is on average so much more interested in presidential elections than in any other elections, be it for House of Representatives or the Senate, or be it for local and state elected officials. This is of course simply silly, because so much more depends on local and state officials and what they decide than how we are impacted here locally by what the President of the United States decides, whoever she or he may be. It is true nonetheless.

As I write these lines we are at that time in November of every forth year. We don't know who will win the election for president of the United States yet. By the time this would be read we might know though. I will submit that in spite of all the hype who wins the presidential election doesn't really matter, after all. It does matter, of course. Thus vote. Get well informed and vote. Yet, it doesn't matter who wins in the presidential election as much as it matters who wins in every other election than that one.

A simple matter of perspective

In the United States there are over 89,000 local governments. Inside these, in places such as Omaha organization is further distributed at neighborhood level. We can probably safely assume that there must be 1,500,000 neighborhoods or their equivalent in the United States. Gifford Park is one of these many. Ours. One of the best nationwide.

We all too often forget the very core beauty of American democracy—the experimenting nature and beauty of federalism. Most decisions are taken locally. Most things that matter to us on a day-by-day basis are decided locally, and not in Washington D.C. Not even in Lincoln as much as they would like it to. In Omaha instead.

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Washington DC decides (or not at all). Property taxes and cost of a building permit affect us more as well. All these other following things matter more and more often: responsiveness of OPPD when one lists a broken street lamp, the Mayor's hotline response time, and the effectiveness of the city contractors' in collecting the garbage or filling in pot holes, or organizing large-size waste collection, or it will be all about removing snow very soon...

What gets developed in the neighborhood and how will it be done matters. NuStyle Development consulting us all in their planning for the old Creighton University Medical Center matters. Saving Yates Community Center matters. The place where and how the neighborhood school will be built matters to us more still.

As we approach winter, we are coming away from summer and we finally see some autumn weather, With Halloween just behind us and with Thanksgiving ahead, and new year soon to come after that, it is that time of the year when neighborhood elections just knock at the door. That time of this year, as of every year and not just of every forth year, when we can take a step back and take stock.

The grass is greener... on the side that you water

To get engaged in what happens in politics is all too often and for all too many an every four-years thing. Every four years (OK, every two years after all, but more so every four years) the lawns are filled with campaign signs, and the airwaves get all too full of campaign ads. The radio and TV stations ads revenue budget must go through the roof. Campaign ads become like pumpkin spice. Elections spirit is just everywhere. Chevrolet dealerships run election themed ads just to be in sync with the trend. The beer companies mock campaign ads making their own "party" as well. Every candidate is first better than his or her opponents. As election day comes nearer, then every opponent becomes so much nastier than the candidate paying for the ad, or who is promoted by the super Political Action Committee

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Gifford Park Neighborhood School/Save Yates Effort Update

By Chris Foster

Here's an update on Omaha Public Schools (OPS) plans for our new neighborhood elementary school on the parking lot property near 32nd & Webster. On Thursday October 20, several of us neighborhood representatives met with Omaha Public School (OPS) officials to discuss in some detail the new school planning & design process overview and timeline, our community role, and determine if we (the community) should have our own separate "planning design" meeting in the coming weeks. We felt we do not need to have our own meeting, and instead focus our community efforts on the OPS-led upcoming community meetings in January. Here are some other items discussed:

-We will identify 3-5 community representatives (must be committed & passionate) to be on the Educational Specification (ED Spec) committee.

-The Educational Specification (ED Spec) committee will also include 2 principals for a total of 6-8 people.

-Ed Spec committee will meet every week during January-February, then less often after that -Other "teacher specialists" (IT, PE, Math, Nutritionist, etc.) will rotate in.

-A large community meeting will occur in the beginning (2nd or 3rd week in January) to describe the process, the Ed Spec committee, and community input opportunities...And there will be a community meeting later in the process to ensure transparency and hopefully buy-in. We will get out the word to appropriate neighborhoods (fliers, newsletter, email, social media, meetings, events, Kellom Elementary, etc.) to promote these community meetings.

-School capacity plans to be about 450 (could change a bit depending on attendance boundaries, programming, curriculum).

-Final outcome will be a published narrative with areas of focus, etc. and will go before OPS Board for approval.

-Important factors will be to keep an open mind about potential school functions, flexible & future uses, technology, instructional models, urban school design, etc.

-Yates Community Center building and programming will continue as it currently functions.

Current OPS planned schedule for new Gifford Park neighborhood elementary school is: Jan. 2017-Sept. 2017 – building design Oct. 2017-Dec. 2017 – construction procurement Jan. 2018-July 2019 – construction Aug. 2019 – move in



We look forward to partnering with OPS to design the best school possible from all angles – physical design (building footprint and urban design & architecture to fit in with our neighborhood); safety; walk/bicycle routes; car/bus/transportation traffic routes & parking; curriculum/programming (i.e. potential magnet for dual language, STEM, STEAM, agriculture, economics, other magnet focus); student assignment plan for the new school attendance boundaries; PTA/PTO; principal selection; proper technology & resources; etc. We will inform everyone of upcoming opportunities to provide community input – stay tuned!

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Eagle Scout Monarch Butterfly Project

By Curtis Flint

Hello this is Curtis Flint and I am glad to say that I have completed my Eagle project. But I could not have done it without the help of the people that live here. During the project 52 people came! And a total of 154 hours of work were completed. My project consisted of creating Monarch butterfly habitats with interpretive signage and a park clean up. The butterfly habitats are located in the east park and the community garden. In the east park there is one by the apartment buildings and one on 34th street. And the habitat in the garden is located on the east side. Since the project I have seen a couple Monarch butterflies and caterpillars, build it and the will come! Over all my project was a huge success thanks to all of the hard work that everyone put into it.





Letter to a Neighborhood Teen from GPNA President

Dear Curtis,

On behalf of Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, I want to thank you wholeheartedly for choosing to develop and implement your Eagle Scout project—the creation of habitats to protect and save the monarch butterflies—in your neighborhood, Gifford Park. I also want to congratulate you for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

Throughout your project, you demonstrated outstanding leadership: you developed and managed your project in a timely manner, you built strong and reliable relationships with all stakeholders (Board members, authorities, neighbors and volunteers), you showed excellent communication skills, and your enthusiasm and passion are contagious. Even though you encountered some drawbacks, you managed to recognize them, and adapt accordingly.

You are a True Eagle Scout and an inspiration to others: trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind and cheerful. Therefore, I will recommend to the Board of Gifford Park Neighborhood Association extending to you an invitation to serve with the Board as special adviser and liaison officer with the neighborhood youth.

Congratulations! Keep up the good work!

Marie Hélène André President, Gifford Park Neighborhood Association



Holiday Makers Market at Yates Community Center By Eliza Perry

The Gifford Park Neighborhood Market (GPNM) is excited to present our very first holiday market! Join us at Yates Community Center on November 19, between 12-4pm. Most of your favorite regular GPNM vendors plus lots of new folks! Come with an empty stomach to fill with Cure's famous pulled pork sandwiches, Scratch's artisan doughnuts and pies galore, and SO MUCH MORE. Support local makers and gift all of your family members with our diverse array of locally-made crafts.

Don't miss live music form 1-2pm! Gifford Park Neighborhood's own Topher Booth on guitar with his gorgeous voice, and Jessica Hanson on violin. The duo go by Nation and they make extraordinary sounds. We are thrilled to have them play the market again after a stellar performance in their former band Omaha.

Get in touch with Eliza Perry at gpnmarket@gmail.com if interested in vending. See you all soon!!

National elections come and go, neighbors and neighborhoods stay. Forever.

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or organization wanting that candidate to win. Our mailboxes get filled with colorful pictures for the "right" candidate or black and white grim looking pictures for the other not-so-good candidate. This is for the most part for people running for national elected office. The higher the office the fancier the printed materials are. This is because all those campaigns generally have more money than local or state candidates. Let's just look at the way the electoral materials got to you. Mailed in means they have more money. Hand-delivered means they have less money and they actually asked a campaign student volunteer to walk the fliers to each door.

Read everything you can. Go online. Look up all the candidates. Peruse "votesmart.org" and other such sources. Go vote. It matters. Less than local and state races, but it does matter.

Then come to the GPNA meeting and vote again. Vote for what matters for us here. Vote this time for the GPNA board slate. I know, I am somewhat biased. The board this year did a great job, in every way possible. It will continue to be here next year no matter who wins in Washington D.C.

In this year of so much political turmoil in national elections there is a clear message we should read. Get involved. Every day. Not just every four years. Every day. Civic engagement is never an election cycle thing alone. It is the day-byday participation in the things and decisions that matter. Where they are made. It is holding elected officials accountable to what they promised to do when the time comes for them to do those things.

Curtis Flint is now an Eagle Scout. We know. We were there. Roger Freeman was there. Chris Foster couldn't make it as he was busy in the neighborhood doing some other activity, but he was there in mind and soul. Curtis Flint does not vote yet. Yet, Curtis Flint gets involved almost every day. With his incredible energy and passion, and with his dedication and positive spirit and attitude, he shows us all what being engaged means.

I promised I will not say anything political but I can't resist. In our state I should be allowed, with Lincoln the name of our state's capital.

"A child is a person who is going to carry on what you have started.

He is going to sit where you are sitting, And when you are gone,

Attend to those things which you think are important.

You may adopt all the policies you please, But how they are carried out depends on him. He will assume control of your cities, states and nations.

He is going to move in and take over your Churches, schools, universities and corporations....

The fate of humanity is in his hands." (Abraham Lincoln)

Let's water the grass in Gifford Park Neighborhood. Metaphorically, and sometimes literally too. Day in and day out.

It's been a good year in Gifford Park Neighborhood and "many things are growing on."

We got used to forever better and stronger year after year of activities and creative ways for everyone to get involved. This last year was no exception. Next year will more than likely beat this year. We take so many things for granted. That is good. It is reassuring and we need that.

Chris Foster will keep the tennis program growing. Chris, Martin Janousek, and Eliza Perry, and our many vendors, with so many new ones this year, will keep the summer market growing. Rain or shine. Guaranteed. Not even "flash floods" were able to close the market this past year. Now, along with Susan Mayberger of the Yates Community Center with her kindness and willingness to always welcome the neighbors at the Center, we'll have for the first time a holiday

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Community Garden/Adventure Playground Updates

Can you believe this warm and dry fall weather, how long can it continue? At the time of this article, some community garden plots are still producing vegetables. A big thanks to EVERYONE who volunteered and participated on Saturday Oct 22 in fall activities at the community garden and Adventure Playground. We started off the morning cleaning out the youth garden plots and collecting any remaining vegetables. We then carved & painted pumpkins (donated by Trader Joe's). A bit later

we had an awesome scavenger hunt (organized by Jasmine Frierson). We finished the day off with building a bonfire, roasting hot dogs & marshmallows (along with other pot luck food) and watching the movie Ghostbusters. Besides Jasmine, thanks to other volunteers Monica Lehn, Paul Pellerito, Jenny Waltemath, the Stanley family, the Manzo family, Matt Cronin, Eliza Perry and Mike Caban. We plan to open Adventure Playground on Saturdays 2-6pm until the weather gets cold. 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.











National elections come and go, neighbors and neighborhoods stay. Forever.

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market indoors at Yates, on November 19. We'll make this one a future tradition too. This simply complements the dance that Big Muddy just organized October 28th for the Harvest Festival. We'll expect this one and others to happen next year too. The children dancing on the side were the absolute cutest. We can't wait to see their new school designed and built. Eric Purcell will still instill inspiration in young soccer aspirants to become the next Lionel Messi of Omaha. Even from afar now Teal seeks to keep the great Adventure Playground alive and well. And it will stay so. Charles Mitchell's departure didn't leave any missed beat with Adam Blowers taking over the bike shop right away and continuing the great work there into next year. It makes me wish I were a child again to make my own bike too. The community garden will be there and wait for us to plant again next spring even better than before. Mike Caban will once again organize it and watch it and be helpful to everybody. The children will enjoy the easter egg hunt again, rain or shine. They will keep making bikes and they'll enjoy every other great activity. Maybe there'll be even more activities to come this coming year. We will most likely see the Tibetan monks again this coming year, just as we did this year, in much part thanks to Clarinda Karpov and Richard White and of course Boys Town's continued niceness. The monarch butterflies will certainly stop by at Curtis Flint's patches of milkweed. Meanwhile, in our own front

yard there'll be certainly tulips again and later on sunflowers. Big Muddy will start its first residency program in January and we will all work to keep up the organization for the Neighborhoods USA conference coming to Omaha and to Gifford Park Neighborhood in May. Folks from the neighborhood already impressed all the future guests and some of our own city officials when we hosted just last month a little get together over a potluck when the NUSA forward delegates were visiting town in preparation for May's conference. Did I say Brent had another opportunity to let everyone know about the urban farmer residency program? Ah, while the national news media kept helping candidates make our election choice harder and harder every day, it was absolutely great to take a break one day from everything and walk around the neighborhood along with Chris, Martin, Cynthia Shuck, Clarinda and Marie Hélène to show off a little. We are working with Bob Henrickson and Justin Evertson of Lincoln to designate and help make Gifford Park Neighborhood into an educational arboretum. They were impressed with everything they saw and heard and they too most likely will be back again this next year with more good news.

"Many things are growing on" in Gifford Park neighborhood, as Brent Lubert proudly declared (slip of tongue, but a really good one!) the other day at the Harvest Festival. We loved it, Brent. We could make it the motto! If I may paraphrase, many great people and things are growing on here. Thank you all for everything you do to make all of it happen! Please keep on keeping on, for another year. Neighbors and neighborhoods stay. Every year, every day, forever.

Big Muddy Urban Farm Harvest Festival Contra Dance on Oct 28th







Gifford Park Neighborhood Association PO Box 31462 Omaha, NE 68131

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