



# Gifford Park's Pride

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

Summer/Fall 2025

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

**33rd Friday Block Party August 15, EVERYONE WELCOME!**

**YATES ILLUMINATES**  
*and* **GIFFORD PARK**  
**NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
*are proud to present the annual*

**33RD FRIDAY  
BLOCK PARTY**

LIVE MUSIC & DANCING  
KIDS ZONE - FOOD TRUCKS  
NEIGHBORHOOD MARKET  
POP-UP SKATE PARK  
PICKLEBALL & TENNIS  
YARD GAMES - FUN!!!

**ALL ARE  
WELCOME**

**FREE  
EVENT**

**FRIDAY  
AUGUST 15TH**

**5 - 8  
PM**

**ON 33RD STREET  
BETWEEN CASS AND CALIFORNIA**

*Special thanks to our partners:*

   

## Next Meeting

**Thursday August 7  
6:30 p.m.  
at Yates Illuminates  
3260 Davenport St.**

Tour the Yates freight farm with Austin from MCC, see the new commercial kitchen and taste the results of our recipe challenge!

## In this issue...

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## Back to School Safety Tips for Drivers

Please be extra careful when driving and follow these tips...be aware of school buses; stay alert and avoid distracted driving; follow speed limits, especially in school zones; watch for pedestrians, children, and cyclists; be cautious of new drivers on the road; do not pass a stopped bus; be prepared for traffic, obey crossing guards and crosswalks. Thank You!

**GPNA OFFICERS**

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**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**

**Welcome Students!**

By Terry Wilwerding

We have a large number of university students living in the area who have returned for another year of school, or who are just starting college this year. Welcome (back) to Gifford Park! The Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA) has been working very hard to improve the appearance and safety of our neighborhood. The goal of the GPNA is to improve the neighborhood and make it a better place for all residents, and we would ask our new student neighbors to become a part of this effort. The largest part of being a good neighbor is consideration for others. First, we ask students to be considerate in terms of noise, especially after 10 pm. Many families in our neighborhood have children or go to work early. Parties are another problem. Unfortunately, parties can end up bigger and noisier than first planned. Another issue is parking. Our neighborhood is short on parking, so you may not always be able to park directly in front of your residence. Please do not park on lawns, across sidewalks, or on the wrong side of the street (facing traffic). Besides being a serious safety issue and making the neighborhood look bad, all of these are parking violations and are subject to ticketing. Also, please do not litter, and help us to keep our neighborhood picked up. Many of us pick up trash that we did not leave and we ask that you would help us by doing the same. Finally, consider coming to our quarterly neighborhood meetings and joining the GPNA. A single membership is only \$10 and the membership form is on the back page of this newsletter. We welcome students for the upcoming year, and we hope that you will help us continue to make the Gifford Park neighborhood a better place to live, work, learn and play!

**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**

<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>
10	7	5	2	14
24	21	19	16	28
<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sept</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
11	8	6	3	1
25	22	20	17	15

**Mondays 6-8pm**



**A safe  
 space to  
 take care  
 of YOU**





**Porchfest returns for the 9th Annual event on Sunday, October 5th from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.**

This free community festival has over 80 performances that take place on 14 stages including Omaha Mobile Stage at Yates Illuminates, the neighborhood market stage, seven more music porches, an open mic porch, a poetry porch, a comedy porch, and an art porch in Omaha's Gifford Park Neighborhood. Bring the whole family for activities including face painting, chalk painting, art displays, games, food trucks, and more!

## Gifford Park Neighborhood Market



Midtown's Original Farmers Market...since 2006

520 N. 33rd St.



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



**Every Friday evening - 5:00 to 8:00 pm  
June 6 to September 26**



Contact:  
GPNMarket@gmail.com

***Since 2006!***





## Community Garden

By Chris Foster

The community garden at 35th & Cass Street has benefited this season from timely rains which have kept everything growing (weeds too!). Everyone is welcome to walk through the garden and Adventure Playground and check out the gardens, flowers, chickens, bees, compost, two-story tree house, and memorial brick dedication feature. Our Youth Garden (GPYG) program began May 10 with our “Season Opening” event and ends with our “Pizza Garden Harvest Party” August 23rd. Youth participants gardened in 44 raised beds (each 30” x 30” plots) and learned from volunteer presenters on these topics: rocks, building birdhouses, music, nature journaling, yoga, making chicken treats, hydroponics, insects, composting, pickling, cooking & nutrition, herbs, seed bombs, and art. Thanks to our many dedicated parents and volunteers and especially to GPYG director Monica Lehn and our chicken-care families! For more information on the community garden, youth garden, or Adventure Playground, contact Chris Foster (402-290-8187, [foster3413@cox.net](mailto:foster3413@cox.net)), Monica Lehn (402-660-9046, [mmlehn@gmail.com](mailto:mmlehn@gmail.com)), or Rose Carlson (402-639-5952, [rhcarlson4@yahoo.com](mailto:rhcarlson4@yahoo.com)).



## Gifford Park 'Identity Garden' at 33rd & Cass Streets





## 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 for 2025:

-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](mailto:hello@giffordparkomaha.org)

For more information contact our membership chair Rose at [rhcarlson4@yahoo.com](mailto:rhcarlson4@yahoo.com) or 402-639-5952

Thank you to those who have already joined or renewed!

## Fall Neighborhood Cleanup?

Stay tuned for more information on tentative plans to partner again with our Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association friends for the annual fall cleanup on a Saturday likely in October or November at the Duchesne parking lot (36th & California). For more information contact Chris at 402-290-8187 or email [foster3413@cox.net](mailto:foster3413@cox.net).

Friendly reminder to set out waste and recycling carts by 6 a.m. the day of collection, and they must be removed from the curb by 10 a.m. the day after collection.



## 29th Annual Halloween Festival

### Where:

Gifford Park  
Playground Area  
35th & Davenport St.

### When:

Saturday  
October 25th  
4:00 to 7:00pm



hosted by the Phi Delta Theta Fraternity,  
Delta Zeta Sorority & Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

All Children and Parents Welcome  
Halloween Activities, Pumpkin-Painting, Scavenger Hunt,  
Games, Treats, and other Fun Festivities!

**FREE!**



## Big Muddy Urban Farm

By Gavin Johnston, Farm Manager

Things are productive at the urban farm this season. We have harvested over 500 lbs of produce in total so far, including over 120 lbs of onions! We have a lot of corn, peppers, squash, tomatoes, cucumbers, and potatoes coming on too. We have made a ton of salsa, pizza sauce, and chili base. I am pretty happy with how things are going this year. The refugee group farming the front half of 34th & Burt Street plot are doing a fantastic job. They have a lot of corn, peppers, and eggplant coming. Our partnership with Global Roots is going great too. They are utilizing the Cottage Grove Plot this season. So, if you see them up there while you're walking about, say hi! In addition, if you see us out in the Burt Street garden come check things out and get some bounty! If we don't cross paths you can always come by the Big Muddy garage on Monday nights from 6pm-7pm to get some fresh produce. We also have been donating produce to a local food distribution group that operates out of the Big Muddy garage, but soon you will find Big Muddy produce at Yates Illuminates! Keep Your Eyes Peeled - Volunteering Events:

-August 9th @ 10 a.m.: We will be harvesting our potatoes. Join us in the fun and go home with some tasty potatoes!

-August 23rd @ 10 a.m.: Join us in harvest!

-September 20th @ 10 a.m.: Join us as we expand our garden beds to increase production capabilities.

-September 27th @ 10 a.m.: Join us as we clean up the garden and prep some beds for winter.





## Youth Soccer Camp

Thanks to Magpie Magnuson and Jeff Spurlock for organizing Soccer Camp 2025, which is the fourth year since they have led this free program started in 2012 by Eric Purcell to create a fun space where kids ages 3 to 13 years old are introduced to soccer to learn the basic skills of the game. Soccer goals, balls, and instructors were provided each Wednesday evening in June and July at Gifford Park.



## Youth Tennis

Thanks to the Stanley family for leading our June and July Wednesday 10 am to Noon youth tennis program at Gifford Park. Your dedication, talent, and enthusiasm is inspiring! We also had our annual tennis block party May 14th. See page 7 of this newsletter for information on our Wednesday evenings in August program starting August 6th...the Stanleys will be there!



## 33rd Annual Easter Egg Hunt

Nice spring weather greeted us for our 33rd annual Easter Egg Hunt held Saturday, April 19 in Gifford Park. We estimated about 125 neighborhood children participated in age groups 0-4, 5-6, 7-9, and 10-12 year-olds. As in the past, our anonymous dentist friend donated dental care bags! New this year, we scattered lots of yellow tennis balls with a prize for the most collected. Volunteers picked up litter in the park before the event. There were many volunteers and donations from a variety of people and businesses; Brittney Rubek did a GREAT job leading the event with help from her daughter Arianna. Justine Stanley did another wonderful job as Easter bunny giving out treats to youngsters, she was joined by her sisters Dawn, Crystal, Witney, Rachel and brother Wendell Junior. Sara Howard, husband Doug, and her mom Gwen donated cute stuffed bunnies. Many thanks to all those who donated time, money, candy, and other items: Urban Village, Danny's Corner Grocery, California Tacos, Mic & Jane Whelan, Darryl Hutton, Bob Hutton, Ben Spahn, Cammy Bogard, Noah Christensen, Crispin Mahoney, Adrian Petrescu, Marie Helene Andre, Terry & Sue Wilwerding, Michael & Emily Van Sant, Claire Doll, Paul Pellerito & family, Jackie Foster, Chris Foster, and GPNA. Please support the above businesses for their contributions.







## 32nd Annual Gifford Park Free Tennis Program



**For:** Youth (3 to 18 years old)  
**Dates:** August 6, 13, 20, 27  
 (each Wednesday in August)  
**Where:** Gifford Park Tennis Courts  
 (33rd & Cass St.)  
**Time:** 6:00 - 7:00 pm



The Gifford Park Neighborhood Association is offering **FREE Tennis Lessons** and will provide tennis racquets, balls and instructors for each lesson. Parents and others are welcome to help.

**To be enrolled, YOU MUST complete the form below and bring with you to the tennis lessons.** Special prize for those who attend every lesson and demonstrate good sportsmanship. Space is limited so please **be on time**.

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

**Registration/Permission Form** - Bring this form (completely filled out) with you to the tennis lessons to be enrolled.

Youth's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street: \_\_\_\_\_ Street: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent/Guardian Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ 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:** \_\_\_\_\_

## News from Yates Illuminates

By Marie Hélène André, Executive Director



At the time of writing, we have just wrapped up the *Summer Drumming Camp* for the third consecutive year. It is now a tradition at Yates Illuminates: drumming classes every afternoon for two weeks in the middle of the hot Nebraska summer and a final performance. This year, we welcomed almost 40 participants and had traditional West-African Food at the end of the concert! It is the first of a series of cultural events until the rest of the year. We hope you'll join us!



Also this Summer, *The Science Club* welcomed Kids on the Air Day -an amateur radio event- and offered a few sessions about our amazing brain, thanks to Aaron, our volunteer and a Creighton University student in Neuroscience. We had fun discovering the different parts of the brain and learning about sensory physiology. Our next session (August 17) will be about muscles and nerves.



Do you want to meet neighbors and make new friends, play (board) games or just relax have a good time? Join us *every other Wednesday from 6 to 8:30 pm for the Yates Games Club*, a new program to foster the very sense of community Gifford Park Neighborhood is known for.

Our partners are working hard to offer more resources and services to the community. For example, the *clothing closet* opened early March and served 814 individuals in the first 3 months! There is a real need in the community, and we accept donations of gently used clothes when the closet is open (Tuesday/Thursday from 10:30 am to 1:00 pm and Wednesday from 4 to 7 pm).

And we have more projects in the making for Fall: a few partner tenants are working on the use of the *kitchen*, while others have already met several times to start a *Yates podcast* and open the room for community members, and we are also working on *opening a pantry*. **Stay tuned!**

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

Contact me ([mhandre@yatesilluminates.org](mailto:mhandre@yatesilluminates.org)) if you want to volunteer, or if you have an idea and would like to implement it at Yates, donate to help us implement the community's dream, visit our website ([yatesilluminates.org](http://yatesilluminates.org)) and sign up for our weekly newsletter!



## Business District Flower Pots

by Martin Janousek

A Big Thank You goes out to the businesses and individuals who helped this year with donating money, time and energy in planting the flowers, maintaining the flowers especially during our hot summer days and most importantly making the business district successful and beautiful.

This is the 19<sup>th</sup> year of planting flowers and it's what has helped over the years in bringing life back to the business district. As a neighborhood association, we get many compliments and questions from people about the flowers. Please stop by the following businesses and let them know you appreciate their generosity...and give them a Big Thank You!

### Gifford Park Business District Businesses

California Bar

Danny's Corner Store – Danny

Evoluxion Barber Shop – Beau

Melrose Apartments – Baron Management

Sommelier Insurance – Luper

And the following GPNA individuals.....

Josie, Stella, Paul, Martin, Rob, Chris



## Community Bicycle Project of Omaha

Exhi-BIKE-tion is a curated community art show celebrating bicycles and cycling as modes of transportation, transformation, resistance, and release. Co-organized by Yuanjun Chen, and in the historic Joslyn Castle, the exhibition explores how biking shapes the way we move, connect, and imagine our lives from everyday commutes to childhood memories, critical mass rides to quiet moments in motion. This event is also a fundraiser for The Community Bike Project of Omaha, the city's only nonprofit dedicated to providing free access to bikes, tools, and cycling education for people of all ages. Exhi-BIKE-tion opens to the public Thursday, September 18th with a closing celebration to follow Friday, September 26th. Omaha-area artists working in painting, drawing, photography, mixed media), zines, digital works, small sculpture, bike-modified objects, or functional bike-related art will submit artwork. For questions regarding the art shows, please contact John Paul at: [jpaul@joslyncastle.com](mailto:jpaul@joslyncastle.com). If you have any questions for the bike shop, email [info@communitybikeproject.org](mailto:info@communitybikeproject.org) or message us on Instagram [@bike\\_project\\_omaha](https://www.instagram.com/bike_project_omaha).



*Join us on a bike ride the last Sunday of every month for a fun, all-ages slow ride around town. Meet at the shop at 5:30 p.m. and we will ride at 6:00 p.m.*

## exhi-BIKE-tion @ The Joslyn Castle



Call for Arts



Scan QR code for submission page.  
Deadline: July 31st

A bike themed art exhibit & fundraiser for  
**Community Bike Project Omaha**

Presented by

JOSLYN CASTLE  
GARDENS



AMPLIFYARTS

Opening: Thursday, September 18th, 5-8pm  
Closing Show (\$10 cover fee): Friday, September 26th, 5-8pm  
3902 Davenport St, Omaha, Nebraska 68131

For more information, please visit the organization's website

## Coming Soon to Turner Park – Lady Liberty

By Jim Thompson

A while ago it was reported that a replacement Statue of Liberty was being planned for installation in Turner Park. The Advisory Committee has been working to make this a reality and is getting closer. Approval was obtained from the Omaha Public Arts Board and the next step is fundraising.

For those who may not remember, the original Statue was dedicated on July 4, 1951, as a major project of the Boy Scouts of America. Further, there was a national effort by the Scouts to have penny drives to buy one of the statues and place her in various cities, depending on the success of each of the troops. A total of 200 were placed around the country during 1949-1952. About 20 years ago an inventory was taken, earning an Eagle Scout award to the young fellow, and it was discovered there were 100 missing, 100 still standing. The Omaha icon was classified as missing. She is close to reappearing, brand new, cast by a local artist.



This effort will display the grand lady in a designated area in the southeast section of Turner Park. An engineering/design firm has been engaged to work out the beautiful details, including a granite plaza to hold the 8-foot granite base for the Statue. Funding is expected to come from some noted foundations and donors. The highlight of this campaign will be a “coin drive” through the scouting chapter. It will take a lot more than pennies this time around to buy a new Statue. Perhaps with the phasing out of the penny, this would be a great opportunity to turn those in for such a good cause. We are fortunate to be working through the non-profit Omaha Parks Foundation and the account is open and ready!

This project will join others around the country to inspire us and remind us of the freedoms we need to hold dear and continue to strengthen. Locating the Statue back in Turner Park restores the historical perspective and with the advent of the Omaha Street Car Project, will surely be a “blue pin” stop on the map for many to relish and enjoy. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me: [jdthompson1001@gmail.com](mailto:jdthompson1001@gmail.com).

## What's Happening in the Neighborhood...

Congratulations to longtime resident and GPNA supporter Sue Vipond who celebrated her 100th birthday in March! She and her husband Roger raised 10 children here in Gifford Park in the house where she still lives with her daughter Patty near 35th & Webster.

Congratulations to Terry & Sue Wilwerding who recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary! Terry and Sue have volunteered for almost every neighborhood event and activity since before GPNA was formed in 1988...we do not have space in this newsletter to describe all they have contributed to our Gifford Park neighborhood and beyond. One amazing fact is Sue published our GPNA newsletter for 15 years from 1997 to 2011, and back then we did it monthly! Thank you both for your great support of GPNA!

Thank you to GPNA board member Anthony Stepka for putting on an impressive "local" Gifford Park neighborhood fireworks display July 3rd at Gifford Park. Anthony coordinated and timed the fireworks show perfectly on the park tennis court! Neighbors enjoyed the show and watermelon, and cleaned up the courts afterwards. Well done Anthony!

Kudos to former GPNA president Luther Larson and wife Debra for the great front page article "Construction of ADU's on the rise in Omaha" in the July 27th Sunday World Herald. The story highlighted Luther & Debra's restoration projects featuring their latest project building an ADU (accessory dwelling unit) by adding on to what was originally a hayloft above their garage at 40th & Cass Streets. Keep up your inspiring restoration work, one house at a time!

The City Parks Department continues to work on Gifford Park improvements including regrading/reseeding the ball field/soccer field area, install a new backstop, replace deteriorating asphalt pavement under the bleachers and sidewalks with new concrete, and replace the old water faucet. Good progress has been made in recent weeks after many weather delays.

Stay tuned for more information about an upcoming Health Fair at Yates Illuminates Saturday October 4th, 10am to 3pm. Plans are for a variety of health screenings, information booths, food, family activities inside and outside of Yates, yard games, passport activity, and much more.



## Around Gifford Park Neighborhood...





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](mailto:hello@giffordparkomaha.org)