



# Gifford Park's Pride

*Gifford Park Neighborhood: A Great Place to Live, Work, Learn, and Play*  
[www.giffordparkomaha.org](http://www.giffordparkomaha.org)

January-February 2020

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

## Save Yates For Omaha

By Dr. Adrian S. Petrescu

Three months ago, on October 28, 2019, the Superintendent of Omaha Public Schools, Dr. Cheryl Logan, called a meeting with the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association's Board. At the meeting the Superintendent let everyone know about OPS's plans to move the programs dedicated to refugees out of Yates Community Center, and "to surplus the building," with the intent that a developer buys it and transforms it into apartments for teachers. A few days later the Superintendent called a community wide meeting at Gifford Park Elementary, whereby OPS's plans were reiterated to a wider audience, to include Nebraska State Senators Sara Howard and Gwen Howard, a couple of Board of Education elected members, the Midtown Neighborhood Alliance Board, and a large number of Omaha residents who came to the meeting. Large costs of necessary renovations to bring the Yates building to compliance with ADA and fire and safety standards were cited as the main reason for OPS's intent to close down Yates.

While the programs were declared to be "mission critical," and hence we were told they will be moved fully to other space available elsewhere, we were all told that "OPS is in the business of running schools, and not community centers."

The community organized to tell OPS that we all would

rather that OPS keeps the building as a community center, and keeps the programs as they are or better, and where they are, namely at Yates. Within a few days we established a bi-weekly meeting to plan and organize a response effort in support of the programs, and in opposition of the sale of the building. A number of refugee organizations in Omaha, and many of those delivering programs at Yates Community Center joined us. The more we studied and we inquired the more confusing it got. We met with the Superintendent as a community twice, and the second time we didn't get answers to the questions we asked the first time. Senator Sara Howard asked a lot of detailed questions, and the Superintendent answered them.

## NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

**Thursday, February 6th // 6:30 PM**  
**Yates Community Center**  
**3260 Davenport Street**

**Topics:**  
**Save Yates, GPNA Budget, and more**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **6th Annual Seed Share**  
**Feb. 15th - 10am to 2pm**
- **Restore Nebraska Conference**  
**Feb. 28th-29th**
- **Gifford Park Cleanup**  
**March 21st - 2pm**



# SAVE YATES

#SaveYatesForOmaha

*(continued on page 4)*

### 2020 GPNA Officers

**Marie H el ene Andr e, President**  
 402-769-9183 | mhandre34@hotmail.com  
**Alexandra Goswami, Vice President / Treasurer**  
 847-477-2156 | omaha\_beef@hotmail.com  
**Anna Deal, Secretary**  
 206-276-5952 | anna@immigrantlc.org

### Board

**Eliza Perry, At-Large**  
 207-590-9880 | yrrepazile@gmail.com  
**Brent Lubbert, At-Large**  
 402-213-9646 | brent.lubbert@gmail.com  
**Tyler Magnuson, At-Large**  
 402-706-7496 | tyler.magnuson@gmail.com  
**Obed Sanchez, At-Large**  
 402-401-0554 | grainolia@gmail.com  
**Martin Janousek, Business Rep**  
 402-558-4070 | mjjanousek@leoadaly.com  
**Chris Foster, Landlord Rep**  
 402-290-8187 | foster3413@cox.net  
**Susan Mayberger, Yates Rep**  
 402-342-6606 | susan.mayberger@gmail.com

### Opportunities – Contacts

**GPNA General Meetings**  
 Eliza Perry 207-590-9880  
**Community Bike Project**  
 Adams Blowers 423-307-4136  
 adam@communitybikeproject.org  
**Community Garden/Youth Garden**  
 Chris Foster 402-290-8187  
**Adventure Playground**  
 Monica Lehn 402-660-9046  
 sfadventureplayground@gmail.com  
**Midtown Neighborhood Alliance Rep**  
 Adrian Petrescu, 402-769-9070  
 aspetrescu@alumni.pitt.edu  
**Gifford Park Market**  
 Martin Janousek 402-558-4070  
**Yates Community Center**  
 Susan Mayberger 402-342-6606  
**Youth Soccer**  
 Eric Purcell 402-719-5108  
 eric@thresholdscommunity.org  
**Youth Tennis**  
 Chris Foster 402-290-8187  
**Spring Cleanup**  
 Anna Deal, 206-276-5952  
**Newsletter Editors**  
 Amanda Huckins and Jessie Fisher  
 402-706-1045

## From the President

by Marie H el ene Andr e

*“The year is 50 B.C. Gaul is entirely occupied by the Romans. Well, not entirely... One small village of indomitable Gauls still holds out against the invaders. And life is not easy for the Roman legionaries who garrison the fortified camps of Totorum, Aquarium, Laudanum and Compendium...”* (beginning of each Asterix comic)

The year is 2020 A.D. in Omaha, Nebraska.. one small village of indomitable neighbors still holds out to preserve and protect their neighborhood and the values they believe in. And life is not always easy for those who want to ‘do business’ with the neighborhood (potential developers, the City of Omaha, OPS, etc.)...

*The Asterix comics take place in the year 50 B.C. Julius Caesar has all but conquered Gaul, except for a few pockets of resistance. One of those pockets is a small but plucky village in Armorica (Brittany, pre-medieval France), which has held back the Romans thanks to a Super Strength-granting magic potion. The village happens to be the home of our hero, a small but plucky Gaul named Asterix. Along with his loveable lug partner, monolith craftsman Obelix, and the other inhabitants of the village, Asterix gets into all manner of adventures, which usually involve foiling the schemes of the Romans (and, occasionally, Julius Caesar himself). The Gauls fear nothing except that the sky may fall on their heads...*

This is what Gifford Park Neighborhood is all about: a small but plucky neighborhood considered a pocket of resistance by some, a welcoming place by most, where everyone is Asterix the hero, and where solidarity, team spirit and dedication drive every effort.

This year again, we will go on a long journey filled with adventures that include:

- Yates Future: some neighbors have been working hard to keep the Yates building a neighborhood asset and we will update you regularly on the effort
- developing and maintaining good relationships with our neighbors
- organizing so many activities for all ages
- taking care of green spaces
- and many more

Do these plans involve foiling the schemes of *“the Romans”*? Not really. We really want to collaborate and find solution. Together.

And we in Gifford Park Neighborhood fear nothing, not even that the sky may fall on our head!

*And each story ends with a lavish banquet...!*



I am looking forward to meeting you in our great and plucky neighborhood!

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 jessiefisherart@gmail.com

## Youth Volunteers of the Year – Dejah Schulte & Wendell “Junior” Stanley

*By Chris Foster*

The GPNA recognized young neighborhood superstars 11-year-old Dejah Schulte and 13-year-old Wendell “Junior” Stanley as ‘Youth Volunteers of the Year’ at the GPNA Holiday Banquet.

Dejah has a natural talent for understanding and helping younger kids. She is involved with most of our youth programs and is a terrific ambassador for GPNA, whether it be giving guided tours of the community garden, the chicken coop, Adventure Playground...or passing out GPNA newsletters and talking with our market vendors on a Friday evening – she makes you feel welcome. She is always eager to help with setup and cleanup tasks at youth garden and other events and programs. Dejah attends Beveridge Middle School and aspires to become a surgeon.

Wendell has grown up in Gifford Park and involved with EVERY neighborhood youth program & activities – tennis, soccer, basketball, youth garden, Adventure Playground, 33rd Friday block party, market, park cleanups, Easter Egg hunt, Halloween festival, holiday banquet, and more. Wendell balances hard work and play with a great attitude...he is known as a peacemaker with a million-dollar smile! He is an excellent tennis player and improving all the time. Wendell is home-schooled, I envision him being an inventor when I watch him at Adventure Playground creating and building things... in fact, he designed and built one of our 33rd Friday block party games!

It’s no surprise Dejah and Wendell were selected as “grand marshals” for our inaugural parade through Gifford Park at last August’s 33rd Friday Block Party. Congratulations Dejah and Wendell, you inspire us and give this world hope, keep up the great work!



**(SAVE YATES continued from page 1)**

We started a website and a Facebook page. Private donors pitched funds for the Yates Future effort. Within less than a month, and by December 7 at the fourth annual Holiday Makers Market previously planned and held at Yates, we had Save Yates signs and banners everywhere, and we organized speakers at every OPS Board of Education meeting. Program participants and Omaha neighbors from across the entire city came and spoke in public comment at the OPS Board of Education meetings, and emphasized how much of a gem and treasure Yates is for everyone, and how it supports everyone's dreams for entrepreneurship and becoming better engaged citizens of the United States, and parents much readier to parent their children or grandparent their grandchildren, all in English. The Yates Future effort was interviewed on several TV stations quite a few times in the past three months, and several articles and opinion pieces were published in the Omaha World Herald as well.

By January 6, 2020 the Yates Future effort had grown so strong and was present at every OPS Board meeting that in the end the previously planned vote to declare the Yates building surplus was postponed by the Board of Education. We asked kindly twelve pertinent detailed questions about the planned move of programs, OPS and non-OPS, out of Yates and into the Teachers Administration Center (TAC), trying to ensure that all the programs will be moved, and that a smooth transition will ensue without losing any participant, while maintaining the integrity of the uniqueness of bundled programs that are proven very effective and which were recognized as a national best practice as they are at Yates by the US Office of Refugee Resettlement. Our questions ranged from cost of the move to renovate the space inside TAC that would host the programs, through presence of windows in the learning spaces, room for growth, parking, separate welcoming entrance, all the way to a comprehensive communication plan for ensuring no participant is confused and lost in the move, and no component program is left without a home in the entire shuffle. To this date, over three weeks later we are still waiting for answers in writing to our twelve questions. We, and we mean Senators too, asked OPS to follow an Omaha tradition established previously on a few occasions—that we pointed out from the past—and to donate the building to the community to organize a community center ourselves. We were denied that request, at least for now. Seemingly there is little monetary value that administration in general attaches to the community's overall contribution in countless thousands of volunteer hours a year for over 32

years to make Gifford Park the welcoming diverse neighborhood that it is, a model and attraction point for all surrounding neighborhoods and the entire Omaha. For the record, so that we are all on the same page, we can just write down the math here. 10,000 to 20,000 volunteer hours per year, valued \$15/hour, is between \$150,000 and \$300,000, while we are told that yearly expenses for maintaining Yates Community Center are at around \$200,000.

Meanwhile, we started planning, strategizing, and fundraising so that the community organizes and buys Yates to keep it as a community center for another century and more.

I was born in Romania. I dreamt for my entire childhood, ever since 1976—when I got my first US Constitution inside a big box of US Bicentennial of Independence materials from my aunt in Philadelphia-- that I would some day come to visit Independence Hall in Philadelphia. Everywhere in this country, just as in many other countries, children dream their entire childhoods, when they first learn about the US Constitution and US history, about Boston, Philadelphia and of Washington DC. They dream of traveling to the US and visiting, someday, places like Paul Revere's silversmith shop in Boston, Independence Hall in Philadelphia, the US Capitol building along with many other places and symbols of invention and innovation, and of liberty, democracy, and equity in this country. How would it look, if when they finally arrive in Philadelphia, they find the old Independence Hall building had been transformed into apartments? Even worse, how could we explain that to our own children?

To many of us in Omaha, Yates is a community hub where we all made things to be happening over the years, where Omaha neighbors have gathered and exchanged views and dreams and a meal, and where we formed friendships, where we planned for the future and helped nurture our children and their dreams with sports or music or dance or seeing first hand how hard work pays off when you sell the things you made to customers, where we bragged with much pride to the entire nation coming to visit at the Neighborhoods USA Conference in 2017 how many things we achieved here in Omaha in terms of neighborhood programs and collaborations. We would not let those memories, past and present, die out without a fight to keep making new better memories still for the future. Join our effort. Please. Let us keep Yates the place of dreams that it is for our youth and us for generations to come. Come brainstorm with us February 6, 2020, at 6:30 pm, at Yates.

#SaveYatesForOmaha

## Gifford Park Elementary PTO Update

by Bren Duvall

Thank you to everyone who donated items, or purchased raffle tickets, for the PTO gift basket fundraiser raffle at the Gifford Park Elementary Winter Program. We appreciate your support.

### Groundhog Day at Myrtle & Cypress

**Sunday, February 2nd 8am-4pm**

The Myrtle & Cypress team has generously volunteered to donate 10% of sales on Groundhog Day, Sunday, 2/2, to benefit the Gifford Park Elementary PTO! Visitors will have the option to donate an additional \$1 or \$5 with their order. Stop by Myrtle & Cypress anytime from 8am-4pm at 517 N. 33rd Street.

### Gifford Park Elementary Family Night

**Thursday, February 6th 5-6:30pm**

Join Gifford Park Elementary families for a STEM-focused (science, technology, engineering & math) night of fun! Interactive information and games for families will be located in the gym at Gifford Park Elementary, and chili and cinnamon rolls will be served. Volunteers are needed to help with games, please email Bren at [bmdmarketing@hotmail.com](mailto:bmdmarketing@hotmail.com) up here if you're interested in volunteering.



**YOU CAN GET INVOLVED!**

### Attend a PTO Meeting at Gifford Park Elementary School

Thursday, February 20th 5:30-6:30pm

Thursday, April 16th 5:30-6:30pm

*Join us as we work on planning spring events. Pizza and drinks are provided.*

### Join the PTO

*Join the GPE PTO to support our children, connect with families and teachers, help with events and fundraising. Everyone is welcome, including students, teachers, parents, grandparents, and community members. Send an email to [bmdmarketing@hotmail.com](mailto:bmdmarketing@hotmail.com) to get signed up to receive updates. You can find us on Facebook and Twitter @GiffordParkPTO*

### QUESTIONS?

Please contact Bren Duvall at

[bmdmarketing@hotmail.com](mailto:bmdmarketing@hotmail.com) or 402-943-6503

## 2019 Fall Cleanup Recap

by Anna Deal

On Saturday November 23, GPNA partnered with Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association (JCNA) to host our first ever Fall Cleanup event! In addition to the Spring Cleanup series, the city is now sponsoring a more limited Fall Cleanup series. The Cleanup was held in the Via Christe/Duchesne parking lot at 36th Street and California. City staff and volunteers unloaded vehicle after vehicle, filling at least three compacting trucks, while GPNA and JCNA representatives managed traffic, greeted new and old neighbors, and hit folks up for donations! We lucked out with sunny, crisp weather and spirits were high. A hearty thank you

to our friends at JCNA, at the city, and to all who volunteered or stopped by. Keep an eye out for our 2020 Spring Cleanup date, in May or June. We may partner again with JCNA at the Duchesne location, or we may be at our usual location in Gifford Park near 34th Street and Davenport—stay tuned!



# Holiday Market Photos - Dec. 7th 2019



## Nebraska's largest preservation conference celebrates 15 years in 2020.

Back in 2005 a group of architects, neighborhood leaders and old house lovers came together to organize the first Restore Omaha Conference inside Mutual of Omaha's dome. Today Restoration Exchange Omaha and History Nebraska partner to offer attendees across the state the education and motivation to restore, revive and preserve Nebraska's older homes and buildings.

In honor of the anniversary, organizers have invited favorite speakers from the past 15 years to present again at the 2020 event. The two-day conference will open Friday, Feb. 28 with a morning session geared toward Nebraska's state, city, county and Main Street preservation leaders. Bob Yapp, the 2005 and 2006 keynote speaker, will return to highlight a new Historic Preservation Cost Comparison Tool providing side-by-side comparisons of the true, objective costs for replacing vs repairing a properties architecturally important and character defining features. After lunch Metropolitan Community College will offer tours of its historic Fort Omaha Campus. The opening session Friday evening will feature a sneak peek tour of the former Blackstone Hotel set to open this summer along with food and drinks inside the Kiewit Tower across the street.

Saturday's Conference will feature Yapp, president of Preservation Resources Inc. and the Belvedere School for Hands-On Preservation. He is an entertaining speaker, passionate preservation advocate and knows his stuff inside and out. His keynote will take participants through the economic benefits of historic preservation. Bernice Radle, the 2015 keynote speaker, will return to present the opening session. The Buffalo, New York

resident is an urban planner, historic preservationist and building science nerd. She is the owner and CEO of Buffalove Development and Little Wheel Restoration Co. She is an advocate for small scale incremental neighborhood development. She believes strong healthy neighborhoods are the key to a community's success and believes neighborhood strength isn't defined by how expensive the homes are it is defined by how inclusive it is to all walks of life.

The event also will offer a full day of hands-on demonstrations, exhibits and break-out sessions. The day will end with personal testimonials from Gifford Park neighborhood change-agents Chris Foster, Martin Janousek and Rob Janousek who started redeveloping the Midtown neighborhood after attending the first conference in 2005.

For more information and to register to attend the Feb. 28-29 conference visit [www.restorationexchange.org](http://www.restorationexchange.org) or call (402) 933-3104.

RESTORATION EXCHANGE OMAHA & HISTORY NEBRASKA PRESENT  
15TH ANNUAL  
**RESTORE NEBRASKA  
CONFERENCE**  
February 28-29, 2020

The poster features three photographs: a man in a white shirt pointing at a map, a man in a blue shirt working on a wall, and a man in a white shirt working on a brick wall.



*Spend the day gathering ideas, solutions and inspiration to restore and preserve older properties.*

Metropolitan Community College, Fort Omaha Campus  
North 32nd Street &  
Sorensen Parkway | Omaha, NE

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS  
National Preservation Leaders



Bernice Radle  
[BerniceRadle.co](http://BerniceRadle.co)



Bob Yapp  
[BobYapp.com](http://BobYapp.com)

### FRIDAY, FEB. 28

- Preservation Leaders Session, Lunch and Tour
- Friday Opening Reception 7 to 9 p.m. Sneak Peek Tours of the former Blackstone Hotel and food and drinks at the Kiewit Tower. Space Limited.

### SATURDAY, FEB. 29

- Opening Keynote: Bernice Radle, Buffalove Development and Little Wheel Restoration Co.
- Lunch Keynote: Bob Yapp, Preservation Resources Inc. and Belvedere School for Hands-On Preservation
- Best of Speaker Series bringing together favorite speakers and topics from the past 15 years.
- Restore Jam! featuring Gifford Park change-makers Chris Foster and the Janousek brothers.
- Local vendors galore! Visit with local craftsmen to gather ideas, contacts and solutions.

Online Registration opens January 15 [www.restorationexchange.org](http://www.restorationexchange.org)



Restoration Exchange  
Omaha: (402) 933-3104

Restore Nebraska is the statewide historic preservation conference produced in partnership with History Nebraska. To get involved as a vendor, advertiser or sponsor or if you have general questions about the event contact event chair Nicole Malone at [nmalone@xoomaha.com](mailto:nmalone@xoomaha.com)

## GPNA Neighbor of the Year – Monica Lehn

by Chris Foster

The GPNA honored Monica Lehn as our 2019 'Neighbor of the Year' at the 31st annual GPNA Holiday Banquet hosted by Duchesne Academy on December 5th. When I was gathering information from Monica for her recognition, she shared these fun facts:

- Oldest of 8 kids
- Favorite musicians as teenager: Donovan, The Ramones, Johnny Cash, The Pixies
- Most read genre is the British Cozy Mystery
- Owns own home
- Crafty, "MacGyver-like"
- First got involved with GPNA at the community garden in 2012
- Volunteered with community garden, youth garden in 2013 (yoga)
- Cares deeply about children
- Volunteering: soccer, tennis, basketball, youth garden, adventure playground, 33rd Friday block party, holiday banquet, and more
- 11 year-old son Ezra

I reached out to a great Gifford Park volunteer Teal Gardner (started the Sallie Foster Adventure Playground in 2015, she moved to Boise, Idaho in 2016) for her thoughts about Monica and her impact on our neighborhood (and far beyond), here is what she wrote:

"I want to say thanks for this opportunity to publicly recognize Monica, and thanks to Chris, or whoever is reading it... Make sure to punctuate this

letter with long meaningful looks, and end it with a hug from me! :-)

I know Monica through the lens of Adventure Play, and distinctly remember first meeting her- at the Big Muddy Urban Farm potluck. Our conversation centered around making inclusive, free, and open play spaces for children. She was one of the first people I'd ever spoken with in person who had any idea what an 'Adventure Playground' even was. Her keen intelligence, wit, and energy, simply radiated from her that evening at the farm. Months later we became close collaborators as the reality of having such a space in our own neighborhood became more and more plausible. Monica was a totally crucial teammate in starting the Sallie Foster Adventure Playground, along with her son, Ezra, who did much early play-testing of the site. I have always admired Monica's ability to be at once a meticulous person, while also being deeply patient and easygoing- a person whose work to attain balance creates peace and balance and possibility for others. She is also not one to shy from physical or intellectual challenge, as I saw many times when she took on hours of volunteering at the Adventure Playground, providing mind-opening, and skills-laden opportunities for the kids. All of these deeply felt observations said, I want to focus on one final quality, which I think makes Monica the community cornerstone that she is: Her belief in youth and children as capable, valuable people, just as they are. Monica never once talked down to a child that she was working with, nor stooped to "because I said so," when an explanation could provide an effective pathway to deeper understanding for someone more naive than she. Her well of energy and the joy that she takes in giving so much to the youth of our community will stay with me forever. I am grateful to Monica for all that she taught me about patience, good-will, and children. Thank you, Monica, for all that you choose to share with Gifford Park, and any community that you touch."

***Congratulations Monica, and son Ezra!!***



*Monica Lehn and son Ezra pictured on left side teaching soap making at the Youth Garden Program*



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## Community Garden/Youth Garden/ Adventure Playground Update

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

### Donations to GPNA are tax-deductible

In 2015, the GPNA's application for 501(c)3 was approved. Donations to the GPNA are now tax deductible. Make a donation to support the GPNA and all of its activities at any of our events or by mail. Funds go toward furthering the mission of making the Gifford Park Neighborhood a great place to live, work, learn and play.

JOIN THE CLEAN UP CREW AT

# GIFFORD PARK

21 MARCH 2020 • 2PM

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## Big Muddy Urban Farm Update

by Brent Lubbert

Big Muddy Urban Farm is excited to announce the 2020 aspiring farmer residents and the addition of a program coordinator to the team!

**Irene Atayi** is from Togo, West Africa having moved to the United States with her family when she was 11. She grew up helping her mom garden and that's where her love for growing began. She is passionate about family and community. Her interests include hiking, binge watching shows, gardening, social justice, yoga and reading.

**Katie Bettin** is from Omaha and followed her interests in leading an active, healthy lifestyle

urban, organic farming practices that support our local food system.

**Jasmine Marr** is from Omaha and graduated from UNO with an international studies and Spanish degree. She is excited about the opportunity to learn how to grow food and hopes to pass on the knowledge she is learning. Her passions are social justice, mental health, diversity, learning, and creating spaces where people can feel like themselves.

**Phalin Strong** is originally from Lincoln, now having lived in Omaha for three years. While having gardening experience for their own home use they expanded their experience with food in the service industry; learning to cook and bake at a farm-to-table establishment. They have always known they

are happy with their hands to the earth, and have been fortunate to learn how vital community is in fortifying ones curiosity-building a resilient self.

**Matt Wettengel**

decided to stay at Big Muddy and continue learning through another growing season and to support the new group of residents throughout the year as a second year resident. In addition to his work at Big Muddy, Matt helps manage the Gifford Park Neighborhood Market and works part-time at the Omaha Public Library.

**Rhonda Freeman**

is joining the Big Muddy



to Colorado where she studied human nutrition and environmental sociology. She worked in AmeriCorp in Texas. After graduating she spent a year working through AmeriCorps. Now back in Omaha she is ready to dig into a year of learning and growing as an individual, community member, and urban farmer.

**Carly Frazee** is from Palmyra, NE and has always had a passion for children. She graduated from UNK with a degree in elementary education. She interned at the Big Garden last year teaching children how to grow, cook food, and understand food systems. She is excited to dive deeper into the

team as program coordinator. She grew up in Florissant, MO with gardening parents and grandparents. Her commitment to urban agriculture in Omaha has included volunteering with City Sprouts, building a backyard chicken coop and converting her empty lot into a neighborhood vegetable garden. In 2014, she refocused her priorities to the Omaha community by working with Omaha Public Schools, Partnership4Kids and Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands. As the Program Coordinator, she is committed to supporting the success of Big Muddy's residential farmers, farm tours and youth garden.

## Thank You to Brent Lubbert!

by Chris Foster on behalf of the GPNA Board

On behalf of the GPNA and beyond, a HUGE THANK YOU to Brent Lubbert for his tremendous effort as our neighborhood newsletter editor for our award-winning and nationally recognized “Gifford Park’s Pride” for the past four and half years! He had big shoes to fill after previous editor’s Jill Westfall and the “legendary” Sue Wilwerding did their amazing work. For anyone “lucky enough” to be a neighborhood newsletter editor, it can be a tough, grinding job requiring a craft skillset to produce a professional-quality finished product for the neighborhood and the whole-wide world to see...no pressure, right! Add to that, our Gifford Park Neighborhood Association has many programs, events, activities, community advocacy issues, and more going on...so to combine all the appropriate information from multiple writers/contributors in a nice format under late night deadlines is not for everyone. As most of you know, Brent is involved with some of the most important efforts affecting our communities, and the planet! In particular, he is executive director of Big Muddy Urban Farm, a great organization “dedicated to making sustainable agriculture education accessible to all”, based in our Gifford Park neighborhood but touches many well beyond our neighborhood. We are incredibly lucky to have a young leader with a deep level of commitment to volunteering with GPNA and other community organizations. And best of all, Brent is still serving on our GPNA board...I never said he was very bright :)

Please join me in welcoming Gifford Park residents Amanda Huckins and Jessie Fisher as our newest newsletter editors! Please don’t hesitate to contribute articles, photos, stories, or information that is relevant to our Gifford Park neighborhood...it’s OUR newsletter and our best communication tool.

### Tree of the Month

by Tyler Magnuson

**Norway Spruce - *Picea abies***  
**Located at 3410 California St.**

This Norway Spruce is one of the tallest conifer trees within the Gifford Park neighborhood. True to its name it is native to Scandinavia and northern Europe, and is one of the classic Christmas tree in many big cities across the northern hemisphere. It is easily recognized by its drooping cones & foliage, while keeping its classic conical shape throughout its life span. Its bark is scaly and this particular tree has a small ivy plant growing up its base. A simple circumference aging technique suggests that this tree is roughly 80 years old. I tried to reach out to the owners to get any tid bits they might know about the history of the tree but they were not at home the few times I stopped by.



## 2019 GPNA Holiday Banquet Highlights

by Chris Foster

Nearly 200 GPNA members, family, friends and guests gathered for our 31st Annual GPNA Holiday Banquet Thursday December 5th. Our great neighbor Duchesne Academy again hosted the event, the theme was holiday lanterns. As people arrived, they viewed historic memorabilia and photos, including three history scrap books created by GPNA historian Eva Swanson. Dinner started with GPNA president Eliza Perry and Duchesne principal Dr. Laura Hickman welcoming everyone. We enjoyed an amazing home-cooked dinner and dessert, compliments of Gifford Park's own Wendell & Alyssa Stanley family, and help from Rodney Hay who cooked the turkeys. Matt Cronin, Brent Lubbert and neighborhood children led the singing of the "Twelve Days of Gifford Park". Children then enjoyed opening donated presents. Food donations collected went to the Food Bank. Here are more highlights of the evening:

- Dr. Laura Hickman (Duchesne Principal) – On behalf of the GPNA, we could not have a better host and neighbor! Please pass on our thanks to Jason Schlesiger (IT/AV guy) for his time helping with setup, presentations all went smooth!
- Eliza Perry (past president) – Thanks for leading our (sometimes crazy) GPNA team another year... and banquet fundraising, emceeing, and a lot more!
- Marie Helene (current president) – Thanks for leading this year's banquet committee, always a lot of details and moving parts :)
- Wendell & Alyssa Stanley family – Just when we think your incredible family cannot do more, YOU DO MORE! Providing the lanterns, place-settings, food-warming equipment, appetizers, dinner, drinks, dessert makes it easy for the rest of us... and saves GPNA a lot of \$! Great job speaking about youth tennis!
- John & Jenn Aerni family – Thank you all for helping setup and serve dinner, and being very flexible!
- Rodney Hay – Everyone loves your turkeys!
- Ellen Price – What a TREMENDOUS surprise donation from your company Meridian Clinical Research, the gift to help our youth programs will have a big impact on children and families.
- Brittany Stebbins – Great work tracking RSVP's.
- Susan Mayberger – Thanks for your expertise with

- banquet planning, great raffle idea for fundraising!
- Matt Cronin – Another original new rendition of "12 Days of Gifford Park", so much fun for everyone, what a hit!
- Brent Lubbert – Mr. Everything...from IT to A/V to guitar-playing to creating the cool video montage... you do it all, usually on short notice and with a smile!
- Monica Lehn (and son Ezra) – CONGRATULATIONS on being GPNA 'Neighbor of the Year'...so well-deserved, I was honored to say all those great things about you both!
- Anna Deal, Tyler Magnuson, Martin Janousek – Thanks for welcoming folks, and handling memberships. Anna, thanks for running last minute errands too.
- Alex Goswami, Tyler Magnuson – Nice tree-planting presentation, fantastic project!
- Amy Lanspa, Julie Smith – Thanks for coming early setting up GPNA history and memorabilia stuff...and the t-shirt display table was awesome, let's do this again next year!
- Senator Gwen Howard, Doug Schroeder & Senator Sara Howard – We missed you Doug & Sara, we know you wanted to be there! Great to see you Gwen and providing gifts! Thanks for all your support of GPNA.
- Adrian Petrescu – Perfect timing sharing 'Save Yates for Omaha' information and getting the signs done in time to hand out.
- Mike Caban – Thanks for organizing the children's gifts, door prizes, and A WHOLE LOT MORE!
- Everyone else – THANKS for a GREAT BANQUET!!!





## Draft of 2020 GPNA Budget

**Gifford Park Neighborhood Association  
Draft budget to be approved by membership  
For the calendar year 2020**

Donations & revenue	
Unspecified	
Memberships	\$ 1,500
Donations	
Banquet (donation stimulated by banquet)	5,000
Other unrestricted donations	4,600
Misc. other	50
Newsletter ads	600
Specified	
Neighborhood Market	500
Cultural Event/33rd Friday	200
Easter Egg Hunt (matched)	500
Flower Pots (matched)	100
Tennis (matched)	400
Soccer camp	250
Garden & Adventure Playground	300
Garden plot fees	420
Membership outreach and development	100
Holiday Market	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 14,620</b>

Expenses

General

Banquet	3,000
Newsletter printing and other flyer printing	1,200
Postage	300
Cultural Event/33rd Friday	500
Post office box & bank fees	200
Organization memberships & sponsorships	300
Email subscription service	1,500
Meeting expenses	120
Digital promotion	-
Insurance	1,000
GPNA Board discretionary	1,000

Specific

WorldPay fees (Neighborhood Market)	500
Neighborhood Market other	500
Easter Egg Hunt (matched)	500
Yates facility rental fees	100
Flower pots	100
Soccer camp	500
Garden & Adventure Playground	1,200
Basketball	100
Porchfest music festival	100
Park events (Halloween, park cleanup portapotty)	400
Tree care	1,000
Membership outreach and development	100
Tennis (matched)	400
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 14,620</b>

Total change in net assets	<u><u>\$ -</u></u>
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## 4th Annual Cocoa, Carols and Mitten Drive

by Eric Purcell



If you were out and about in the neighborhood a week before Christmas you would have seen something unexpected: A hayrack pulling a load of Christmas Carolers around the neighborhood! That's right! For our 4th Annual Cocoa, Carols and Mitten Drive we pulled out all the stops: Hot Cocoa from Myrtle & Cypress Coffeehouse and a HAYRACK RIDE!

On December 18th friends and neighbors gathered at Myrtle & Cypress Coffeehouse to get some warm hot cocoa and then loaded up on the hayrack for a ride around the neighborhood. We paused at several homes along the way to jump off and sing some Christmas Carols.

And of course, we also decorated a Christmas tree with new and gently used hats, gloves, scarves and other warm winter gear. We collected 39 hats, 31 gloves, and 5 scarves. These have been placed in boxes at Danny's Corner Store, California Bar, Myrtle & Cypress and the Community Bike Shop and are free for anyone who needs them! This year a large number of coats were also donated (11 adult coats, 3 infant coats and 42 kids coats). We were excited to be able to give these to Gifford Park Elementary to distribute. If you have some extra



hats, gloves or scarves that you no longer need you're welcome to bring them to Myrtle & Cypress and we'll make sure they get into the hands of folks who need them!

AND be sure to join us again next year for another evening of caroling, drinking hot cocoa, riding the hayrack and gathering warm clothes.

## There's nothing more telling about neighbors than the way they shovel snow

by Rose Carlson

There are those people who can hardly wait for the snow to stop so they can get out there with their snowblowers, fancy shovels and a foolproof method for clearing it away as efficiently as possible. They follow up with the latest trend in Ice Melt. Their sidewalks win the winter prize, and those of us who walk dogs every day are grateful.

Then there are those people who look out the window and see the snow coming down and think, "Oh no! I'm going to have to shovel!" They will allot fifteen minutes before leaving for work to get the job done, dutifully making the sidewalk just passable and running the shovel up or down the driveway on their way to the car. As they pull away they wonder what the price is to lease at the Midtown Crossing apartments.

There are people, often young people and usually renters, who have things on their minds other than snow. They can't be bothered with shoveling. They flounder and trudge through it on their way to classes, work, and social events, largely oblivious to the weather except possibly to recognize that "It's cold! I should have worn boots!"

For some of our older neighbors, snow is a reminder that the time is coming when they will no longer be able to stay in their homes. Each year shoveling is more of a challenge. Sometimes a teenager from up the street knocks on the door, and they are glad to pay not only for the shoveling, but for the reassurance that their time as homeowners is not up just yet.

And lastly, there are those neighbors who make our day by extending their shoveling past their own property lines, sometimes even running their snowblowers down the entire block. Have you ever gone outside, shovel in hand, to find that your front walk was already cleared? Thank you to these neighborhood heroes, especially to those who take care of the walks in front of homes where the residents are not able to shovel! Neighborly gestures such as this build community in a way that nothing else can!

Every year I hope that the winter will not be too harsh nor too long. But in the meantime, may the snow and the shovels bring us together!



The Big Garden, City Sprouts & Big Muddy present:  
The 6th Annual

# SEED SHARE

February 15th, 10 am - 2 pm  
Gifford Park Elementary  
717 N 32nd St, Omaha, NE 68131

Music by Kiwi

"Whatever happens to seed affects the web of all life."  
-Dr. Vandana Shiva

CITY SPROUTS  
GROW WITH US

BIG MUDDY  
LIVON PASH

BTZ

Be A Good Neighbor  
Please Shovel Your  
Sidewalk!





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.