



Gifford Park's Pride

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

September 2015

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

33rd Friday Block Party

By Ali Clark

It's safe to say that the 33rd Friday Block Party + Multicultural Event has quickly become a new neighborhood tradition. The evening began with the musical talents of the Hottman Sisters, with harmonizing singer-songwriter originals. Our next performers came from Yates; Bhutanese song and a Karen dance group with colorful and vibrant performances that had everyone's attention from start to finish. Our final performance for the evening was the European Dance Group, who even invited our audience members to get involved!

As a backdrop, neighbor Jim Kyler's RAGBRAI bus added a colorful canvas and a great balcony vantage point for the whole event. The Yates Community Center offered a variety of craft activities, displays on the various cultures represented at Yates and in our neighborhood, and various samples of ethnic foods. Next up down the road, carnival games and resident clown we're a real hit with our youngsters. Over 90 kids participated in the activities! And at the end of the road, a bicycle rodeo and activity zone hosted by the Community Bicycle Project. And of course, the Gifford Park Neighborhood Market, with t-shirt stamping, a lemonade stand benefiting the Sallie Foster Adventure Playground, and our wonderful spread of weekly vendors!

All of this was made possible with the support of our team of volunteers, including:

Eliza Perry, Martin Janousek, Eric Purcell, Kayla Meyer, Marie Helene Andre, Chris Foster, Ali Clark,

**Next General Meeting
Thursday, November 13**

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

Upcoming Event

**September 5
10 a.m.-1p.m.
Playground & Park Cleanup
(details on page 10)**

Susan Mayberger, Veronica Hill, Lotplay Laywah, Kumar Gurung, Scott Wolfe, Brent Lubbert, Matt Cronin, Michaela Wolf, Jim Kyler, Chelsea Taxman, Jenny Waltemath, Charles Mitchell, Judy Quest, Mike Caban with son Ben and daughter Ellen, Stanley Family, Bob Hutton, Darryl Hutton, Luther Larson, Flor Campos, Scott Wolf, Katie McDermott, Eh Toh Heh, Maggie Jones, Janelle Nissen, Danielle Zulke, Amina Mejdoubi, Mohamed Ukach, Market Vendors, Neighborhood Businesses, Yates Community Center, Omaha Public Schools, Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

It was a night to remember, and one to look forward to for years to come.

2015 GPNA Officers

Luther Larson, President

402-616-9350 | lutherlar@cox.net

Eric Purcell, Vice President

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

Jill Westfall, Secretary

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

Alexandra Goswami, Treasurer

847-477-2156 | omaha_beef@hotmail.com

Board

Mark Trampe, At-Large

402-332-6188 | supertrampe@gmail.com

Andy Wessel, At-Large

402-916-5030 | ajwessel13@yahoo.com

Charles Mitchell, At-Large

402-309-0777 | charlesalexandermitchell@gmail.com

Marie Hélène André, At-Large

402-769-9183 | mhandre34@hotmail.com

Martin Janousek, Business Rep

402-558-4070 | mjjanousek@leoadaly.com

Chris Foster, Landlord Rep

402-290-8187 | foster3413@cox.net

Opportunities – Contacts

GPNA General Meetings

Luther Larson, 616-9350

Community Bike Project

Charles Mitchell 309-0777

Community Garden/Youth Garden

Chris Foster 290-8187

Adventure Playground

Teal Gardner 402-875-1896

teal.gardner@gmail.com

Teen Market Garden

Cynthia Shuck 556-2090

dalilabush@cox.net

Gifford Park Market

Martin Janousek 558-4070

Yates Community Center

Susan Mayberger 557-2431

susan.mayberger@ops.org

Youth Soccer

Eric Purcell 719-5108

Youth Tennis

Chris Foster 290-8187

Spring Cleanup

Luther Larson 616-9350

Letter to the Editor

Chris Foster on behalf of the GPNA Board

Is anyone interested in joining my campaign to stop Jill Westfall from leaving Omaha? Yes, sadly Jill will be moving to St. Paul, Minnesota in the coming weeks to take on a new job with Hunger Solutions Minnesota, but this is a great career opportunity for her to do what she really enjoys. I know I speak for the GPNA board and MANY others in Gifford Park who wish nothing but the best for her. Jill's wonderful accomplishments in a relatively short period of time are quite impressive. Jill is our reigning "Neighbor of the Year" and current GPNA Secretary since 2008 except when she was vice-president in 2011. Most of you know she has been our award-winning and nationally recognized Gifford Park's Pride newsletter editor for the past 3 ½ years and does a GREAT job. Jill also has done a ton of work for our holiday banquet, block parties, garage sales, community garden, bike rodeos, and of course the Community Bicycle Project of Omaha (CBPO) from 2006-2011. Her incredible dedication volunteering with the Bike Shop is amazing and includes: early startup and "foundation" work to help get operations off the ground; fundraising; training; operations; recruiter; working with Creighton Legal Clinic on 501c3 non-profit status and by-laws; CBPO President, treasurer and secretary; teaching bike safety and repair; and mentoring youth.

Quite frankly, the volunteer work Jill has been doing is difficult and time-consuming, and it's tough to find people with her talents willing to volunteer to do this work! Her dedication to serving our neighborhood and the broader community will be greatly missed, but Jill's example will hopefully attract new volunteers to take on opportunities just as Jill did. Having said that, I still do not know what our neighborhood will do without Jill! Good Luck Jill from your friends in Gifford Park!

Editor's Note

By the time many of you read this, I will have packed up my belongings and begun the process of moving to take a new job in Minnesota. (Sorry Chris, your campaign to get me to stay will be a little too late!)

I have loved living in Gifford Park these 9 years and I'm proud to be leaving it an even better place to live, work, learn, and play. It's a truly special place and while the neighborhoods in St. Paul are great, I'll be hard pressed to find one that tops Gifford Park!

Since I am leaving soon, we are looking for someone to take over putting together the newsletter. If you are interested, drop me a line at jill.lynn.westfall@gmail.com.

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 jill.lynn.westfall@gmail.com.

Adventure Playground

By Teal Gardner

Saturday, August 29, concluded the Youth Garden season. With that clear benchmark in place, we can reflect on what the first summer at the Adventure Playground has been all about! But don't worry! The playground will continue to be open on Saturdays, 12-4 p.m. into Fall and Winter.

We started with a very blank slate: a fence and a sloping yard with a couple of trees at the top greeted the first visitors. The playground was stocked full of donated wooden furniture, rope, fabric, paint, tires and some tools. The first kids to visit the Playground were quick to bash apart most of the furniture. Some small enclosures went up, signs were made, and we were off! The trees became anchoring points for much of our construction activity. Two large spools donated by Don Newland, helped a structure take form at the base of the trees. There, kids were able to work week after week on their fortress, which has multiple hiding areas, a bridge, and swinging ropes behind it. A favorite challenge is to step from the bridge down to the largest rope, and swing balance between the high and low ropes!

As the weeks passed, we accumulated a group of kids who became regular visitors. These kids are the heart of the playground, carrying ideas through from week to week. Work commenced on the side of the garage, where painted scenes have ebbed and flowed. Visitors from other parts of the city dropped in, some multiple times, with donations, grandkids, and friends.

From toddlers to late teenagers, the Adventure Playground has been a fun place for everyone. Some of our busiest days were delightful, as a large range of ages played together in the sun. The materials on hand were flexible enough to allow for many different skill levels of building activity, from blanket forts to more fortified pallet shacks, to the spool fortress described above. Over this summer I have been grateful and amazed for the variety of visitors, each of whom



bring their own style of play to the playground. When I could find a moment to stand back and marvel at the brisk activity happening all around me, I was consistently moved. The kids have never ceased to impress me through their unrelenting willingness to try new things, be flexible, kind and thoughtful. I am also grateful beyond words for the dedicated volunteers who showed up again and again this summer to help guide and problem solve, making the playground a community bound together by a love of free play.

Please join us on September 20, 4:30 – 6:30 PM for a potluck at the Community Garden! The kids of the Adventure Playground will present a talent show following dinner. See you soon!

Materials we are still looking for: hay bales, c-clamps, a table vise, large pieces of fabric, large sticks, boulders, an electric drill, fire wood, nails, and anything else you may have that could be fun/uesful. Email teal.gardner@gmail.com if you have questions, donations, or would like to volunteer!

33rd Friday Block Party and Cultural Event



33rd Friday Block Party and Cultural Event



22nd Annual Youth Tennis Program Highlights

Nice weather greeted us for this year's 22nd annual August Youth Tennis Program in Gifford Park. This year we had about 65 youth participants and 34 with perfect attendance. We had tremendous help from our volunteer instructors for each of the four Wednesdays in August for this free program. The kids learned basic groundstrokes, volleys and rallying skills.

Godfather's Pizza gave us a good deal providing 10 pizzas for our program "finale" on the last day. Neighborhood volunteers also provided delicious treats. Many thanks go to all the wonderful instructors for their support and dedication to this program: Jane Hines, Buddy Hogan, Jim Wilson, Vince Emery, Leif Bade, Jennessa Runia, Brianna Liu, Roger Freeman, Jackie Foster, Jenny Waltemath, Calvin Webster, Laurie Bolte, Allie Gardner, Donnie Gildon, Liseth Garrido, the Stanley ladies (Dawn, Crystal, Justine, & Witney), Ari Manzo, and Chris Foster. Also during June and July, volunteer instructors Jim Wilson, Lou Harrison and the Stanley girls taught small group

tennis lessons on Wednesday mornings in Gifford Park - this was the 8th year for this free program for kids having a strong interest in tennis.

Special thanks go to Jan Franks, Brittney Rubek, Betty Slayden, Tyffaney Reichert, and Kayleen Tran for help with registration, awards and lots of other administration duties – thanks ladies! Thanks to Aleta Stevens who took excellent pictures at the finale, and Mike Caban for always helping out when needed most. We had some special guests join us for the finale by sharing "words of wisdom" and community spirit: Senator Sara Howard and her mom Gwen; Omaha Police Sgt Marcus Taylor, Sgt Bruce Rima, Officer Matthew McDonald, Officer Aaron Dugick, and Officer Jeremy Latham. Thanks also to the Omaha Tennis Association, the Nebraska Tennis Association, the United States Tennis Association, and the City Parks & Recreation Department for their generous support over the years. Special thanks to Ryan Polito for donating 36 new youth tennis racquets for our program. If anyone who participated in the tennis lessons is interested in more advanced lessons, please contact Chris Foster at 402-290-8187. Keep your eye on the ball!



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3rd • 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Iowa/Nebraska IN the Neighborhood Conference

“Celebrating Strong Empowered Neighborhoods”

Metro Community College - South Omaha Campus - 2902 Babe Gomez Avenue

\$35.00 Admission Includes:
Morning and Afternoon Breaks • Lunch
Keynote Speaker • 24 Breakout Sessions
Visiting with Exhibitors

Neighborhood associations, grassroots community organizations, civic and business leaders coming together to host the second Iowa/Nebraska IN the Neighborhood Conference October 3rd at the South Omaha campus of Metropolitan Community College.

Dynamic and engaging speakers on topics ranging from:

- a green community ■ health & safety ■ economic growth & development ■
- empowering neighborhood initiatives ■
- community partnerships ■ important spanish issues presented in spanish ■

For reservations and more information go to:

www.intheneighborhood.org

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- Rebel Interactive ■ City of Omaha Parks & Recreation ■ Barbara Weitz Community
- Engagement Center ■ Dahlman Neighborhood Assn.
- North Omaha Neighborhood Alliance
- Congressman Brad Ashford

**NEW
THIS
YEAR!**

*Spanish Interpreters
For Keynote Session
And Breakout Sessions*

**Tour
on Sun.,
Oct. 4 from
Noon to 5 pm.
of Hanscom Park
Neighborhood.
\$10.00
per person.**



Community Garden Update

By Chris Foster

We have had very timely rains and that has meant very little need to water this year – maybe too much of a good thing has hurt the tomato crop this year. Our Gifford Park Community Garden will be one of a seven host gardens on this the fourth annual Tour de Garden event Sunday September 6, 9am to noon. Participating gardens are Omaha Bicycle Company (6015 Maple Street), City Sprouts (40th & Seward), Big Garden (34th & Ohio), John Pollack's Orchard (36th & Charles), Gifford Park Garden (35th & Cass), Dundee Garden (49th & Underwood), Benson Garden (60th & Hamilton). A Salsa competition will happen after the tour at the Benson Garden.

Our next pot luck dinner for our community gardeners, youth gardeners, Adventure Playground, volunteers and their families will be Sunday, September 20 at 4:30 p.m. Socialize, 5:00 p.m. dinner at 35th & Cass Streets. Besides our normal grilling of burgers and hot dogs, Chef Wilson Calixte (chef at Le Voltaire French Restaurant) will treat us to some entertaining food preparation and grilling, so be sure to come early around 4:30pm to enjoy his expertise.

It's a good time to stop by the garden to see neighborhood friends or check out what's growing – things are changing fast! Contact Mike Caban (402-341-4722, caban3321@cox.net) for garden plot information, and Chris Foster (402-290-8187, foster3413@cox.net) for other questions.

Youth Garden Program 2015 Highlights

Now in its 12th year, 2015 was another great year for the Gifford Park Youth Garden (GPYG) program. It began May 9 with our "Season Opening" event and ended with our "Pizza Garden Harvest Party" August 29. In between these dates we had over 60 registered youth participants gardening on 44 raised beds (each 30"x30" plots), some children shared their plots.

Amazingly there were no rainouts again this year, although our tents came in handy a couple times it did rain.

Last newsletter I gave an update through week 10, here are highlights of the last five weeks of activities: Week 11 we learned what to do with all of those veggies we're growing with the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) and their famous "Cooking Matters" class led by Anna Curry and Chef Wilson Calixte. They demonstrated valuable secrets to proper food preparation and cooking, and in the end we all enjoyed a healthy and delicious 'Asian Vegetable Stir Fry' meal from vegetables we grew in our gardens this summer. Week 12 Andrea Lawse taught us all about 'Herbs & Health Remedies'. She brought herbs for us to sample with our senses, and taught how we use them to improve our health. We also had a 'Garden Scavenger Hunt' organized by Mike Caban. Week 13 Chad Lebo (Cure) showed us fermentation and how to make sauerkraut from cabbage grown on-site; Brent Lubbert and Matt Cronin from Big Muddy Urban Farm with help from Eric & Annemarie Noll (one of the founding families of the community garden) and son Preston taught us how to make refrigerator pickles - as well as a variety of other vegetable/ herb combinations! It was exciting to learn a quick, easy way to save vegetables for later use! Week 14 Betsy Goodman (She works at Bloom Organics Farm, and she started Omaha's Common Soil Seed Library at the Benson Public Library) taught us all about seed saving. Besides Betsy's leadership, Brent and Matt from Big Muddy Urban Farm taught us about the cyclical nature of seed saving and how to use this process in our own gardens. Brent taught us how to save tomato seeds - which involve a fermentation, sorting, and drying process before the seeds become viable. Betsy took us on a "treasure hunt" around the community garden where we looked at different plants and learned how they are pollinated in order that they might produce seeds. Matt taught us how to collect and sift seeds from the plants once they are formed. Week 15 we celebrated another wonderful year the Youth Garden program with a Harvest Party!

Youth Garden

continued from page 8

We enjoyed homemade pizzas prepared by the kids and Big Muddy Urban Farm. Each pizza was topped with an assortment of bountiful veggies harvested from Big Muddy's gardens and our young gardener's plots. After all the pizzas were ready, we enjoyed each other's company while we feasted on our harvest and ate some awesome homemade fruit pies baked by Michaela Wolf! We encourage our young gardeners to continue tending your plots for the rest of the growing season.

As you can see the program teaches youth of all ages how to grow our vegetables, prepare, eat, and share our harvest with others. Plus, the youth are creative with art, music, and poetry; explore our natural environment; and have fun while working together and getting our hands dirty. GPYG relies upon parents and volunteers

each week to provide snacks, lead lessons, and simply share their time with participating young people. Tremendous thanks to all our volunteers including but not limited to: Megan Kriegler, Paul Pellerito, the Stanley family, Jasmine Frierson, Maria Diaz, Teresa Vizcaya, Monica Lehn, Daniel & Andrea Lawse, Andy & Leslie Wessel, Eric & Lisa Purcell, Jason & Denise Bash, Tony Newman, Joy Doll, Kevin & Chastidy Smith, Erin Grace, Shelley Anderson, Michaela Wolf, Rose Carlson, Tyronda Pierce, Jackie Foster, Teal Gardner, Maranda Allbritten, Anna Deal, Sean Coder. Huge thanks to Big Muddy Urban Farm (Brent Lubbert, Matt Cronin) for their incredible talents, energy, spirit and commitment to the program and Gifford Park neighborhood! Thanks to the dedicated parents and family members who participate with their youth gardeners. Special thanks to Mike Caban for his dedication to this program and the community garden project, neither would be the same without his leadership – thanks Mike!



Welcome Gifford Park's Newest Residents

Lachlan Oliver Purcell, son of Eric and Lisa Purcell, born 8/16/15 weighing 8 lbs, 5 oz and 20 inches long.

Jonathan Thomas Doll, son of Mike and Joy Doll, born 8/4/15 weighing 8 lbs, 4 oz and 20 inches long.



11 Years for Neighborhood Flower Pots

For eleven years, the business district has had some of the prettiest flowers of any neighborhood. Long before there was a place called Midtown, neighborhood volunteers started planting flowers in the business district. Volunteers spent time collecting money, buying flowers, planting, watering, and weeding. When vandalism occurred neighbors and businesses pitched in to tip back up flower pots that had been pushed over and helped to water when the days were long and hot. Now years later the business district wouldn't be the same without the large pots overflowing with flowers.



This year we need to give a BIG thank you to the following business that were able to donate money or in kind donations.

Blueline Coffee
California Bar

Cass Gas & Shop
Community Bicycle Shop

K n J Grocery
Gifford Park LLC

Urban Village



Gifford Park Cleanup and Playground Celebration



When: Saturday, September 5, 10am to 1pm

Where: Gifford Park Playground at 35th Ave & Davenport

Who: EVERYONE (adults & children)!

Activities: Playground & Park Cleanup, Pickup Litter, Weeding, Mulching, Raking (tools & gloves provided)

Food: Sandwiches & Refreshments for Volunteers

Community Bicycle Shop

by Charles Mitchell

The summer season is always a whirlwind of activity at the Bike Project! We introduced some new programs and events and grew other initiatives with the help of dedicated volunteers and new neighborhood supporters. All of the activities increased our capacity to make bicycling accessible, reliable, and fun for Omaha and helped build community in the Gifford Park neighborhood and beyond.

In April, the Bike Project partnered with HDR, Inc. to refurbish 50 kids bikes with new tires, chains, and tubes. The like-new bikes were then donated to Youth Emergency Services, InCommon Community Development, and the Heart Ministry Center to benefit their clients.

In May, the Bike Project put on a second annual Lids for Kids fundraiser ride to support our Youth Earn-a-Bike programs. The ride brought together Gifford Park neighbors, Youth Earn-a-Bike graduates, volunteers, and friends of the shop. Many riders challenged themselves with a 50 mile ride to Fort Calhoun, including seven of our Youth Earn-a-Bike graduates!

Our Youth programming continued to grow this year. Kids' Bike Club ran for its first full season. 5-9 year olds consistently attended classes to earn bikes, often

Continued on next page

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Community Bicycle Shop

continued from previous page

assisted by older siblings who had graduated from Youth Earn-a-Bike. The Bike Project also started hosting weekly Youth Earn-a-Bike sessions at Omaha Home for Boys.

In June, we partnered with LiveWell and Lutheran Family Services to provide 10 Karen and Nepali refugees with bikes, helmets, and locks. Participants learned how to safely ride on the streets and how to put their bikes on buses to make the most of their new transportation options.

We also collaborated with Big Muddy for the second Full Cycle Supper in June. This short bike tour and farm-to-table dinner at Big Muddy's urban farm plots was a great way to see the neighborhood and support two of Gifford Park's community building organizations. Watch for the fall Full Cycle Supper coming up on Sunday, September 27!

In July, the Youth Board completed its first term and celebrated by organizing a birthday party for the bike shop. Bike Project supporters played bike games, printed shirts, and enjoyed food while celebrating the Bike Project's 8th Birthday. The event was youth-led and awesome!

In August, we capped off summer with our best attended monthly Sunday Funday ride yet! 18 cyclists rode from the shop to Iowa via the pedestrian bridge. New Earn-a-Bike graduates, parents, and volunteers enjoyed the pleasant weather and celebrated another season of successful bike programming with a bike ride open to all ages and levels of cyclists.

One Sunday Funday rider had just earned his bike the previous day from Youth Emergency Services. On Saturday, we led a bike safety class and bike ride along the Field Club trail. 20 YES clients earned a free bike refurbished by Bike Project volunteers and a new U-lock by attending the class and ride.

As the temperature drops, the Bike Project will be staying busy with Open Shop, Youth Earn-a-Bike, and a Bike Build-a-Thon in November getting bikes ready for fall and winter riding and for another season of fun rides and events next year. Come volunteer at the Bike Project to help more people have access to bikes and all of the amazing benefits that come from bicycling! Stop by the shop or email me at charles@communitybikeproject.org to join our amazing team of volunteers.



HANSCOM PARK Neighborhood Tour

Sunday, October 4, 2015 • Noon to 5 p.m.



TICKETS: \$15 or 2 for \$25

REO Member Price: \$10 or 2 for \$15

Tickets available on the day of the tour on the east side of the Center Street Mall at 42nd and Center Streets or online at www.restorationexchange.org

Join or renew your Restoration Exchange membership for 2016 and your tour ticket is **FREE!**

This year's fall tour features:

- 9 Historic Homes and 2 Churches
- Tour Booklet
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The tour is sponsored by



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For more information and to purchase advance tickets
visit www.restorationexchange.org



Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
 PO Box 31462
 Omaha, NE 68131

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 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.