



Gifford Park's Pride

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

May 2018

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Gifford Park is the Newest Community Arboretum Affiliate

This is from a letter written to Gifford Park Neighborhood Association from the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum

In association with both Earth Day and Arbor Day, the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum (NSA) is pleased to announce that the Gifford Park Neighborhood, one of Omaha's oldest and greenest neighborhoods, has been approved as the newest affiliate site of NSA via its community arboretum program. The neighborhood, which is located just west of downtown and north of Midtown, has been active in tree planting and care, community gardening, urban farming, habitat improvement and environmental education for many years.

Gifford Park arboretum is spread throughout the neighborhood. It includes a variety of sites: Gifford Park, Gifford Park Community Garden & Adventure Playground, a butterfly garden, Big Muddy Urban Farm garden (eight sites), Sweet Thymes Permaculture Garden, the green space at 30th and Cass, Teen Market Garden, Turner Park North, Creighton Bluejay/Root Down Garden, Yates Community Center garden and a new elementary school opening in fall of 2019.

The arboretum also includes the neighborhood's tree-lined streets as well as many exceptional home landscapes that have been cultivated with care, creativity and ecological awareness. To date, more than 50 species of trees and shrubs have been identified growing in the neighborhood with more species being added to the list every year.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

Thursday, May 10 // 6:30 PM
Yates Community Center
3260 Davenport Street

Presentation:
School Update by Jeramie Cobb,
Spring Planting by Scott Farrington
with Indian Creek Nursery,
and details about upcoming
neighborhood events listed below

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Community Garden Season Opener
- Neighborhood Wide Spring Cleanup
- Neighborhood Potluck
- Omaha Gives!
- Gifford Park Neighborhood Market
- Tennis Block Party
- Soccer Camp Sign-up

Event dates and details in articles of newsletter



continued on page 10

Justin Evertson shows youth gardeners different tree species

2018 GPNA Officers

Eliza Perry, President

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Marie Hélène André, Vice President

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402-213-9646 | brent.lubbert@gmail.com

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402-706-7496 | tyler.magnuson@gmail.com

Andy Wessel, At-Large

402-916-5030 | ajwessel13@yahoo.com

Eric Purcell, At-Large

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

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 | susanmayberger77@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

Jasmine Frierson 402-213-0223

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 402-557-2431

susan.mayberger@ops.org

Youth Soccer

Eric Purcell 402-719-5108

Youth Tennis

Chris Foster 402-290-8187

Spring Cleanup

Chris Foster 402-290-8187

Newsletter Editor

Brent Lubbert 402-213-9646

From the President

by Eliza Perry

Spring is here and one thing's clear: it's time to gather outside again! GPNA, Matt (my fiancé) and I invite you to hang out in our backyard for a neighborhood-wide potluck on Sunday May 20 anytime between 5pm and 9pm! Our address is 3409 California St, right behind the community garden off Cass. Please bring your friends and family (we are ultra kid-friendly) as well as a dish to share.

We also ask our current members to invite their neighbors who may not yet be familiar with GPNA and the amazing things the armies of volunteers accomplish inside our neighborhood boundaries. We will be distributing as many fliers as we can, but would appreciate any assistance via word of mouth or let me know if you'd like to distribute a stack of fliers yourself: (207) 590-9880 is my number to text or call.

Eating meals together is a powerful social force. We build community when we sit down and discuss our backgrounds and our views face-to-face. There are thousands of residents within our 10-block radius - let's invite everyone to be a bigger part of making Gifford Park the best neighborhood on earth.

School Update

by Jeramie Cobb

After a fairly wet start to the month of April, the new elementary school being construction at 32nd & Burt is progressing well. Footing and Foundation work is complete and concrete masonry unit construction is on-going. The first floor storm shelter at the south portion of the building is visible from the Burt and 32nd streets. Mechanical and Electrical system rough-ins are being positioned throughout the project at various locations. Structural steel and metal decking installation is set to take place during the first and second weeks of May. Stay tuned.



Editor's note: If you have news of interest to the Gifford Park Neighborhood, we encourage you to submit an article for the monthly newsletter. Editorials are subject to approval by the GPNA Executive Board. Please include your contact information. Articles may be submitted by email to brent.lubbert@gmail.com.

NEIGHBORHOOD POTLUCK

GPNA PRESIDENT ELIZA'S BACKYARD
3409 CALIFORNIA ST
MAY 20 2018 · 5PM-9PM



WE ARE ALL NEIGHBORS



NEIGHBORHOOD POTLUCK
GPNA PRESIDENT ELIZA'S BACKYARD
3409 CALIFORNIA ST
MAY 20 2018 · 5PM-9PM



bring a dish · your family · housemates

relax with neighbors

tour the community garden



chicken palace



adventure playground

**which neighborhood projects
or concerns are on your mind?**

No matter where we're from, what we do, or whether we rent or own, we all have something a-m-a-z-i-n-g in common:

GIFFORD PARK
NEIGHBORHOOD
IS OUR HOME



Omaha Gives!

We are so looking forward to 2018's OmahaGives - our city's annual day-long rally event to raise funds for all the amazing nonprofits that make our community amazing!

Do your kids come out to learn, play and grow their own vegetables during Saturday morning youth garden programming? Do they learn teamwork and soccer skills at youth soccer or tennis camps? Does your family attend the holiday banquet each year or wander our neighborhood market every summertime Friday evening? Funds from Omaha Gives support these and our many other free, accessible-to-all initiatives. Please consider including Gifford Park Neighborhood Association in your list of nonprofits to support on Wednesday, May 23rd.

Thank you for all you already do for Gifford Park Neighborhood as a member!



OMAHA GIVES!

powered by the Omaha Community Foundation

Three To Beam Up

by Don X. Nguyen
directed by Roxanne Wach

April 20 - May 13, 2018

RESERVATIONS:
www.shelterbelt.org
boxoffice@shelterbelt.org



Yates Community Center Update

by Susan Mayberger

One of the many treasures in our neighborhood is the Yates Community Center. The Center has been serving our neighbors who are immigrants and refugees since the summer of 2009 when the first pilot class of “conversational English” started. The first class had 30 refugee parents who wanted to learning English as well as learn how to live and parent in Omaha. Since those beginnings, the programming has grown to serve over 700 parents and children each year. There are approximately 150 parents and 80 children in attendance each day.

Yates is a unique place in Omaha because it is the only ESL programming in Omaha that provides morning classes Monday through Friday every day that the elementary schools are in session. It also provides a place where our newest neighbors can connect with each other, find clothing and furniture through the Donation Center (housed in the Yates basement) or receive help in figuring out issues such as housing with the help of the social worker. Adults can also take Citizenship classes every Thursday morning and dozens of our neighbors have become citizens through the support of these classes. There is also a community garden on the front lawn utilized by the parents.

The programming provides conversational English classes for immigrants and refugees on the second floor of the building. There is a Family Literacy Program that provides English instruction to parents but also strategies on how parents can support the education of their children. In the Family Literacy Program, parents and children are in the same room together learning through read aloud, songs and chants. This program has grown to two classrooms.

The building holds four Pre-K classes for children. Each of the Pre-K class has a special focus due to funding. There is a Native American program, a special education class, a migrant class and a class for students identified as English learners.

Veronica Hill works in the Migrant Education

Program and is based at Yates. She describes the school as “more than just a place of learning but a thriving community center where we celebrate the diversity of our neighbors.” She identified the important partners within our community such as Joslyn Art Museum, the Senior Intercultural Center, the Creighton Center for Service and Justice, Catholic Charities, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral and the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association that all support parents and families at Yates.

Jaimie Cogua oversees the ESL, Migrant and Refugee Programming for the Omaha Public Schools and is the building administrator for Yates. She started in this position in August, 2017 and has continued the programming that has served our neighborhood since 2009. She can be reached at jaimie.cogua@ops.org.

The myriad of programming at Yates only enhances our already special, diverse and welcoming neighborhood. Neighbors are always welcome to stop by and see what is going on at the Yates Community Center.

Gifford Park's neighborhood bar for 80 Years

ESTD. 1937

CALIFORNIA BAR

OMAHA, NE

**Craft Beer on Tap
Friday Night Karaoke
Beer Garden
KENO**

Stop in and watch your Creighton University & Nebraska games

510 North 33rd Street

www.calibaromaha.com



29th Annual Easter Egg Hunt Highlights

It was a cold and windy day with temperatures in the upper 30's for our 28th Annual Easter Egg Hunt, held Saturday, March 31 in Gifford Park. We estimated about 200 anxious neighborhood children participated in the coldest hunt in recent memory. This was the tenth year in a row an anonymous dentist donated dental care bags for all the children. Volunteers picked up litter in the park before putting out candy, treats, and other prizes in the grass. As traditional, we had four age groups: 0-4, 5-6, 7-9, and 10-12 year-olds. There were many volunteers and donors who helped put forth extra effort – once again Darryl Hutton did a great job getting donations from a variety of people and businesses; Jan Franks, her grandchildren Brittany Rubek, and great granddaughter Arianna, organized the candy. The Slayden family (Betty, Tiffaney, Kayleen, and their families) were tremendous help as always. Justine Stanley did another wonderful job as our Easter bunny giving out treats to youngsters, and she was joined by her sisters Dawn, Crystal, Witney, Rachel and brother Wendell Junior. Senator Sara Howard and her mom Gwen volunteered again and donated cute stuffed bunnies. Many thanks to all those who donated time, money, candy, and other items for the event: Fremont Machine, Whelan Law Office, Kilgore Law Office, Discount Laundry, Urban Village, California Tacos, California Bar, Danny's Corner Grocery, Selenas Market, Burnzzz, Ideal Hardware, Shane Lynch, Bob & Virginia Hutton, Susan Mayberger, Francisco & Maria Gonzales & family, Terry & Sue Wilwerding, Jessyka Sheldon, Mike Caban, Ellen Price, Paul Pellerito & family, Nancy Gaarder, Chris Foster, and the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association. Please support the above businesses for their contributions. Hope for warmer weather next year!



Youth Garden Starting Soon

The Gifford Park Youth Garden (GPYG) program will be kicking off its 15th year at the Gifford Park Community Garden (35th & Cass) growing young gardeners. The 2018 program will be each Saturday morning from 10:00 to 11:30am May 19 through August 25. Attached in this newsletter you will find the schedule and registration information on page 6 and 7. We will be accepting registrations at our Community Garden & Adventure Playground Season Opening Saturday May 12, 10am to Noon at the community garden. 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; 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. Please contact Chris Foster (402-290-8187 or foster3413@cox.net) if you have questions about GPYG program.

See Youth Garden schedule and registration on page 6 and 7

Community Garden & Adventure Playground Season Opening Everyone Welcome!

Saturday May 12th, 10 a.m. to noon
at the Gifford Park Community Garden (35th & Cass Street)

Variety of family activities including:

Youth Garden Program & Adventure Playground registration
Free Library Books; Ask the Master Gardener
Mother's Day take home project; Face-Painting; Music; Digging; Chickens
Information on community garden, Adventure Playground, Big Muddy Urban Farm
Free Seeds, Plants and Refreshments (while supplies last)

Gifford Park Youth Garden Program

2018 Schedule ~ all Saturdays 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

May 12	Garden Season Opening Event (*10:00am-noon)
May 19	Get to Know Your Garden (prepare plot for planting & paint stakes)
May 26	Plant Your Plot (select seeds & plants, plant your plot)
June 2	Plant Your Plot (select seeds & plants, plant your plot)
June 9	Wildlife & Animal Care
June 16	Bugs & Worms
June 23	Pollinators
June 30	Sound of Music
July 7	Making Bread & Butter
July 14	Garden Movement
July 21	Art in the Garden
July 28	Tree Walk
August 4	Cooking Matters
August 11	Canning & Preservation
August 18	Tea
August 25	Pizza Garden Harvest PARTY! (Big Muddy Urban Farm)
Rest of growing season - tend your plot	



The Gifford Park Youth Garden is a fun, educational program for school age youth. Volunteers, parents, and children meet **Saturdays from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.** at Gifford Park Community Garden on 35th & Cass Streets.

Ways parents can get involved:

- Post this schedule of activities in your home
- Ask your child what they have been learning at the garden
- Accompany your child to any or all sessions
- Pick a date to bring snacks

To register, complete the attached sign-up sheet and bring to the Season Opening Event on May 12. You can reach Chris Foster with questions or suggestions at 402-290-8187 or foster3413@cox.net.

Youth Garden Sign-up Sheet

All school-age youth are invited to participate in this free program at the Gifford Park Community Garden on 35th & Cass Street. We will meet Saturdays from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. beginning May 19 through August 25 to work, learn, & play in the garden.

Child's Name: _____

School: _____

Age: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

We would like to bring treats for one of the Saturday's: yes no

My parent/I would like to volunteer sometime: yes no

Waiver and Release of All Claims and Assumptions of Risk

Please read this form carefully and be aware that in signing up and participating in the Gifford Park Youth Community Garden program, you will be expressly assuming the risk and legal liability and waiving and releasing all claims for injuries, damages, or loss which you or your minor child/ward might sustain as a result of participating in any and all activities connected with and associated with this program.

I recognize and acknowledge that there are limited risks of physical injury to participants in this gardening/nature program, and I voluntarily agree to assume the full risk of any injuries, damages, or loss, regardless of severity that my minor child/ward or I may sustain as a result of participating in any and all activities connected with or associated with this program. Further, I permit the taking of photos during Gifford Park Youth Community Garden activities for publication and use as the program deems.

I have read and fully understand the above important information, warning of risk, assumption of risk, and waiver and release of all claims.

Participant's Name (please print)

Guardian's Signature

Date

Thanks Phi Delta Theta

On behalf of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, THANK YOU again this year to the Creighton Phi Delta Theta Fraternity for having about 70 guys volunteer Sunday, March 25 to do a variety of duties in Gifford Park, and a nearby alley. Special thanks to Dillon Nerland for organizing his Phi Delta Theta Fraternity guys.



Also, a big thanks to the City Parks Department (Director Brook Bench) for dropping off the piles of mulch prior near the park flower beds – this worked out great. We trimmed, weeded and mulched the identity, flower & rose gardens and around some of the park trees, picked up litter, and cleaned up a nearby alley. The timing worked out well with the weather and the Easter egg hunt, which occurred the following Saturday.

Community Garden/Adventure Playground Update

We hope you plan to attend our Community Garden & Adventure Playground Season Opening Event, Saturday May 12th, 10am to Noon at the community garden (35th & Cass Street) to celebrate the start of our 18th year - it's free and open to everyone. We plan to have a variety of family activities including Youth Garden program registration; information on the community garden, Adventure Playground; Big Muddy Urban Farm; "Ask the Master Gardener"; free library books; Mother's Day take home project; face-painting; music; digging; free seeds, plants and refreshments (while supplies last); and meet the new young chickens! We hope everyone pitches in to help with ideas, projects, maintenance, and overall participation with the community garden in whatever capacity they feel comfortable. 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 12, 10am - Noon)
- Youth Garden Program (Saturdays 10-11:30am, May 19 to August 25)
- Adventure Playground (Saturday afternoons noon-4pm, May 19 to October)
- Pot Luck dinners
- Wednesday evening work nights (6-8 pm during the growing season 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 (good exercise!)
- 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). For garden plot information, contact Mike Caban (402-341-4722 or caban3321@cox.net).

Gifford Park Free Soccer Camp

For: Youth (3 to 11 years old)

Dates: June 13, 20, 27, July 11, 18, 25

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:

Community Bike Shop Update

by Adam Blowers

Back in March we started up a special class of Youth Earn-a-Bike with Iowa School for the Deaf (ISD). Three students from ISD participated and all graduated! Jesse, Paul, and Jesse (pictured) were our first Youth Earn-a-Bike graduates of the year. They not only earned their own bikes, they also repaired 3 of the bikes that are on the ISD campus for other students to use. We hope to offer Youth Earn-a-Bike to more non-profits and programs this year.

Now that it looks like Winter has finally left us, we are starting up our weekly shop rides. These are easy slow roll rides designed to illustrate the places you can get to in this city by bike and just how easy it can be. Every Saturday morning at 9am we will leave from the shop and go to a different destination. If you're new to riding or just like riding your bike then these rides are for you. All ages and all skill levels are welcome.

Now is also a great time to pick up a bike for Summer. We have a lot to choose from. You can either purchase a used bicycle or volunteer to earn one and Youth Earn-a-Bike (kids aged 10 to 15) and Kids Bike Club (kids aged 5 to 9) are in full swing. We provide the opportunity for anyone to earn a bicycle and get out and ride. As always, check our website (www.communitybicycleshopomaha.org) or follow us on facebook for more information and news.



from left to right Jesse, Jesse, and Paul

Gifford Park is the Newest Community Arboretum Affiliate

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Gifford Park is rich in both greenery and culture and is a great place to learn about how people of various ethnicities and incomes can work together to make a neighborhood not only greener but also more purposeful for everyone that lives within it.

To learn more about the Gifford Park Neighborhood Arboretum, contact Chris Foster at 402-290-8187 or foster3413@cox.net. This is the newest member of the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, "planting Nebraska for healthy people, vibrant communities and a resilient environment," <https://plantnebraska.org>.

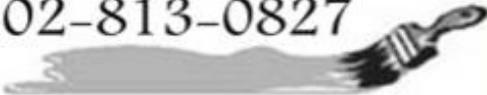


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Gifford Park Neighborhood Market starts June 1st

by Alex O'hanlon

The Gifford Park Neighborhood Market will be back for its 11th season, or as the market's founder Martin Janousek put it, "A Gifford Park decade." Market season begins on Friday, June 1st. We've got a lot going on to celebrate this milestone. The market management team has expanded this year from three to six and grant funds secured by the GPNA for new tents, picnic tables and music equipment will help to make market set up and tear down a breeze. The market will feature all the regular trappings that attendees have come to expect; fresh produce, locally handcrafted goods, delicious ready-to-eat foods and live music. The market will also collaborate with Big Muddy Urban Farm on a new community composting initiative, we'll feature monthly Story Times courtesy of the Omaha Public Library AND have a Wellness Corner offering free massages and herbal elixers.

Mark your calendars now: August 17 will be everyone's favorite 33rd Friday Block Party and September 17th will be the 3rd Annual Chicken Show! And heads up, the third Friday of every month will feature extended live music (and market) until 10pm all summer long.

Folks who would like to sell their handmade or homegrown items, would like to help out at the market, or have any questions/concerns are encouraged to contact the management team at GPNMarket@gmail.com or send us a message on the Gifford Park Neighborhood Market's Facebook page. Eliza Perry, long-time market organizer and GPNA President enthusiastically said "We can't WAIT!!" And Neither can we!



Gifford Park



Neighborhood Market

Friday's 5-8pm // 33rd & California St.



GIFFORD PARK TENNIS BLOCK PARTY

Sponsored by the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, USTA Nebraska,
Omaha Tennis Association, and the City of Omaha



ages 4 - 18

WEDNESDAY, MAY 16

6:00-7:30 PM

GIFFORD PARK TENNIS COURTS - 33rd & Cass

Join us for a **FREE** evening of **TENNIS**. We have the rackets and balls.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE SUMMER TENNIS PROGRAMS AT GIFFORD PARK

Call 402-290-8187 for information

YOUTH SUMMER TENNIS

FREE INSTRUCTION AND DOUBLES PLAY

Sponsored by the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, Nebraska Tennis Association,
Omaha Tennis Association, and the City of Omaha



WEDNESDAYS

June 6 - July 18

10-10:50 am: Ages 9-11

11-11:50 am: Ages 12 & Over

GIFFORD PARK TENNIS COURTS - 33rd & Cass

Rackets and balls provided

For more information, call Chris at 402-290-8187

Big Muddy Urban Farm Update

by Brent Lubbert

Forty-five baby chickens are scratching around in a spacious brood box in the Big Muddy garage. Aspiring Farmer Residents have cared for them since they were only one day old. The chickens will grow their adult feathers by late-May and you will see them in the three coops around the neighborhood (Community Garden at 35th and Cass St, corner lot at 33rd and Webster St, and in back of the Big Muddy house on 33rd and Burt St). Excitement is building to get the chickens in their home, as well as for all the crops that are just sprouting. Residents developed a unique Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model and will be vending at the Neighborhood Market. The CSA is separated into three consecutive six-week subscriptions that match the seasons: spring, summer, and fall. Visit our website www.bigmuddyurbanfarm.org for more CSA information and to sign up for a share.



Plants aren't the only thing growing this spring. Five incoming board members joined the Big Muddy Board in April: Audrey Paulman, Dennis Magnuson, Shelley Elson-Roza, Lori Tatreau, and Emily Anderson. Jen Miller, Rich Callahan and Ali Yahnke are continuing to serve on the Board. Big Muddy serves in a stronger capacity thanks to the voluntary efforts of these wonderful board members sharing their talents and providing leadership.

This spring begins a flourishing of activities on the farm: Omaha Gives! on May 23rd, Beginning Farmer Meetup on June 16, Full Cycle Supper on June 24, Breaking New Ground on July 8, and we have our save-the-date set for the 2018 Let's Grow Here Gala: Friday, November 2nd at Creighton University Harper Ballroom. Follow us on facebook or visit our website for more information on these events and more. Happy planting!

Toddlers, teenagers, tennis, true personal performance, parks and policy. Let's connect all dots! Now more than ever.

by Adrian S. Petrescu

I've known the United States in person for half of my life, or over a quarter Century. I lived the most in Omaha, and then the most in Gifford Park. This is where we belong most and where we feel best at home from anywhere we've ever been or lived or worked in the country and in the world. For good reason.

Over the last few years I tried to write a column here every now and then, when I felt I had a few thoughts to share or a happier perspective to point to. I tried my best to always see the bright side in everything, even when it was hard. It wasn't the easiest to silence anger and to just note that few of those in charge, elected or appointed, other than ourselves, have ever cared fully about our youth, toddlers or teenagers alike. It took patience and optimism to do it in what I hoped to have been a semi-funny way, by suing every level of government for leaving their dirt hill behind, like an undisciplined and unprofessional plumber, and asking for a swimming pool in damages. It took trust that someone somewhere is actually listening, if only we speak up, and if we tell compelling stories about who matters most, our youth. Incidentally, we never heard back from any of those we

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Toddlers, teenagers, tennis, true personal performance, parks and policy.

Let's connect all dots! Now more than ever.

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"sued" in the court of public opinion, even though we know they read our lawsuit from the future... I honestly tried always to somehow brighten a little everyone's day when the newsletter arrives. No matter what was happening. I am sorry if I cannot do the same today. Today I cannot write happy thoughts. Today I am really really sad.

You may have read the news in the Omaha World Herald two weeks ago and you may not have put two and two together just yet. The Literacy Center for the Midlands closed its doors at the end of April, after 50 years. I taught there for one year and a half. My Dear Bride, Marie H el ene, past board member and President, and current Vice-President of the GPNA, also volunteered and worked there over the years, before she took on her position with Metro Community College, that is also in Adult Education.

The Program Director of the Center that closed is a former graduate student of mine. He had worked there over five years. He asked me to help a little with teaching math and science and social studies, and critical thinking and cultural awareness for English-as-a-second-language (ESL) learners. I answered yes, and I was very happy I did. I learned to love our students a lot and to empathize with their struggles and to try to help them self motivate to reach their fullest potential. We served about 600 adult students a year, all studying for high school completion, or the GED credential as it is called, or for improving their English, all to be able to get better jobs or a chance at college, and essentially and ultimately a better life. I often mentioned Pierre, the Director, and used his story to motivate students, especially since Pierre was born in Togo and English is thus his third language, and he has all his American degrees, including a Masters of Public Administration, obtained in English. A lot of students of the Literacy Center were our neighbors, and a lot of our refugee or generally immigrant neighbors would also be or should have been students at the Center. Of course these were not all the students, since the Center served everyone from everywhere. The only condition was a willingness to learn and a desire to discipline oneself sufficiently to set a goal and to work hard towards it. What often works as a great motivator is the vision of a better ability to nurture and support the students' own children's and sometimes even grandchildren's own learning and life aspirations.

During these eighteen months I learned in much more detail than I previously knew that the size of this issue is from 44 to over 100 thousand strong in the Greater Omaha, and is 60 million nationwide, up from 45 million nationwide a few years ago. Let me say that again. About 100,000 adults in the Greater Omaha area (Sarpy and Douglas County mostly) do not have a high school diploma or the GED equivalent, or are not fluent

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Coffee
With:
MARQUE SNOW
9:00 A.M. *Howlin' Hounds*
712 SOUTH 16TH St.

Dates: April 21// May 19 // June 16 // July 21

**Toddlers, teenagers, tennis, true personal performance, parks and policy.
Let's connect all dots! Now more than ever.**

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enough in English. The latter may have graduated high school or may have higher degrees too, but those would be in a different language. Considering the U.S. population of 320+ million, in the United States as a whole the number is about one in four people. A door just shut closed to one in four of our neighbors and friends, and that keeps them away from a better chance at true personal performance in their lives. That makes me very sad. What do I say, I'm sad? I am very upset.

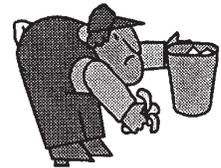
I live in the center of the richest country in the world. Omaha, and Nebraska, are a special place in the history of the United States for so many reasons. We are nice caring people. In 1879, with help from the people of Omaha who were so supportive of Standing Bear and his quest to be a Man, a Federal Court finally granted a Native American the right to be a person under the U.S. Constitution. How would it make you feel to have to wait 387 years before you had any rights? Rights that you originally had in the first place before, just puff..., they were taken away in 1492 with the arrival of Christopher Columbus. Hm...

To be continue in June Newsletter

SPRING CLEANUP - Saturday, May 12, 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 at Gifford Park
- * **Tires** may be dropped off for **FREE** at South High School (23rd & J) or St. Vincent DePaul (22nd & Leavenworth)
- * **Tires** will be accepted at Gifford Park site at \$1 each
- * **Appliances** containing freon (refrigerators, A.C.) will be accepted at Gifford Park site at \$10 each
- * Gifford Park Neighborhood Association members will get highest priority for hauling items
- * If you can help with our neighborhood cleanup or if you need help hauling, please call:

Chris 402-290-8187

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



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.