



Gifford Park's Pride

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

April 2017

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

The "Original" Community Bicycle Project Omaha

At a time when our city and business leaders are looking for ways to attract and keep young professionals in Omaha, we often overlook small success stories that don't make the front page of the paper or a well-funded marketing campaign. Our city looks for "Change Agents" or big developments as the only way Omaha can entice the elusive young entrepreneur to think of Omaha as a place where they can thrive and make a difference in the world.

Years ago, before there was a place called "Midtown" and back in the early 2000's, there was a little house with a big impact. The house was located at 3212 Webster Street in the Gifford Park Neighborhood, and in a part of town where most people in Omaha were afraid to visit. It was a house where college students lived, some going to Creighton University and others trying to figure out their place in the world. It wasn't a perfect house and some of the activities that took place weren't something an antiseptic suburb would tolerate, but it definitely created a unique cultural vibe in the Gifford Park neighborhood. The house was an incubator of ideas and causes. It was a place for the young college age residents to question the status quo. Looking back, it was a place that nurtured future leaders that our neighborhood benefits from today and quite possibly other communities around the country.

It was in this house that the original Community Bicycle Project Omaha (CBPO) got started by Emerick Huber, a Creighton University student. Before we had our current Community Bicycle Project Omaha located at 525 N. 33rd Street, Emerick, along with others, would fix and give away bikes to neighborhood children out of the

EASTER EGG HUNT

Saturday April 15

more information on page 8

GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, May 11, 7:00 pm

SPRING CLEANUP

Saturday May 20

more information on page 8

house's detached garage, a garage where the door didn't close or lock. When the garage began to over flow with donated bikes and spill out on to the drive, it was then susceptible to thieves and the garage would get "cleaned out". Over time, Emerick eventually came to some Gifford Park Neighborhood Association members and worked out a deal to move the young shop to a more secure location. The only request from the building's owners was to expand the bike fixing program and be an agent of positive change for the neighborhood in exchange for free rent. Today, Emerick no longer runs the bicycle shop at 525 North 33rd street and has since graduated from Creighton University and lives out of state. Over the years, shop managers, many volunteers, and their now non-profit board have taken the Community Bicycle Project Omaha to new levels and have had a big influence in the lives of many inner city children developing bicycle skills, mentorship, and giving them a sense of community. The bicycle shop will be celebrating

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Opportunities – Contacts

GPNA General Meetings

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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

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Gifford Park Market

Martin Janousek 402-558-4070

Yates Community Center

Susan Mayberger 402-557-2431

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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

You may wonder what the GPNA Board members do during the long winter time in Gifford Park Neighborhood... We are usually busy planning and preparing the new 'season', with all its events and programs. We will launch our new season on April 15, with the traditional Easter Egg Hunt in the park (rain or shine...), followed in May by the opening of the Community Garden (May 13), the Tennis Block Party (May 17), the annual Spring Cleanup and the start of the Youth Garden Program (May 20), the Neighborhoods USA tour and the opening of the Neighborhood Market (May 26) ... and this is just the beginning! ☺

Of course, some board members and neighbors are also involved in the Educational Specification committee: they have already met several times -with and without OPS representatives- to discuss about the new elementary school in our neighborhood.

But there is one thing I want to tell you about, one thing that shows what Gifford Park Neighborhood really stands for: a welcoming, friendly, diverse and inclusive community. We already have the welcome signs in our front yards, but what about going the extra mile to really show the newcomers we care?

That is exactly what Eliza Perry and I did during the winter: we visited a couple of families who moved in our neighborhood recently. Think about it... For some, moving may mean just a few miles from their original home, or it may be to a different city. For others though, moving is a long, very long journey to another country, or even to another continent... For all of them, the journey ends here, in Gifford Park Neighborhood, where they will start a new life and make new friends. Some of them will discover a new culture and learn a new language. They all come from very diverse horizons, and like any of us, they have fascinating stories to tell. They have children and teenagers who, hopefully, will soon take part in all our programs, make new friends, play and grow here.

Wherever they come from, whatever their journey to Gifford Park Neighborhood was, we want them to know that they are welcome, that we value their presence in our community, that we will be happy to meet them more often and learn from each other, and that they are in a safe neighborhood.

We still have a couple of families to visit, and maybe others will still arrive. We will continue to go the extra mile to welcome new members in our community, and I am sure I can count on you too to help these families feel 'home' in our neighborhood!
Happy Easter!

Marie Hélène

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.

Community Bike Shop Update

By Adam Blowers

The shop has really picked up in the last month. We got a nice visit from Warren (pictured) who was on his way to Albuquerque, New Mexico from North Dakota. Warren read about the shop and neighborhood online and rode all night from Sioux Falls to be able to get to the shop in time to get his bike repaired. Warren was impressed with the murals in the neighborhood and the help he received from Mohammed the Bike Shop Legend. Mohammed helped during all of the open shop hours on Saturday to get Warren's bike back into road shape. We wish Warren luck on his travels and maybe one day he'll cross our path again.

ExhiBIKEtion was a huge success! We had a really great turnout and some amazing pieces of art. We even had a few youth volunteers who submitted art that sold. This the third year we have had ExhiBIKEtion and it seems to just get better every year, so we're definitely looking forward to next year's show.

The next big thing for the shop is a joint bicycle giveaway with ABIDE. We are currently refurbishing 200 kids' bikes to give away during Keep Omaha Beautiful Day on Saturday, May the 6th at the ABIDE campus located at 3223 N. 45th St. This will be the biggest single bike giveaway we have ever done. We are still working on refurbishing the bikes so if you have time and want to work on a few kids' bikes, come down to the shop or email Adam at info@communitybikeproject.org



Gifford Park Cleanup & Trimming with Creighton's Phi Delta Theta Fraternity

On behalf of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, THANK YOU to the Creighton Phi Delta Theta Fraternity for having over 60 guys volunteer Sunday, March 19 to do a variety of duties in Gifford Park, Turner Park North, and a nearby alley. Special thanks to Patrick Dougherty for organizing his Phi Delta Theta Fraternity guys. Also, a thanks to the City Parks Department for dropping off the piles of mulch a few days prior near the park flower beds. We trimmed, weeded and mulched the identity, flower & rose gardens and around some of the park trees; picked up litter (in Gifford Park and Turner Park North); deep-edged the perimeter around the concrete playground sand-pit area; and cleaned up a nearby alley. The park looks pretty nice!



Gifford Park Community Garden Update

By Chris Foster

This is the 17th year of the Gifford Park Community Garden, located at 35th & Cass, and we are getting ready for the new planting season. Thanks to about a dozen St. Margaret Mary's seventh-grade volunteers on Saturday April 1 for cleaning and weeding some of our flower beds and working in our composting area. Big Muddy Urban Farm resident, Taylor Jespersen, and I gave them an educational tour of the community garden, chicken coop and Adventure Playground. Thanks to Tyler Magnuson for doing some much needed pruning of our espalier fruit trees (4 each apple and 4 each pear). At the present time, we have a couple of available garden plots for renting, please contact Mike Caban (402-341-4722, caban3321@cox.net) for more information on plots.

The Gifford Park Youth Garden (GPYG) program will be kicking off its 14th year. This free program teaches youth of all ages how to grow our vegetables, prepare, eat, and share our harvest with others. Plus, we'll be creative with art, music, and poetry; explore our natural environment; and have fun while working together and getting our hands dirty. On April 1 some of our GPYG volunteers met at Big Muddy Urban Farm Residency House to begin planning for this year's program.

Here is a list of some known and potential projects/events/activities that we plan to do:

- Garden & Adventure Playground Season Opening event (Saturday, May 13, 10am - Noon)
- Youth Garden Program (Saturdays 10-11:30am, May 20-August 26)
- Adventure Playground (Saturday afternoons, May-October)
- Pot Luck dinners
- Wednesday evening work nights (6-8 pm during the growing season, mid-April through September)
- Garden tours (get people familiar with different parts of the garden)
- Theme garden maintenance (roses, butterfly, senses, perennial, front wall & parkway, herb, berry bushes, etc.)
- Compost bins – turn over compost pile
- Planting & weeding (on-going)
- Chickens care

Let me know if any of the above interests you,

and if you have any questions or ideas with the community garden, contact Chris Foster (402-290-8187 or foster3413@cox.net).



Restore Omaha Conference 2017

Gifford Park Neighborhood Association had a booth at the Restore Omaha Conference that took place March 3rd & 4th at Metro Community College'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. GPNA and Big Muddy Urban Farm had a nice display how Gifford Park is "a great place to live, work, learn and play."



What's Midtown on the Move?

Hi everyone. My name is Andy Wessel and I live in Gifford Park with my wife Leslie and our 4 kids, Nora, Jonas, Manny, and Hank. Living in Gifford Park makes it possible for us to only own one car (which is a big part of us being able to afford to have four kids).

In my day job at the Douglas County Health Department, I'm working on a related effort called Midtown on the Move, and I wanted to tell you how Gifford Park residents can be involved.

The purpose of Midtown on the Move is pretty simple – encouraging people to switch one trip a week. By switch a trip, we mean to leave the car behind and walk, bike, bus or rideshare instead.

The reasons why to give it a try are pretty simple too – neighbors being out and about creates an active street life which supports local businesses and the type of personal connections that makes our neighborhoods safer and more vibrant. Plus leaving the car at home is a way to build in some physical activity (which helps our stress levels and the fight against chronic diseases) – while also keeping down traffic congestion and pollution.



Midtown on the Move will be starting April 28 and running through June 30 in four neighborhoods – Gifford Park, Joslyn Castle, Blackstone, and Leavenworth. Help show the rest of Omaha what makes Midtown great (and win prizes from local businesses) by signing up at midtownonthemove.org.

Hope to see you out and about over the next few months,
Andy Wessel

P.S. If you want some personal guidance on how to switch a trip, contact Shelby Braun, the Midtown on the Move navigator, through the website above, or connect with an experienced GP neighbor (including Daniel Lawse at daniel@verdisgroup.com & 402-547-8372 or me at andy.wessel@douglascounty-ne.gov & 402-444-7225).



Saturday, April 8th

Open House

10:00 - 12:00 pm

Open Fields (volunteer work party)

12:00 - 3:00 pm

3320 & 3322 Burt Street
Omaha, NE 68131



NEXT BIG MUDDY URBAN FARM EVENT:

Omaha Gives!
Potluck

Wed, May 24th @
5:30pm

3215 California St.

OPEN HOUSE // OPEN FIELDS



JOIN US for a day of meeting the inaugural Aspiring Farmer Residents, touring the renovated residency houses, and embracing the beginning of spring by working in the fields together - water bottles and gloves if you have them, come and go as you please.



powered by:



JOIN OUR
Community
Supported
Agriculture
Program

shares available online
bigmuddyurbanfarm.org

Memorial to Harry Dirgo

Harry "Bud" Dirgo
May 18, 1924 – March 12, 2017
Age 92

Harry was born in Omaha, Nebraska in 1924, the first son of Gladys Ruth (Mavis) Dirgo and Harry Clifford Dirgo. His sister Katherine was the first born of this family of 8 children. His father was a veteran of WWI who served with the 88th Infantry in France in WWI.

Harry was born in Omaha and lived there with his family until 1935. The great depression and other family circumstances made it impossible for the family to remain in Omaha and Harry and his siblings went to the Elim Lutheran Children's Home near their Grandfather's farms in 1935. Harry attended school in Elk Horn, IA and was christened in the Lutheran Church. He was 11 when he entered the Children's home with his 4 brothers and 3 sisters and remained there until the last years of WWII. The children were reuniting with their Mother Gladys Ruth on 32nd and Webster Street in Omaha and as the other boys entered the military (Earl and Ray), Harry worked with his mother to provide a home for Vern, Ruth, Katherine, George, and Helen. His Mother Gladys Ruth owned the house at 613 N 32nd and a duplex (up and down) next door. George entered the Navy in 1946 preceded by Earl entering the Army in 1944 and Ray entering the Navy in the same year. That duplex saw lots of Dirgo children and their families as the cycle matured.

Harry loved flying and Omaha and except for the 7 or 8 years in the Lutheran Children's Home he was an Omaha Resident. He wrote a letter to the editor of the Omaha World Herald published in 1948 talking up Omaha and his ferrying of airplanes throughout the Midwest up until that time.

Harry's own military service was in the US Army during the Korean War and was in Fort Riley, Kansas with an Infantry unit. Upon his discharge, he went to the USAF and with his pilot experience was accepted and stayed until the end of the war. The Air Force didn't use him as a pilot so he didn't re-enlist after the war and used his GI bill to further his pilot ratings while living in Omaha in the Gifford Park area (32nd and Webster Street).

He taught flying, flew skydivers, flew charters, flew part-time on Mutual of Omaha's Lear jet (right seat), ferried aircraft and was a fixture at the FBO at the South Omaha Airport until it closed in 1995. He then used the Millard Airport to teach and fly until his age and health stopped him. He then became more active in the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association and was 'Neighbor of the Year' in 1999.

Harry was the constant at 613 N 32nd Street in Omaha. Creighton University grew around his home until he was the last home on that side of the street surrounded by the University. He never married, cared for his mother until her death in 1996 and was a fixture in that area for family and friends. He was always there. Through births, deaths, divorce and career changes, the house on 32nd and Webster Street with 'Bud' was always there.

"Bud" was the tortoise to his siblings. Steady, slow, and consistent. He was the last of his siblings and the last of that Dirgo generation that endured the great Depression. A quiet bird man with a quiet and private life.

He will be missed.



Memorial to Harry Dirgo

I suppose Gifford Park doesn't have any more unique characters than any other neighborhood, but it sometimes seems that we do. Harry Dirgo was a neighborhood fixture for many years. He was a lifelong bachelor, and in many ways we were his family. There was hardly a single event over the years where he was not seen. Gardening, tennis, cleanup, watch group, meetings, no one was surprised to see Harry come ambling up. But actually he was a much more interesting individual than his easygoing nature would indicate. Harry was a pilot. He wanted to fly from an early age, and got his license at the close of the second world war. Throughout most of the rest of his life, Harry flew. He flew flivvers and jets, hauled Mutual of Omaha execs, dead bodies, skydivers, and just about everything else. He had unlimited stories. Flying is not necessarily dangerous, but it is an exacting and unforgiving profession. Harry had over 20,000 hours in the air, which says more than any other description of his expertise. He was as well known among Omaha pilots as he was at 33rd and California St.

Flying has many unique expressions. In aviation-speak, Harry has "Gone West". Another colorful piece in the mosaic of our neighborhood is gone.

- Terry Wilwerding

Harry Dirgo walked into the California Bar while I was tending the bar on a slow Sunday afternoon in the mid-seventies. Harry was not a big drinker and I can't remember if he had a beer, or a different beverage. He engaged me in conversation, the usual stuff - Where are you from? How did you end up here? When I told him I was from Winner, South Dakota, he perked right up. He told me he had a very good friend from Winner, Frank Antess. I recognized the name. I told Harry I had worked for Frank in my youth and he was like a second dad to me. That's all it took, Harry and I became quick friends.

We would swap stories about Winner and Frank. He flew into the Winner airport on numerous occasions to spend time with Frank. They would hunt pheasant, bowl, and catch up. I learned a lot from Harry about my friend Frank Antess. Harry was still flying back then and I was interested in flying, so I'd ask him a range of questions. I had taken a couple of introductory flights at the Millard Airport. I knew just enough to start a conversation on the subject. With Harry, that's all it took. He would entertain me with numerous stories about his years of being a pilot. He used to tell me how fast planes would go: up 45,000/

ft going 550/mph. He had many horrowing and daring experiences and he was pretty good at embellishing. As time progressed, and Harry was no longer flying, we stayed in touch. I've always had old cars and on occassion, I would pick up Harry for a ride and grab lunch. If we were in the Studebaker, he'd have model Studebaker stories. If we were in the Model A, he'd have Model A stories. Harry could hang with about anything. With Harry, we had fun. When he slowed down and he had to move to The Rehabilitation Center of Omaha, I would visit him and we would go for occassional car rides and visits. He always had good stories, mostly about flying or the neighborhood. Harry was a good friend, with a quick wit, a great story teller, and I will miss him.

- Jim Kyler

Harry Dirgo passed away March 12, 2017 at the age of 92. Now very seldom did I refer to him as Harry Dirgo, to me and many others he was plain Harry. Not only that, but if you think Harry did not have a story regardless of the subject matter, it must have been you were too busy to allow that to happen. One of his tried and true words to me was: "Let me tell you something about that", and he would fill me with all sorts of information on the subject he would pick out. I never caught him changing his stories, tried and true he was.

He was a very dedicated member of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association including some of the walks we used to have in the neighborhood. I never heard Harry say anything bad about a person. If he thought I should do something different about the way I was doing a project, he would say "Well Bob, just maybe it could be done this way". You know what happened next, yep, another story. Also, if you think Harry didn't like his beer, where were you hiding? On one occasion when Harry had a neck injury and was laid up in recovery, someone you probably know or can guess who, took a photo of a pitcher of beer to Harry and said "Harry, I brought you a 'picture' of beer and handed it to him, yes another story! His pilot duties took him to a variety of areas with numerous people, he enjoyed telling me of quite a few. His bond with the Gifford Park Neighborhood was also tried and true. Well Harry is now on a flight we will not be told about, rest assured I believe the ones that really knew Harry Dirgo do wish him well on that flight, and will miss him.

- Bob Hutton

28th Annual Gifford Park Neighborhood - EASTER EGG HUNT



Where: Gifford Park

When: **Saturday, April 15**
Noon (Rain or Shine!)

Who: Children Ages 12 & Under

Bring Your Easter Baskets!



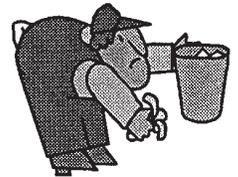
*****Volunteers needed to help pickup litter in Gifford Park at 10:00am to Noon**

*****Join us for snacks & refreshments immediately after the Easter Egg Hunt at the Gifford Park Playground (35th & Davenport) for 5 year Operation Playground Celebration! Everyone Welcome!**

SPRING CLEANUP - Saturday, May 20, 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 Walnut Hill Elementary School (4370 Hamilton St)
- * **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 402-616-9350 Chris 402-290-8187 Eric 402-719-5108

Membership Drive: Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA) annual membership dues are only: **\$10 for Single, \$15 for Family, \$25 for Business**. Your membership helps support **neighborhood cleanups, newsletters, youth activities, watch group equipment, tool lending** and many other worthwhile programs. The Spring Cleanup is a great time to join! You can also find our membership form on our GPNA website: www.giffordparkomaha.org

The “Original” Community Bicycle Project Omaha

Continued from front page

their 10th anniversary this summer as the Community Bicycle Project Omaha (CBPO) with events planned by the Community Bicycle Project Omaha - Youth Board.

In the next few days or weeks the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Board is sad to inform everyone that Omaha Public Schools plans to demolish this little house on Webster Street along with the neighboring home, after purchasing them from Creighton University last fall with plans. The little house and its residents over the years were not part of a big civic campaign to improve Midtown or some flashy presentation to Young Professionals telling them how to be a “Change Agent” in the community. These young residents just did what they believed in with little money but a lot of passion. It was a simple idea. Give people affordable housing in a supportive community and small ideas can grow to become true vehicles for change in the community.



For those who are wondering, yes, the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association has objected to these demolitions starting years ago with the SAVE YATES campaign to most recently speaking to Omaha Public Schools and the various departments including the OPS Board.

After the houses are gone, one has to wonder what other ideas or “Change Agents” could have come out of those homes had they remained standing in the Gifford Park community and the greater Midtown area? We’ll just have to rely on the big marketing campaigns, large Institutions, and the money going into our recent Midtown developments to give us communities where future “Change Agents” can thrive.

Editor’s Note: Besides The Community Bicycle Project Omaha, other initiatives came from this location - Spirit of Peace, Food not Bombs, urban farming and food reclamation drop offs. All these have had a positive impact on our neighborhood.

CERTIFIED ORIGINAL
SHELTERBELT THEATRE
3225 California Street

NEBRASKA ARTS COUNCIL

NEBRASKA CULTURAL ENDOWMENT
ARTS & HUMANITIES
LEVELLING

CATHERLAND

book & lyrics by Becky Boesen
music by David von Kampen
directed by Roxanne Wach
music direction by Peggy Holloway

April 21- May 14, 2017

Thursday/Friday/Saturday at 8pm
Sunday at 6pm (May 14 at 2pm)

• Sat., Apr. 22 - post-show talkback
with the playwright and composer

FEATURING:
Ben Adams • Craig Bond • Jennifer Gilg
Sara Planck • Laurel Rothamel • Randy Vest

www.shelterbelt.org

A Nebraska Ghost Musical

Susan made a deal with her adoring husband: Once her first book is done, they’ll start a family. As the ink dries on the final page, the couple heads to Red Cloud, NE, hoping to begin a simpler life, but a slew of mysterious guests prove that there’s nothing simple about small town living. Dreams shatter, plans change, and the trajectory of Susan’s future takes new shape in the looming shadow of American novelist, Willa Cather. “There are some things you learn best in calm, and some in storm.” Susan just hopes to make it out alive.

Residents of Gifford Park, join us on April 20 at 8pm for a preview of this world-premiere production. If you’re so inclined, you may contribute \$5 to the Theatre Arts Guild Scholarship or any amount to the theatre. Just show us your newsletter! Donation boxes will be located at the box office. Thank you for supporting your neighborhood theatre!

Gifford Park Free Soccer Camp

For: Youth (3 to 11 years old)

Dates: June 7, 14, 21, 28, July 5, 12, 19

Where: Gifford Park (33rd & Cass St.)

Time: 6:30-7:30 PM

The Gifford Park Neighborhood Association is offering a FREE summer soccer camp and will provide goals, balls and instructors. Parents and others are welcome to help.

To be enrolled, YOU MUST complete the form shown below and return it to Eric Purcell 3152 Chicago St, Omaha, NE 68131. **Special prize for those who attend every session and demonstrate good sportsmanship.** There is limited space available so please be on time. Call (402) 719-5108 for more information.

Registration/Permission Form - Mail to the address listed above or bring this form (completely filled out) with you to the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association summer soccer camp.

Youth's Name: _____ Parent/Guardian Name _____
 Street: _____ Street: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____ City, State, Zip _____
 Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Cell Phone: _____
 School: _____ Email: _____

As the parent or legal guardian of the child named above, I hereby give my full consent and approval for my child to participate as a member of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Youth Program.

I understand that there are certain risks of injury inherent in the practice and play of this sport, as well as related activities incidental to my child's participation, and I am willing to assume these risks on behalf of my child. I hereby certify that my child is fully capable of participating in this sport and that my child is healthy and has no physical or mental disabilities or infirmities that would restrict full participation in these activities, except as listed below.

I hereby waive, release and hold harmless the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Youth Program, and the City of Omaha, Nebraska, its Officers, coaches, sponsors, supervisors and representatives for any injury that may be suffered by my child in the normal course of participation in this sport and the activities incidental thereto, whether the result of negligence or any other cause. Further- more, I give consent to any necessary medical treatment in case of emergency. I permit the taking of photos during Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Youth Program activities for publication and use as the program deems.

Signature of Parent/Guardian:

Two Homes

To the surprise of the neighborhood, Omaha Public Schools (OPS) has plans to demolish two of our neighborhood homes, 3212 and 3218 Webster Street, on the Northeast side of the Gifford Park Neighborhood and near the location of our new neighborhood school. The news of this was learned after concerned neighbors called members of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA) Board to ask why the utilities were being disconnected from two homes on Webster Street. This news was a surprise to the GPNA Board as well since over thirteen neighborhood and area residents, including GPNA Board members, have been participating in OPS meetings to plan for the new neighborhood school near these two homes for several weeks and nothing was ever discussed.



Anytime a community loses single family homes unknowingly to unplanned development it becomes a sad and frustrating situation. For GPNA leaders, it was especially disappointing after communicating over the years during the SAVE YATES campaign and as most recently during public testimony at an OPS Board meeting on March 20th that OPS needs to be creative in planning for the new school and expressed satisfaction that tearing down more homes wasn't an option. However, now we know tearing down homes was part of OPS's plans.

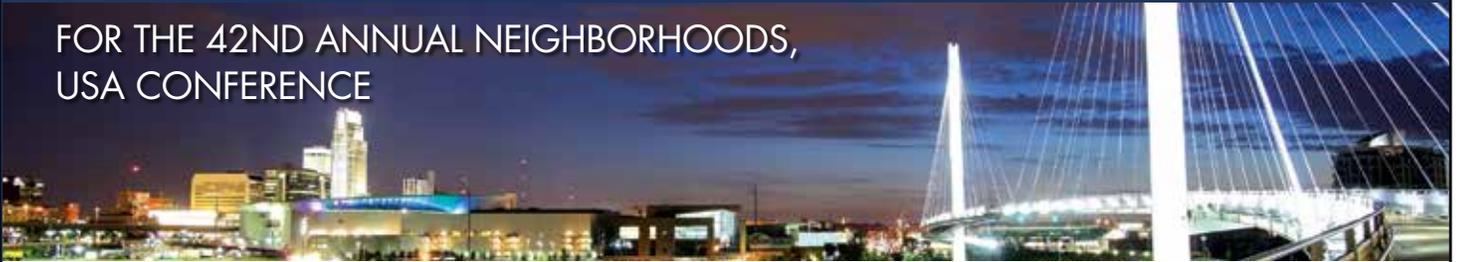
Scars run deep for this neighborhood when it comes to losing homes and displacing families to large institutions. Creighton University had big plans in the 1980s and 90s when it expanded into the neighborhood around 30th and California Street and demolished over four city blocks of Gifford Park's housing stock. Recently, after Creighton University plans changed and the big expansion never came to fruition, they decided to sell the parking lots and other property they had amassed over the years. For the Gifford Park Neighborhood, this decision by Creighton University was seen as an opportunity to turn "lemons into lemonade" and rebuild the four city blocks starting with a new neighborhood school. Conversations with OPS at the time, focused around saving Yates and showing OPS leadership ideas on how purchasing available Creighton University parking lots would be a win-win for everyone. OPS would have plenty of land to develop for a new neighborhood school, Creighton University would redeem themselves in the Gifford Park community, the neighborhood would begin filling back the four city blocks by starting with a new Neighborhood school, and most importantly homes would stop getting torn down for parking lots.

Now getting a new neighborhood school is fantastic and the GPNA is glad to see our community will be getting a school after 17 years of hard work and persistence. We're thankful for all the volunteers and support from many amazing individuals over the years. However, when the news broke last May about the new school and Creighton University called to congratulate the GPNA, the neighborhood's reaction was reserved, polite, and cautiously optimistic. The GPNA knew the real journey towards a new school was just starting. Over the next few weeks we heard from many more people congratulating us, including the developer of the Creighton University Medical Center, but not a word of congratulations from anyone at OPS. It wasn't until the GPNA reached out to OPS did we get any indication we would be involved in the planning of our neighborhood school. Looking back we should have realized that this was a sign of what was to be expected from OPS.

Word of OPS's plan to tear down more homes was brought to our attention not by OPS, but from neighbors. The idea we could work openly together, sharing ideas, collaborating and planning our new neighborhood school then came in to question. We hope this lack of community involvement and openness, when it comes to decisions involving our GPNA community, will not be the defining moment for the long road ahead and the future of our OPS & GPNA relationship.

REGISTER TODAY

FOR THE 42ND ANNUAL NEIGHBORHOODS,
USA CONFERENCE



May 24 – 27, 2017

Downtown Hilton Omaha
& CenturyLink Center in Omaha, NE

Register today and join hundreds of people who are passionate about improving neighborhoods and building stronger communities. Gather together to share information with one another, attend and actively participate in educational workshops, tour neighborhoods and recognize achievements of neighborhoods across the nation.

Gifford Park



Neighborhood Market

Season Opens on May 26!



Project Embrace

Project Embrace is a summer program for neighborhood children, will be held at Augustana Lutheran Church, 3647 Lafayette Avenue, Omaha, from June 12 through July 21. The morning program, for ages 4-8, will be held from 8:30-12:00; the afternoon program, for ages 9-12, will run from 12:00-4:00. Breakfast, lunch, and snacks are provided. Activities include swimming, roller skating, arts and crafts, outdoor games, computer skills, kindergarten readiness for 4 and 5 year olds, field trips to the Henry Doorly Zoo, the Omaha Children's Museum, and more. The cost is \$30 per child, scholarships are available. For more information or to register for the program, contact Augustana Lutheran Church at the address above or at 402-551-4728.



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.