



Gifford Park's Pride

Gifford Park Neighborhood: A Great Place to Live, Work, Learn and Play

Spring 2025

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Spring Cleanup Saturday May 3, 9 am to 2 pm at Duchesne Parking Lot

Gifford Park Neighborhood Association will be partnering with Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association for the annual spring cleanup Saturday, May 3, 9 am to 2 pm in the Duchesne parking lot (3601 Burt St.). If you would like to volunteer, or if you have furniture, appliances or other items you would like to have picked up, contact Chris at 402-290-8187 or email foster3413@cox.net. There is no charge to bring items to the cleanup or to have them picked up, but please consider joining GPNA and/or making a donation.

- *Neighborhood volunteers will monitor the site (No commercial hauling)
- *Items ACCEPTED: furniture, bulky items, appliances, metal
- *Tires (without rims) and appliances may be dropped off for FREE at Levi Carter Park - Boat Ramp (809 Carter Lake Shore Drive North)
- *Yardwaste will be accepted ONLY at the designated yardwaste site, Al Veys Park at 6606 S 60th St.
- *Gifford Park Neighborhood Association members will get highest priority to have items picked up by volunteers

The following items are NOT ACCEPTED at the 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).

Next Meeting
Thursday May 1
6:30 pm
at Yates Illuminates
3260 Davenport St.

Guest Speaker:
Kate Bodmann
Clinical Herbalist and
owner at Land of Milk
and Honey Herbs &
Omaha Whole Living

Neighborhood
Updates

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33rd Annual

Gifford Park Neighborhood - EASTER EGG HUNT



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

When: Saturday, April 19
Noon (Rain or Shine!)

Who: Children Ages 12 & under



Bring Your Easter Baskets!

Volunteers needed to help pickup litter in Gifford Park at 10:30am

EVERYONE WELCOME!

GPNA OFFICERS

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Youth Garden/Adventure Playground
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 sfadventureplayground@gmail.com
Membership
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 rhcarlson4@yahoo.com 402-639-5952

**For City Services, Information,
 or Complaints Call
 Mayor's Hotline 402-444-5555**

**In Case of Emergency Call 911 for
 Police, Fire, Rescue,
 or Medical Emergency**

**For Police Non-Emergency
 Call 402-444-5600**

Gifford Park



Neighborhood Market

**Every Friday Night 5-8 pm
 33rd & California Starting June 6**

520 N. 33rd St.



- Fresh Produce
- Farm Raised Meats
- Breads
- Honey
- Plants
- Handmade Items and more....
- Food Trucks



The city of Omaha is holding general elections for mayor and city council on Tuesday May 13

Parking, Trash Bins, Scooters, and Pets

From Jim Wilwerding's Spring 2024 GPNA newsletter article "Gifford Park is a Walkable Neighborhood"

Unfortunately, we have people who obstruct sidewalks in a number of ways. Perhaps most common is drivers parking on the sidewalk. This is not only against the law, it is a bad idea. While street parking can be a challenge in some areas, please be considerate of pedestrians. Probably next most common are trash containers left on the sidewalk 24/7. Again, the law requires they be removed within 24 hours of trash day. More recently, we are seeing rental scooters left laying on sidewalks, presenting a hazard to pedestrians. It would be helpful if users left them parked on the edge of the sidewalk, not crosswise or laying down. Finally, we have pet owners who do not clean up after their pets. While this problem seems in decline, along certain routes it is still common. No one wants to spend time cleaning up their walking shoes when they get home. Please do your part to keep our neighborhood safe and walkable.

3260 Davenport St

Sweet Circle is a free women's support group. Join us for peer group discussions, professional guest speakers, fun activities, outings, workshops & education
**Light meal & Childcare

☎ 402-598-0919
📧 SweetCircle365@gmail.com
📱 Follow us on Facebook

2025 Calendar

Mar	Apr	May	June	July
10	7	5	10	7
24	21	19	24	21
Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
11	10	7	3	10
25	24	21	17	24

Mondays 6-8pm



A safe space to take care of YOU

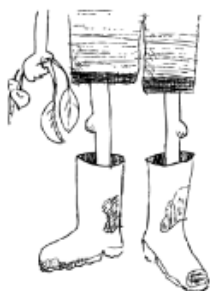
Share your talent
 Free sign up at OmahaMobileStage.org

YOUTH TALENT SHOW

Open to music, bands, dancing, singing, drama, musical theater, comedy, improv, poetry, spoken word, opera, illusion, and more!

Summer 2025

May 31 - Drum-Off Competition and La Vista Days Youth Talent Show at City Hall Campus
 June 8 - Dance Night Youth Talent Show at Gene Leahy Mall
 June 15 - Council Bluffs Youth Talent Show at Tom Hanafan River's Edge Park
 June 22 - Battle of the Bands Youth Talent Show at Millwork Commons
 June 29 - Papillion Youth Talent Show at SumTür Amphitheater
 July 13 - Youth Talent Show Finals at Gene Leahy Mall



BIG MUDDY URBAN FARM

Big Muddy Urban Farm 2025 Update

This summer, Big Muddy Urban Farm, through its new "Educating Tomorrow's Urban Farmers" program, will be teaching children about the principles and practices of urban agriculture. Through interactive lessons and hands-on activities, we will empower young minds to understand the importance of sustainable food production and the benefits of growing food in an urban setting. Questions? Contact info@bigmuddyurbanfarm.org

Upcoming volunteer dates: May 17: Planting Transplants ; May 31: Pest Management and Succession planting June 14: Harvest Methods ; June 28: Weed Management

GPNA Membership Drive

What a deal...Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA) annual membership dues are only: \$10 for Single, \$15 for Family, \$25 for Business. Your membership simply helps support our events and programs including neighborhood cleanups, park improvements, newsletters, public safety, and many youth activities like Science Club, tennis, soccer, gardening, and Adventure Playground. We are a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization.

To join or renew your membership:

-Use the form on the last page of the newsletter and mail your payment to: Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, PO Box 31462 Omaha, NE 68131

-PayPal to hello@giffordparkomaha.org

For more information contact our membership chair Rose at rhcarlson4@yahoo.com or 402-639-5952
Thank you to those who have already joined!

News from Yates Illuminates

By Marie Hélène André, Executive Director



Have you come to Yates Illuminates recently? Have you noticed all the changes since the last newsletter? If you walk by, you will see the beautiful sign and the lightbulb in the front yard, both communal activities started last year at our Grand Opening!

We had a lot of programming and events in the past 6 months: the *Catrina Runway* and a play by Great Plains Theatre Commons, the first *Halloween Trunk and Treats* and many programs offered by Bluebird Cultural Initiative, the *free driving classes* for refugee women offered by Refugee Women Rising, and the *STEAM afterschool program* by International Council for Refugees and Immigrants. GPNA held a couple of general meetings here, one of them with special guests who explained how to Navigate the Healthcare System. *The Science Club* kept their promise to hold year-round sessions, with a special Grand Finale about the Science of Cooking! We wrapped up 2024 with the *now traditional Holiday Makers Market* (did you find the perfect gift?)

The SWEET Circle meets here every other Monday, *MOMentum* started the *Clothing Closet*, we held a food distribution sponsored by UNMC students, and our weekly Saturday afternoon English class is always well attended!

In 2025, we want to do even more to make this community dream even more real with more celebrations and gatherings, like multicultural evenings, the International Day of Hope celebration (July 12) the Summer Drumming Camp with a free concert on July 25, and that's just a start!

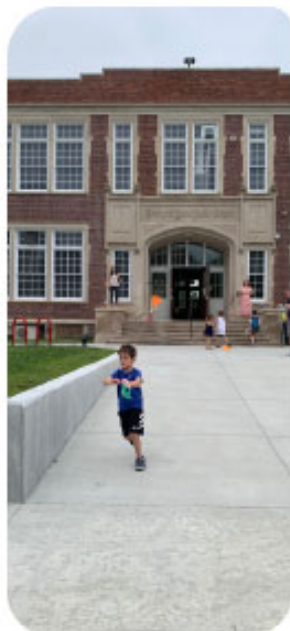
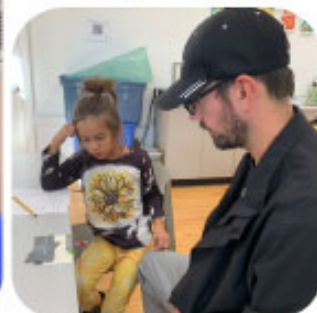
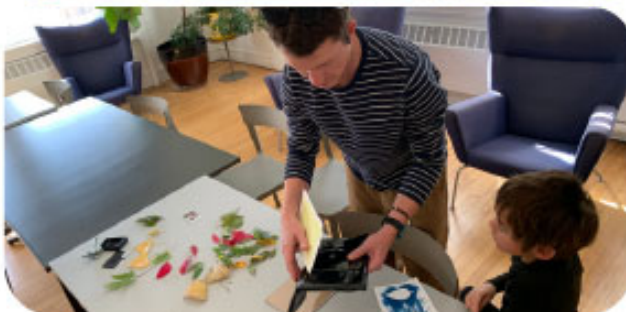
The Science Club will hold another session on May 4, and we will start the violin classes again in the summer.

To offer even more, we need *YOUR* help!

Contact me (mhandre@yatesilluminates.org) if you want to volunteer, or if you have an idea and would like to implement it at Yates, visit our website (yatesilluminates.org) and donate, or attend one or more events here at Yates Illuminates!

Your support is always greatly appreciated!





Community Garden & Adventure Playground

We hope you plan to attend our Community Garden & Adventure Playground Season Opening Event, Saturday May 10, 10 am to Noon at the community garden (35th & Cass St.) to celebrate the start of our 25th year - it's free and open to everyone. We plan to have a variety of family activities including Youth Garden program & Adventure Playground registration; information on the community garden; free books; Mother's Day take home project; face-painting; music; digging; free seeds, plants, and refreshments (while supplies last); and meet chickens!

We hope everyone pitches in to help with ideas, projects, maintenance, and overall participation with the community garden in whatever capacity you feel comfortable. Here is a list of some known and potential projects/events/activities that we plan to do...

- Garden Opening event (Saturday, May 10, 10 am - Noon)
- Youth Garden Program (Saturdays 10-11:30 am, May 17 to August 23)
- Adventure Playground (Saturday afternoons noon - 2 pm, May 10 to September)
- Pot Luck dinners to be announced
- Garden tours (get people familiar with different parts of the garden areas)
- Theme garden maintenance (roses, butterfly, senses, perennial, front wall, herb, berry bushes, fruit trees, etc.)
- Compost bins - turn over compost pile (good exercise!)
- Planting & weeding (on-going)
- Chicken and goat care

For more information, contact Chris Foster (402-290-8187 or foster3413@cox.net) or Rose Carlson (402-639-5952 or rhcarlson4@yahoo.com). For Adventure Playground, contact Monica Lehn 402-660-9046, or mmlehn@gmail.com or sfadventureplayground@gmail.com or on Facebook



On behalf of Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, THANK YOU to the 90+ Creighton Greek Life and Sustainability Club volunteers for doing a great job picking up litter, sweeping glass, and weeding in Gifford Park, Turner Park North, and nearby streets and alleys on April 6 and April 11.

Gifford Park Youth Garden

Everyone Welcome!



2025 Schedule ~ all Saturdays 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

May 10 Garden Season Opening Event (10:00-noon)
 May 17 Get to Know Your Garden (pick & prep plot)
 May 24 Plant Your Plot/Paint Your Stake
 May 31 Plant Your Plot/Paint Your Stake
 June 7 Rocks of Affirmation
 June 14 Building Works
 June 21 Nature Journaling
 June 28 Making Music in the Garden
 July 5 No Programming
 July 12 Chicken Treats
 July 19 Hydroponics for Kids
 July 26 Cooking & Nutrition
 Aug 2 Movement in the Garden
 Aug 9 Quick Pickles
 Aug 16 Seed Bombs
 Aug 23 Garden Harvest PARTY!
 Rest of Season (tend your plot)

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

Ways parents can get involved:

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

2025 Youth Garden Sign-up

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

School: _____ Age(s): _____

Parent's Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

We would like to bring treats on one of the Saturdays: yes no
 My parent/I would like to volunteer sometime: yes no

To register, complete the sign-up information and bring to the Season Opening Event on May 10.

For more information, contact:

Monica Lehn 402-660-9046/mmlehn@gmail.com or
 Chris Foster 402-290-8187/foster3413@cox.net

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. 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, including any incidents for my minor child/ward or me while en route or returning from a Youth Garden activity. Further, I permit taking photos and/or videos during Gifford Park Youth Community Garden activities for publication, social media, 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 _____

Noise

By Jim Wilwerding

My entirely unscientific definition of noise is sound you don't like. When the weather is nice, I like to sit in the front yard and read. I hear birds chirping, squirrels chattering, the wind blowing through the trees, sometimes the clatter of leaves as they roll down the street. Fortunately I live in a relatively quiet neighborhood. And these are all sounds I like, so I don't consider them noise.

Unfortunately I also hear loud cars and motorcycles, often from many blocks away. I hear dogs barking, sometimes from a couple of blocks away. And I hear loud music from passing cars, and from some neighbors a block or more away. And these are all definitely in the category of noise.

We have a few folks in the neighborhood with very loud vehicles who evidently enjoy making absolutely as much noise as possible. The goal is unclear, but I suspect few if any neighbors are impressed, and most would rather do without the annoyance. In some cases you can hear them from nearly a mile away. Obviously the noise is affecting a large number of people. If you believe in karma, the people responsible are due for some bad luck, I'd imagine.

Some pet owners don't seem to hear their dogs barking. Almost certainly the neighbors do. If a dog is out barking more than 20 minutes, it is disturbing the peace, and the owner can be cited. Repeated violations will result in the pet being taken away. The Nebraska Humane Society is responsible for enforcement. When a neighbor's big dog was a problem a few years back, the dog's barking could be clearly heard 6 blocks away. So, again, a large number of people may be negatively affected.

The city has fairly restrictive laws about loud music. Generally, if the music can be heard more than 100 feet away from the source, it is considered to be a violation, and the person responsible can be cited. The Omaha Police are responsible for enforcement. Undoubtedly musical tastes differ. What is music to your ears is perhaps noise to your neighbor. In consideration of that, best to keep the music within your property lines. If you like loud music, keep your windows and doors closed. And headphones might not be a bad idea.

Recent studies have found that noise can be a significant source of stress, associated with negative health consequences. And who needs more stress?

E-stuff

By Jim Wilwerding

I'm sure we've all seen the advances in electric cars. But there is an electric revolution in lawn equipment as well. After my trusty 30-year-old Lawnboy gave up the ghost last spring, I decided to take the plunge on an electric mower. The one I got was kinda expensive, but boasted more power than a gas mower. And so far as I can tell, the claim is 100% accurate. Mulching piles of leaves that would have bogged down the Lawnboy to a stop barely fazes the new mower. Cutting a lawn, even a long, wet one, is a non-event. While I was originally concerned with the durability of the plastic deck, after a season's use, it still looks nearly new, and everything is still solid. I eventually bought the companion weed whip and blower, and both are just as solid and useful.

Advantages of e-power? After the initial expense, almost zero operating expense. I can get two mowings out of a battery charge, at which point it costs about a nickel to recharge it. Other than sharpening the blade and oiling the wheels, not much else to do. No exhaust fumes, much less noise, no worries about having fuel. And the number one benefit? It ALWAYS starts, with no bending and pulling. No need for tune-ups or other expensive visits to the small engine shop. As a bonus, with no oil in a crankcase, mine can be folded and stood on end for storage, drastically reducing the footprint in the garage. The weed whip and blower are much, much quieter than the gas-powered versions, offer more control of speed, can be shut off and restarted with no drama. Again, no stinky fumes. And all, depending on the source of electric power (sadly, OPPD is still coal-dedicated) have zero direct pollution.

So if you dread the thought of fighting your mower for another season, think about going electric.

Gifford Park Free Soccer Camp



Ages 3 to 13 years old

Dates: Wednesdays June 4 to July 23

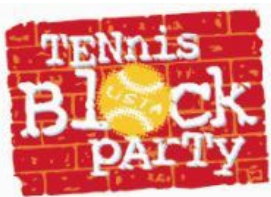
Times: 6:30 to 7:30 pm
at Gifford Park (33rd & Cass St.)



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.

Hello Neighbors! It's almost summer, which means Magpie and Jeff have been planning and prepping for this year's soccer camp. We will have registration forms available soon. As always, there will be forms on site you can complete when you come to camp. If you have questions or are interested in volunteering as a coach this year, please contact Magpie at tyler.magnuson@gmail.com / 402-706-7496 or Jeff at jeffspurlock@icloud.com / 402-651-4735. Thanks, looking forward to seeing you all!

Gifford Park Youth Tennis Block Party



Wednesday, May 14, 6:00-7:30pm
Gifford Park Tennis Courts, 33rd & Cass St.

Gifford Park Neighborhood Association is offering a FREE evening of tennis, games, & snacks to youth and will provide racquets, balls, and instructors.

For more information, contact Chris at 402-290-8187 or foster3413@cox.net



Gifford Park Youth Tennis



For: Youth All Ages
Dates: Wednesdays June 4 to July 23
Time: 10am to Noon
Where: Gifford Park Tennis Courts (33rd & Cass St.)

Gifford Park Neighborhood Association is offering FREE summer tennis lessons to youth and will provide racquets, balls, and instructors.

For more information, contact Chris at 402-290-8187 or foster3413@cox.net



Virginia Hutton Passes

Christmas was her favorite holiday

Virginia Ann Hutton 86, of Omaha, NE passed away on April 14, 2025 from complications of dementia and heart disease. Virginia was born on September 4, 1938 to Emma and Edwin Shannon in McPherson, KS. She graduated from Blackwell High School in Oklahoma. Virginia met her husband, Robert Hutton in Stillwater, OK. In 1959, they moved to Omaha where they have lived in the same house for 63 years.

Christmas was Virginia's favorite holiday. She created many felt Christmas stockings for family and friends. She was very festive, having the house decorated year-round, including a full size Christmas tree and one entire dining room wall covered with a variety of stockings that she had made throughout the years. Virginia enjoyed collecting and sharing recipes, researching family genealogy and in the 70s and 80s chatting with her CB Radio friends. Her true passion was being involved in the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association. Virginia always considered her neighbors family.



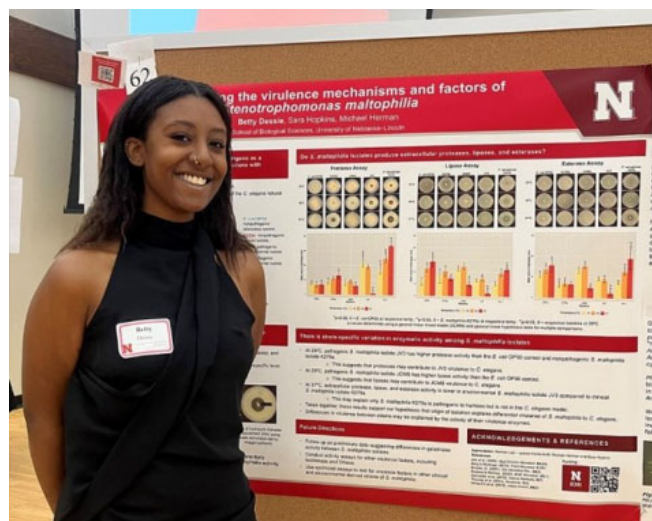
Virginia is survived by her husband Robert Hutton and sons, Michael Hutton (Sheryl Caryl) of Wichita, KS, Darryl Hutton of Omaha, daughters Anna Furry of Omaha and Cheryl Rein of San Antonio, FL., eight grandchildren and four great grandchildren. The family would like to thank Hillcrest Magnolia Memory Care Unit for the wonderful care given to Virginia. A special thank you to the Hillcrest Hospice team for their support and caring during this difficult time. A private family interment will be held at Omaha National Cemetery. In lieu of flowers donations can be made to the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (Community Garden), P.O. Box 31462 Omaha, NE 68131.

Danny's Corner Store Owner's Daughter Betty Dessie Passes

She had a luminous spirit and was a brilliant scientist

Betty Dessie was born on June 9, 2002, and was 22 years old. She was born in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to her loving mother, Elizabeth Worknhe, and devoted father, Daniel Dessie. Betty was a cherished big sister to Jersusalem and a phenomenal aunt to her precious baby nephew, Robel. She was deeply loved by her parents, sister, cousins, uncles, aunts, friends, and community.

Betty had a luminous spirit and was a brilliant scientist. She attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she earned her Bachelor of Science in MicroBiology in May 2024. A pioneer in her field, she conducted outstanding research on "Understanding the Virulence Mechanisms and Factors of *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia*." Her work was recognized across the country, giving her opportunities to present her findings in Los Angeles, Wisconsin, Arizona, and at Brown University in Rhode Island. Beyond her scientific achievements, Betty was deeply dedicated to innovative research and was a passionate advocate—both on her college campus and in the broader field. She championed important causes, including the African Student Association among other social justice initiatives.



In 2023, Betty was diagnosed with Paroxysmal Nocturnal Hemoglobinuria and aplastic anemia, a rare acquired blood disorder that progressed rapidly. Despite the challenges she faced, Betty fought with incredible strength until her very last breath. Even in moments of despair, she found the courage to pray with her family, offer them comforting words, engage in casual conversations, and share her beautiful smile—all while enduring unimaginable pain. On March 6, 2025, the Lord called upon His angel to return to her eternal home. Though her time on earth felt too brief, it was because our Lord, Jesus Christ, had greater plans for her beautiful soul—plans that extend far beyond what anyone could have imagined for her life.

What's Happening around the Neighborhood . . .

Congratulations and welcome to the neighborhood to River Van Sant born in February to Michael & Emily Van Sant. River joins his brother Lincoln in helping take care of the community garden, chickens, and goats!

GPNA offers our sincere condolences to GPNA board member and longtime Gifford Park resident and volunteer Tyronda Pierce and her family for the tragic loss of Tyronda's 15-year-old nephew Shalamar Davis Jr. in March. We know this has been a very difficult time for your family.

The City Parks Department plans to do some improvements in Gifford Park starting the week of April 21. These include regrading and reseeding the ball field/soccer field area, install a new backstop, replace deteriorating pavement under the bleachers and some side-walks with new concrete, and replace the old water faucet. These projects are expected to take several weeks.

Gifford Park Elementary PTO would love to have more community members involved in the school. You do not need to be a parent or teacher to be involved. Upcoming events: PTO Meeting - April 16, 5:30 pm GPE library; GPE Grounds Clean-up - May 3, 9:00 am. GPE has limited Gifford Park gear (hats, T-shirts, and sweatshirts). If anyone is interested, please contact PTO president Lisa Tonjes Moritz at LisaTonjes@gmail.com.

GPNA has been working on creating the Eva Swanson Archive in honor of Eva who was our neighborhood historian. GPNA member Lisa Tonjes Moritz has scanned the wonderful scrapbooks and 33rd & California history book that Eva created for the Gifford Park Neighborhood. If you have photos that show the history and the community of our neighborhood, please upload here: <http://hopeorganizing.com/giffordparkshare> Feel free to contact Lisa@HOPEorganizing.com if you have any questions.

Photos from 2024 late Summer and Fall...Block Party, Community Garden, Porchfest, Halloween





Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
PO Box 31462
Omaha, NE 68131

Place
Stamp
Here

Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA)
Membership Application

GPNA membership year runs from January 1 to December 31
We are a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization

Type of membership: ☐ Single (\$10) ☐ Family (\$15) ☐ Business (\$25)

Today's Date: _____

Business Name (if applicable): _____ Phone: _____

Name (1): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name (2): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Return this completed form along with your payment and mail to:

Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, PO Box 31462, Omaha, NE 68131

or PayPal to hello@giffordparkomaha.org