



# Gifford Park's Pride

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

April 2021

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association



## Fruit Tree Planting Volunteer Opportunity! Friday, April 23rd

As part of our continual work to plant trees in our neighborhood and address food insecurity, Gifford Park will be partnering with the Big Garden to put a community orchard in along Cass street from 33rd to 30th this month. We will be replacing trees that did not survive from our May 2019 planting. We will be planting a mix of apples, asian pears, and other fruit trees that will beautify our streets and provide fresh fruit for all our neighbors. If you would like to pitch in, meet-up at 11am on Friday April 23rd at the gas station on the corner of 33rd and Cass! Bring your gloves and drinking water and we will have the trees and shovels with experts there to help with planting tips!



*Photo by SammyFisher*

## EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT

**Open House and Neighborhood Meeting  
at The Yates, 3260 Davenport St.**

**Thursday May 6 // 5:30pm-8pm  
BRING YOUR MASK!**

## Open House at The Yates

Come for an open house with snacks and meet the tenants of the building! Stay for the neighborhood meeting and hear about upcoming neighborhood events! Grab your mask and join us Thursday, May 6th at 3260 Davenport St.

### 5:30-6:30 Open House

- Meet the organizations that will move into Yates such as the Great Plains Theater Conference
- Tour the building
- Snacks will be served safely

### 6:30-8:00 Gifford Park Neighborhood Meeting

- Quick presentation from the orgs moving into Yates
- Update on upcoming neighborhood events and youth programming
- Update on board's work on mission, vision, and inclusion



**2020 GPNA Officers****Marie Hélène André, President**

402-769-9183 | mhandre34@hotmail.com

**Alexandra Goswami, Vice President /****Treasurer**

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**Chris Foster, Tenant/Landlord Liason**

402-290-8187 | foster3413@cox.net

**Susan Mayberger, Yates Rep**

402-342-6606 | susan.mayberger@gmail.com

**Opportunities – Contacts****GPNA General Meetings**

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**Community Bike Project**

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**Community Garden/Youth Garden**

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**Adventure Playground**

Monica Lehn 402-660-9046

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**Midtown Neighborhood Alliance Rep**

Adrian Petrescu, 402-769-9070

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**Gifford Park Market**

Martin Janousek 402-558-4070

**Youth Soccer**

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**Youth Tennis**

Chris Foster 402-290-8187

**Spring Cleanup**

Chris Foster 402-290-8187

**Newsletter Editors**

Amanda Huckins and Jessie Fisher

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*Editor's note:* If you have neighborhood news or an editorial to share, we want to hear from you! Please include your contact information and put "GPNA Newsletter" in the subject line and submit by email to a.r.huckins@gmail.com. Editorials are subject to approval by the GPNA Executive Board.

**Board Member's Column**

Alex Goswami

Spring is a season of change, and we will certainly see changes in Gifford Park. Change can be something we influence and not just something that happens to us. There will be proposals for new buildings and developments along Dodge St. and in the neighborhood that will impact Gifford Park. There are city council and mayoral elections on May 11 that will influence everything from garbage and recycling to affordable housing. Let's work together to change Gifford Park in ways that benefit our neighbors first and investors second. We live in this neighborhood, so we can influence what changes come to this place that we call home.

To all of the neighbors who have been affected by COVID-19, I wish you healing. I hope that we all have an opportunity to be vaccinated as soon as possible, so that we can start to socialize and share in community events together. As the vaccine is slowly rolled out in Omaha, the GPNA will continue to organize and plan events in a safe way. With respect for social distancing and masks, we will continue to find creative ways to have fun and come together. To all the volunteers who have worked tirelessly for years on these awesome neighborhood events, I hope that we do not go another year without enjoying the warm weather and getting out in our neighborhood. We just have to communicate with one another to plan events in a way that keeps our neighbors and children safe. We can do this. We can be creative. Let's work together to adapt to this new season of COVID-19, so that our neighborhood can continue to thrive and we can strengthen our connections.

Creighton printed the Gifford Park neighborhood newsletter as a service to the neighborhood for many years. In December, Creighton let us know that they would no longer be printing our newsletter due to budget cuts. GPNA board members had a number of conversations with Creighton's decision-makers to ask for more time in the transition to a new printer or a cost-sharing plan with the university, but Creighton was firm in the initial decision. Thanks to Creighton for the many years of printing services that benefited the residents of the Gifford Park neighborhood which includes all the Creighton students that live in Gifford Park. We are trying to find sponsors for the newsletter, so please reach out to us if you are inspired to help in that effort.



## Big Muddy Urban Farm Update

Budding trees, budding seeds, and budding activities at Big Muddy Urban Farm. This past December, a group of five Aspiring Farmers moved into the Residency houses and we are ecstatic to introduce this year's crew! The group is composed of Sophia Cooper, Alexia Queen, Decker Woods, Madi White, and Henry Wisneski. As a part of the learning process, residents have come up with the name Earth and You to simulate the "start-up farm" experience and have developed a community supported agriculture program (CSA) with signups open now. If you want a box of fresh veggies throughout the summer visit our website [www.bigmuddyurbanfarm.org/csa/](http://www.bigmuddyurbanfarm.org/csa/) for full details and to sign up.

Another budding activity we are excited about is the Youth Garden! After a year of limited interaction, we are excited to grow together again, with safety in mind. On March 27th, a planning meeting was held to discuss the youth garden program calendar and covid precautions. Thanks to Rose Carlson, Chris Foster, Frankie Hamburger, Matt Cronin, Monica Lehn, Cie Cie Miley, Brent Lubbert and Brittany Stebbins for brainstorming and BMUF Program Manager Rhonda Freeman for organizing and facilitating. An activity schedule with signup form will be distributed throughout the neighborhood in early May and signups will begin at the Open House of the Community Garden on Saturday May 15th (check with Chris and Brittany if there is an open house). We are following cdc guidelines, including wearing masks, to maintain a healthy and safe environment for youth gardeners and volunteers. Look out for the youth garden flyer in the neighborhood or send Rhonda an email at [rhonda@bigmuddyurbanfarm.org](mailto:rhonda@bigmuddyurbanfarm.org) to get on a list to receive youth garden updates.

And we're raising it up for raised beds! On Saturday, April 10 from 10am to Noon we are hosting a raised bed building workshop at the 3215 California st farm plot. Join in to get your hands dirty and build raised beds. It will also be a little bit of a celebration because the raised beds we are replacing lasted eight years! That's eight years of growing fresh veggies and training urban farmers right here in the neighborhood! After we refresh the raised beds, the next farm infrastructure improvement we are going to make is improvements to our three chicken coops. We're excited to grow in Gifford Park and look forward to seeing you around the neighborhood!



*2021 Aspiring Farmer Residents (r to l) Decker Gabriel-Woods, Alexia Queen, Madi White, Sophia Cooper, and Henry Wisneski.*

## American Dream—coming through: Yates Illuminates opens Doors to the Future

By Adrian S. Petrescu and Marie H el ene Andr e



Marie H el ene Andr e & Adrian S. Petrescu hang a 'save Yates sign' on the 'For Sale' sign. (Credit: Jos e Garcia)

We started 2021 on a roll! Our very first meeting of the New Year, on Monday, January 4, at 9 am —on zoom-- was on building the future of Yates Illuminates healthily, with and by the community. Getting to our office, we found the first signs of programming at Yates: the solar powered hydrogen fuel cell model car kits had been delivered and were waiting for us to organize the Science and Arts in Parks (at Yates) Youth Project. The next day we received the 6 feet by 3 feet polished aluminum sheets to become solar mirrors for powering solar Stirling co-generation engines for the same project (more details further in this article). Later that month, while walking in the neighborhood in the tall snow, we ran across the rest of the team, we learned about further architectural plans being drawn and contractors hired, and decided jointly to write a grant right away for tables and chairs



for meetings and other events at Yates, because what is a Community Center without chairs and tables if not just an empty building? It's done. While we wait for the answer, and the money, we'll use the model for writing a (much) bigger grant for many more tables and chairs and many other learning tools. There could not have been a more fitted start of this year of renewal. But let's recap briefly.

- A lot has happened since that Monday, November 16, 2020, when Omaha Public Schools



Board of Education voted to sell Yates back to the community. On Friday, December 18, 2020, the community finally—after two false alarms in prior days--took possession of the Yates building. It took a good few hours and a locksmith to resolve a missing key issue, but it all worked out in the end. Most of the committed anchor tenants were represented there to take part in the event, and they all got to give interviews on TV about their plans at Yates, and to enjoy fresh baked Belgian traditional cookies too. After all, we are always good hosts in Gifford Park; plus, Marie H el ene, the then President of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, is an accomplished amateur baker. What started at 9 am was eventually done by 4 pm.

Over a year of advocacy and volunteer work, of dreaming big and selling everyone on a bold

vision, of nurturing dreams, of building and growing partnerships, led to an open door. A door opened to the future for everyone. Let the future begin! We also spread the news around the country--in English and in French--thanks to host Franck Tucker Ebang and producer Pierre Sagitteh, MPA, from Kuanza Mpya African TV and to Omaha's community cable TV studio, KPAO: "Yates Illuminates gives people the American Dream. Not just to New Americans, but to everyone who wants to learn and apply to their life something new, at any age." ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbj4AxxcTc8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbj4AxxcTc8))

Over many meetings since January, GPNA neighborhood representatives and representatives from Metropolitan Community College, Learning for All, Refugee Empowerment Center, Benson Area Refugee Task Force, D2 Center, Great Plains Theatre Commons, Restoring Dignity, and quite a few other potential new tenants and partners took part in meetings via zoom, individually and jointly, and addressed spaces re-design, architectural plans, organizational plans and governance committees assignments, strategy ahead, and grant writing and fundraising priorities, to ensure a smooth opening and smooth operations and healthy seeds for future strategic growth.

We've collected and inventoried expressions of interest for using the community space for things from Yoga to new emerging youth STEM non-profits. We are planning to have Yates Illuminates open for the public as early as late April, but certainly no later than this Summer, as soon as the initial committed tenant organizations move in. What should you expect in the near future?

First, you are ALL invited to the Open House on Thursday, May 6, 2021, from 5:30 to 6:30 pm, to meet all anchor tenants, learn about future plans, ask questions and tour the building. It will be immediately followed by the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association General Meeting. See you soon at Yates Illuminates!

Later in the Summer and for the next three years, youth who will choose to participate in successive Science and Arts in Parks programs held in Gifford Park and at Yates will build and race solar powered hydrogen fuel cell model cars, will learn how to design and build a working model of the solar Stirling co-generation engines, out of the polished aluminum sheets GPNA bought with an Omaha Community Foundation grant, will build business plans and so much more.

These are just the first steps in this new and exciting adventure. We will keep you updated on the progress in our next newsletter. You are always welcome to contact us to share your ideas and suggestions.

## That Joyful Music Inside Us

By Mike Caban

One's own heartbeat has a rhythm,

A life-affirming cadence, and a reason,

For joyous dancing,

And the stomping of feet.

Repeating and repeating the beat,

That keeps us breathing and dancing,

To that oh so sweet music of life.

That keeps us breathing and dancing,  
To that oh so sweet music called life.



**GIFFORD PARK**  
**GPNA**  
**ROOTED 1988**  
**30 YEARS**

# YOUR MEMBERSHIP FUNDS NEIGHBORHOOD FUN!

**FOR THOSE ABLE AND INSPIRED TO GIVE, RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP OR JOIN GPNA BY FILLING OUT THE FORM ON THE BACK PAGE AND SEND TO PO BOX 31462**

**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING COMMUNITY-BUILDING IN GIFFORD PARK!**

**\$10 SINGLE**

**\$15 FAMILY**

**\$25 BUSINESS**

## **Omaha's annual free cleanup event will happen in Gifford Park on May 22, 2021, 9am-2pm!**

- \* Neighborhood volunteers will monitor the dumpsters (NO commercial hauling!)
- \* Items ACCEPTED: furniture, bulky items, appliances, metal
- \* See below for items NOT ACCEPTED
- \* Toxic materials (paint, oil, pesticides, chemicals) can be taken to the Under the Sink facility near 120th & I Streets
- \* Tree brush vouchers will be available
- \* Tires may be dropped off for FREE at Walnut Hill Elementary School (4370 Hamilton St)
- \* Tires will be accepted at Gifford Park site at \$1 each
- \* Gifford Park Neighborhood Association members will get highest priority for hauling items
- \* We also hold a membership and donation drive - please consider renewing or donating to Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
- \* We need volunteers to provide traffic control, solicit membership renewals and donations, and help load and unload items!
- \* If you would like to volunteer to work at our neighborhood cleanup or if you need help hauling, please call or text Anna at 206-276-5952

### **PROHIBITED ITEMS**

The following items are NOT ACCEPTED at the Omaha Spring Cleanup: rocks, concrete, and any items that can be collected via your curbside trash and recycling service. Toxic materials (paint, oil, pesticides, and other chemicals) are also NOT ACCEPTED and should be taken to the Under the Sink facility near 120th & I Streets (UnderTheSink.org).

## **¡El evento anual y gratuito de limpieza Omaha se llevará a cabo en Gifford Park el 22 de mayo de 2021, de 9 am a 2 pm!**

- \* Los voluntarios del vecindario supervisarán los contenedores de basura (¡SIN transporte comercial!)
- \* Artículos ACEPTADOS: muebles, artículos voluminosos, electrodomésticos, metal
- \* Vea a continuación los artículos NO ACEPTADOS
- \* Los materiales tóxicos (pintura, aceite, pesticidas, productos químicos) se pueden llevar a las instalaciones de Under the Sink, cerca de las calles 120th y I
- \* Los vales de cepillo de árbol estarán disponibles
- \* Las llantas se pueden dejar GRATIS en la Escuela Primaria Walnut Hill (4370 Hamilton St)
- \* Se aceptarán llantas en el sitio de Gifford Park a \$1 cada una
- \* Los miembros de la Asociación de Vecinos de Gifford Park tendrán la más alta prioridad para transportar artículos
- \* También solicitamos donaciones de membresía - considere donar a Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
- \* ¡Necesitamos voluntarios para proporcionar control de tráfico, solicitar renovaciones de membresía y donaciones, y ayudar a cargar y descargar artículos!
- \* Si puede ayudar como voluntario con la limpieza de nuestro vecindario o si necesita ayuda para transportar, llame o envíe un mensaje de texto a: Anna at 206-276-5952

### **ARTÍCULOS PROHIBIDOS**

Los artículos siguientes NO SE PUEDEN ACEPTAR en La Limpieza de la Primavera: piedras, concreto, y las cosas que se pueden dejar para su servicio regular de basura/reciclaje. Materiales tóxicos (pintura, aceite, pesticidas y otros químicos) TAMPOCO se van a aceptar y uno debe de botarlos en la instalación de Under the Sink (UnderTheSink.org) cerca de la 120 con la calle I.

## Midtown Mutual Aid Marks A Year of Monthly Food Distributions

Thanks you to everyone who has contributed to the food distribution that has taken place every month on 3rd Saturdays at 515 N 33rd Street since April of 2020. So many people have contributed food, art and handcrafted items for our fundraising events, money, and time and energy. This neighbor-to-neighbor support has resulted in hundreds of individuals and families being able to get pantry items, produce, and household necessities (like diapers, toilet paper, tampons, and soap), no questions asked. Midtown Mutual Aid intends to continue bringing people together!



## Waste Bins

by Jim Wilwerding

Now that we've had a little time to become accustomed to the new bins, perhaps helpful to go over a few of the new rules.

Generally speaking, all waste must go into the bins. FCC will not big up trash in bags, boxes, etc. Nor will they take trash leaning against the bins, or stacked on top of bins. In households with more than 5 members, free extra bins can be obtained. For smaller households, extra bins must be leased, for a fee.

There are a few exceptions. They will pick up yard waste in paper bags or bundled sticks. This waste will be picked up with the regular garbage, and sent to the landfill. But you must pay 2 dollars per bag or stick bundle. You can purchase stickers at Hy-Vee, Ace Hardware, and some other locations. Each bag or bundle must have a sticker, or they will not be picked up.

They also plan on picking up yard waste in bags for free for 6 weeks in the spring, and six weeks in the fall. This spring, the free period is May 17 through June 25. There is no limit on the number of bags, and the waste will be composted.

At other times of the year, you can put your yard waste in the black-topped garbage bins, so long as the lid can still close, and it will be taken for free.

Recycling is picked up every other week. The schedule can be found at <https://wasteline.org/>. Again, all materials must fit into the bin, with the lid closed. Materials piled around the bin, or stacked on top, will not be taken.

Glass is not to be included in the recycling. Glass and other recyclables can be dropped off at one of the recycling sites listed on <https://wasteline.org/recycling-collection-information/recycling-drop-off-locations/>. The closest is at 17th and Burt.

Those finding the standard bin too large or difficult to handle can request a smaller bin. Obviously, you'll have less available space to fill. Special pickups can also be arranged for those disabled, or 70 and over. Those qualifying should call the solid waste help line at 402-444-5238 between 8am and 8pm weekdays to begin the process of registration.

Bins should be put out no later than 6:00AM on collection day. And should be taken in no later than 10:00am the following day. Bins should be placed near the curb, with some space between the recycling and waste carts if both are being picked up. City code does not permit leaving the cans on the curb permanently. Please cooperate by putting your cans out in a timely fashion, and taking them in after they are dumped.

Other information can be found at <https://wasteline.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.