



Gifford Park's Pride

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

Spring 2026

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Spring Cleanup Saturday April 18, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Duchesne Parking Lot

Gifford Park Neighborhood Association will be partnering with Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association for the annual spring cleanup Saturday, April 18, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. 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)
- *ACCEPTED items: furniture, bulky items, appliances, metal, lead acid batteries
- *Yardwaste can be taken to Oma-Gro at the former Al Veys Field, 6502 South 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:

- *Tires: they will be collected at separate events later in the year
- *Rocks, concrete, and any items that can be collected via your curbside trash and recycling service
- *Household hazardous waste (auto fluids, paint, solvents, lawn chemicals) should be taken to UnderTheSink, 4001 South 120th Street, open 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on cleanup Saturdays (UnderTheSink.org)

Easter Egg Hunt Canceled!

Unfortunately due to forecasted rainy and chilly weather conditions, and recent park improvement projects, the GPNA had to cancel this year's Easter egg hunt.
See everyone next year!



Pooches in the Park – Midtown (Updated Date!)

Join us for the 2nd Annual Pooches in the Park – Midtown on Saturday, May 9 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Gifford Park, 3528 Davenport St. (rain date May 16). Bring your dog for a fun spring afternoon featuring a pet photographer, treats, and an expert trainer from Dog Gone Problems available to answer your training questions. For every guest who attends, a

donation will be made to the Nebraska Humane Society. Free and open to the community -- leashed dogs welcome.

Questions or RSVP: Carl Griffin 402-415-1333 | Carl.Griffin@bhhsamb.com

Next
GPNA Neighborhood
General Meeting
Thursday May 7
6:00 p.m.
at Yates Illuminates
3260 Davenport St.
Game Night

Sweet Circle is hosting
The League of Women
Voters to speak at Yates
Illuminates April 20 at
6:00 p.m. followed by an
elections candidates
panel at 7:00 p.m.
(to be confirmed)

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History Archiving
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Gifford Park



Neighborhood Market

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



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



Tuesday May 12 - Primary Elections
 for Local, State, and Federal Offices

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 2026:

-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 or renewed!

Sweet Circle

by Tyronda Pierce and Faushia Weeden

Sweet Circle is primarily a women's support group, but we continue to expand to serve the whole community. Our diverse programming centers on holistic health, in the core areas of mental and physical health, socio-emotional wellbeing, and self-care. That includes free peer group discussions, professional guest speakers, activities, outings, workshops, education, and more. Our program aims to eliminate as many barriers as possible, so all our programming is free along with a light meal and childcare (please RSVP), at each meeting. We typically meet every other Monday evening 6-8 p.m. at Yates Illuminates. Our motto is, "We hope you walk out the door feeling better than you came in. Everyone deserves a safe space to take care of themselves and truly feel connected." We believe there is an abundance of resources, gifts, skills and knowledge if we simply pass on what we know. You don't have to look far; you might find what you didn't know was missing or needed right in our sweet circle. Feel free to join us anytime. Here are some of our previous and ongoing activities:

- Annual Health Fair (October 3, 2026)
- Annual Paint & Sip (Mocktails)
- Fitness sessions such as yoga and line dancing
- Community Engagement: Voter Education & Registration, CPR workshop, Financial Advisors
- Collaborations: Girl's Inc, Center for Holistic Development, Brunch at Le Voltaire
- Storytelling, Cooking lessons, Craft sessions, Therapy tips, and more

Want to participate or collaborate? Questions? Please contact us at SweetCircle365@gmail.com or Tyronda Pierce 402-598-0919.

Follow us on Facebook to learn about upcoming events.

2026 Calendar



Women's Support Group
 3260
 Davenport St
 Mondays
 6-8pm

Mar	Apr	May	June*	July
9th	6th	4th	1st	13th
23rd	20th	18th	15th	27th
Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov*	Dec
10th	7th	3rd	2nd	14th
24th	21st	19th	22nd	28th

Join us for peer group discussions, guest speakers, free activities, outings, workshops & education plus Light meal & Childcare
 *June 29/Nov 30 reserved as rain dates



SweetCircle365@gmail.com
 402-598-0919
 Facebook: Sweet Circle





Big Muddy Urban Farms Welcomes New Executive Director, Aaron French

Big Muddy Urban Farms welcomes Aaron French as the new Executive Director. He brings nearly 15 years of leadership in urban agriculture production, operations, and programming to the organization. French is excited to help deliver on Big Muddy's mission to make sustainable agriculture education accessible to all by providing access to experiential urban agriculture education and farm plots which directly improves community resiliency and self-reliance, and in turn will build the foundation for a sustainable, equitable food system in Omaha. As Executive Director, he is focused on expanding and improving upon Big Muddy's programs:

- Educating Tomorrow's Urban Farmers** teaches youth, Omaha residents, and aspiring urban farmers to grow food, establish urban farms, and navigate local market demands to cultivate the next generation of urban farmers.
- Farming Partners** provides free farm plots to our neighbors in the Gifford Park and Joslyn Castle Neighborhoods of Omaha, helping local growers to access and use Big Muddy's available farm plots.
- Free Food Distro Tuesday Partnership** helps to alleviate food insecurity and the impact of high food prices by providing free healthy food, including fresh produce.
- Group Tours** provides educational tours and volunteer opportunities that showcase our urban farms to local organizations, businesses, schools, and community nonprofits to demonstrate the impact of urban agriculture in Omaha.

Big Muddy Urban Farm is a 501(c)3 non-profit in Omaha, Nebraska. For more information about Big Muddy Urban Farm, visit <https://bigmuddyurbanfarm.org/> or contact Aaron French, 402-990-4170, aaron@bigmuddyurbanfarm.org.

News from Yates Illuminates - By Marie H el ene Andr e, Executive Director



We have come a long way since the first partner organizations moved in back in early 2023! We now have 10 partners offering all kinds of services, resources and programs at Yates Illuminates, and our calendar of events fills quickly!

There is something for everyone here... There are weeks when you can spend every evening at Yates Illuminates! While some events are now a tradition (think Summer Drum Camp, Porchfest, Holiday Makers Market), every month brings new partnerships and offerings. Our neighbors from Big Muddy Urban Farm started Garden classes back in the fall and we planted native plants around Yates. Do you want to get help with planning your garden? There is still time to register for the Spring classes. In February, GPTC partnered with Anastasis Theatre Co. to present their play about homelessness, and Lucille -who started a free violin program at Yates two years ago- just finished her fourth Intercultural Violin Program with a short recital. These are just some highlights of the past months...



Last year, we started the Yates Games Club -a place for neighbors and friends to meet, share ideas, play games, or just relax. We have improved it and we now start the evening sharing a potluck-like meal, which gives us the opportunity to discover various cuisines and speak about different cultures. Don't think it's happening inside only! When the weather is nice, you will see us playing bocce or frisbee in the front yard! Bring your own games and join us every other Wednesday evening!

While the clothing closet is open 3 times a week (we need volunteers to help us...), we also have a monthly pantry on a Saturday morning where we offer shelf-stable and fresh food, and where MCC provides fresh greens harvested that same morning in the hydroponics farm at Yates Illuminates!

2026 will bring more programming and more partnerships...

and to do that, we need *YOUR* help! Contact me (mhandre@yatesilluminates.org) if you want to volunteer or start a program, donate to help us offer more, and come to Yates Illuminates to support our partners!



Yates Illuminates
and
Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
invite you and your future young inventors to



THE SCIENCE CLUB



Participation is FREE. Youth 4 to 16 y.o. are Welcome!

Sundays from 2 to 5 pm

SAVE THE DATES!

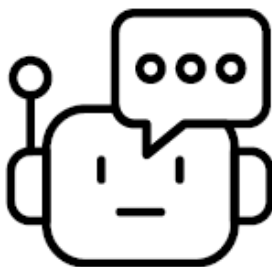
March 22 - April 12

May 3, 17 & 31 - June 7 & 28

Special Saturdays: April 25, June 20

Send an email to Marie H el ene (mhandre@yatesilluminates.org) to sign up your youth
Subject: Science Club Sign Up, with full names of parents/legal guardians, names and ages of youth participating

Yates Illuminates - 3260 Davenport Street - Omaha, NE 68131



Funded in part by the Omaha Community Foundation, Midtown Neighborhood Alliance, and donors to Yates Illuminates; powered by Volunteers and Parents like YOU. Thank you!

Community Garden & Adventure Playground

We hope you plan to attend our Community Garden & Adventure Playground Season Opening Event, Saturday May 9, 10 a.m. to Noon at the community garden (35th & Cass St.) to celebrate the start of our 26th 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 our 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 9, 10 a.m. - Noon)
- Youth Garden Program (Saturdays 10-11:30 a.m., May 16 to August 22)
- Adventure Playground (Saturday afternoons noon - 1 p.m., May 9 to September)
- Pot Luck dinners to be announced
- Garden tours (get people familiar with different areas of the garden spaces)
- Perennial garden maintenance (roses, butterfly, pollinator, senses, 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 | foster3413@cox.net) or Rose Carlson (402-639-5952 | rhcarnson4@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 35+ Creighton student volunteers from Phi Delta Theta and Beta Theta Pi fraternities for doing a great job picking up litter, sweeping glass, and weeding in Gifford Park, Turner Park North, and nearby streets and alleys on March 29.



Gifford Park Youth Garden

Everyone Welcome!

2026 Schedule ~ all Saturdays 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

- May 9 Garden Season Opening Event (10:00-noon)
- May 16 Get to Know Your Garden (pick & prep a plot)
- May 23 Plant Your Plot/Paint Your Stake
- May 30 Plant Your Plot/Paint Your Stake
- June 6 Theater at the Garden
- June 13 Garden Explorers
- June 20 Flora Mandalas
- June 27 Stories at the Garden
- July 4 No Programming. Enjoy the Holiday!
- July 11 Making Music
- July 18 Superhero Training
- July 25 Quick Pickles from Our Garden Bounty
- Aug 1 Natural Dyes
- Aug 8 Cooking Matters
- Aug 15 Sun Prints
- Aug 22 Garden Harvest PARTY!
- Rest of Season (tend your plot)



GIFFORD PARK
Community
Garden

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

2026 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 9.

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 _____

Takin' It to the Streets

by Jim Wilwerding

Dumping anything in the street is considered littering, and litterers can be cited. Most commonly in the winter we see people using snowblowers to shoot their snow out into the street. Often this creates a dangerous situation, as the snow takes longer to melt, and can potentially cause an accident. Especially annoying when the city has finally plowed the street, and then someone covers it with snow. After the last major snow we had, you could easily discern who'd tossed their snow into the street, as the ice persisted there at least a week longer after it had melted elsewhere. Considering that snow contains moisture, it seems a good thing to throw it onto your lawn, so the moisture is available to your plants or grass when it melts.

In the spring and summer, we have neighbors (and some commercial services) throwing (and blowing) grass clippings out into the street. Sometimes the accumulation is sufficient to clog sewer grates and often creates slippery conditions for drivers. It is especially hazardous for those on two wheels. I suspect the clippings eventually end up in the sewers, clogging them, and making life difficult for those who treat the sewage before returning it to the river. Most authorities suggest that you mulch grass clippings when mowing and return them to the lawn, where they can provide nutrients to the grass. Failing that, they should be collected and disposed of properly.

And in the fall, we have those happy souls who blow their leaves out into the street and leave them there. Not only the neighbors, as a number of 'commercial' services were seen doing the same. Given the usual windy conditions at that time of year, they end up in the neighbors' yards and driveways. Hopefully, they are collected and responsibly used or disposed of, rather than returning them to the street once again. Most leaves make good mulch for flower beds, provide shelter for various creatures, as well as insulating the ground to minimize temperature swings. They also help hold moisture. If you contract with a lawn service to remove your leaves, please insist that they take the leaves with them, rather than scattering them in the street. Usually, you can tell the problem services because they show up with a pickup truck, no trailer, no bags, no tarps.

Probably the last major offender is people who toss their fast-food trash out the window of their car, rather than properly dealing with it. We also seem to have folks passing through who drop their empty beverage containers wherever they happen to be. This is litter of the usual sort. During the warmer months, it is not unusual to pick up bags and bottles from the gutter and along the sidewalk nearly every day. It'd sure be nice if people could handle their own problems, instead of making them someone else's problem.

Gifford Park is a Walkable Neighborhood

by Jim Wilwerding

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.

**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 Free Soccer Camp

Ages 3 to 13 years old

Dates: Wednesdays June 3 to July 22

Times: 6:30 to 7:30 pm

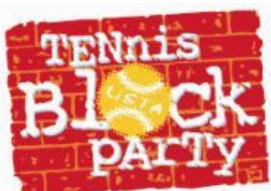
at Gifford Park (33rd & Cass St.)



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 we will be planning and preparing 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, please contact Andrew at aman7116@outlook.com or 402-686-7576. Thanks, looking forward to seeing you all!

Gifford Park Youth Tennis Block Party



Wednesday, May 13, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

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 3 to July 22

Time: 10 a.m. 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



Remembering Nemesio "Mike" Caban

by Chris Foster, family, and friends

On October 3rd, 2025, after fighting a long struggle with Alzheimer's with dementia, Nemesio "Mike" Caban passed away peacefully at the age of 79. I cannot come close to writing the words to properly describe how much Mike meant to me and our Gifford Park neighborhood. So please forgive me for using an old article I wrote when Mike was chosen as our 2007 GPNA Neighbor of The Year...here is the article...

The GPNA was proud to honor longtime member Mike Caban as our 2007 Neighbor of the Year. He was recognized at the 19th annual GPNA Holiday Banquet hosted again by Creighton University Medical Center on December 6. Mike's motto is "what you see is what you get" and the Gifford Park neighborhood has gotten a great deal from him since 1989, shortly after the very beginnings of the GPNA. Mike has served as a GPNA officer and chaired several important committees that helped set the foundation of our organization. Over the years, he has been involved with most of our events and activities including the Watch Group, Volunteer Incentive Program, Newsletter, Easter Egg Hunt, Spring and Fall Cleanup, Community Garden, GPNA Office, Tennis Program, Halloween Haunted House, Yates Elementary School, and other projects. Mike was instrumental in forming the Watch Group and has been involved with the Community Garden since the beginning where he broke ground developing the herb garden and first flower garden. In fact his flower garden when in full bloom is in the shape of a heart in honor of his late wife Judi.



Mike was born in the Bronx, New York, and lived there until age 11. He ended up finishing high school in Puerto Rico, and one week later joined the Navy. Mike served in the Navy from 1965-1969, and 14 months of that was in Vietnam, including five and a half months in the Mekong Delta doing coded secure communications. After the Navy, Mike put his computer communications skills to work at the phone company (Northwestern Bell which became USWest) from 1969-1995. Then he switched careers to Human Resources, working at IBP, ConAgra, and now Oakland Foods. He is retiring in January, lucky dog!

Mike met Judi at the phone company. They moved into the neighborhood in 1975; their home was a brick duplex at 331 N. 35th Ave. They bought a house at 3321 Davenport in 1978, which is Mike's current home. Mike has two sons; Michael lives in Arizona and Ben lives with Mike. Mike's daughter Ellen, son-in-law Andy, and grandson Ethan live in Omaha. You cannot say Mike's name without also recognizing Judi. Judi was also very active in the GPNA and with the PTA – she was president of Yates and Nebraska PTA's. Quite simply, Mike and Judi made a great team!

Mike's real passion is writing. He has written 9 short stories that have been published, including articles in Crickett and the New Yorker. Mike is also an "amateur archeologist". Mike's contributions to the Gifford Park neighborhood are long, and his commitment is as strong and passionate as ever. I have personally learned a great deal from Mike, and I draw energy from his passion for the neighborhood. I remember many nights walking or driving (in that old brown station wagon!) through our neighborhood on Watch Group on Friday and Saturday nights and dreaming about what could be and ways to make our area a great place to live, work, learn and play. Mike, we are proud of your service to our country and proud of your service to our neighborhood. Congratulations, from all of us in the Gifford Park neighborhood!

Please see the next page for more words about Mike from his son Ben and longtime Gifford Park resident and volunteer Clarinda White.

Remembering Nemesio "Mike" Caban

continued from previous page...

Mike's son Ben Caban wrote these words..."He didn't shy away from showing me the injustices of the world, he encouraged me to educate myself independently as well as through school. When you're a kid, that can be a lot, but he always taught me that if the world makes you angry, if it feels unfair or cruel, then it's your job to change it. To make it better in any way you can for as many people as you can. He did that with every waking breath. He lived those words."

Clarinda White wrote..."We are so sad to learn about Mike Caban. We are sorry for the loss of a friend so dear, and so cherished by our community. Loss, in a way, feels like the wrong word, because everything that Mike has meant, and all the good he's done, will continue. The loss of Mike's presence is a deep cause for grief. But his goodness and his influence will continue to resonate in our neighborhood and in the lives of all who have been touched by him.

We were so moved when we read Mike's biography. What an amazing life he led, and what a great person he was. He was so blessed to have found wonderful Gifford Park, a place where his humane influence was embraced, and where he had friends. And all of us in Gifford Park were so lucky to have him for a neighbor.

We're sorry that we didn't know Mike better. But even knowing him a little was enough to be changed and inspired by his warmth and his great generosity of spirit. Gifford Park is an incredible place, a place of caring, creativity, generosity, belonging, and love. We, too, are grateful every day to find ourselves living here, and we are deeply aware of how special it is. That's because of people like Mike."

What's Happening Around the Neighborhood . . .

Congratulations and welcome to the neighborhood to baby boy August "Gus" Joseph Kucera born February 19, 2026 to Evan & Emily Kucera who live on Webster Street. He weighed 6 lbs 14 ozs and was 19 inches long.

Congratulations and welcome to the neighborhood to baby girl Zayla Zen born January 14, 2026 to Isiah Coleman & Jessica Bollinger who live on Burt Street. She joins her siblings Kadence and Kayson who are active in youth garden, chickens, and goats!

Our neighbor John Zak, who lived at 36th and Cass St., passed away March 11, 2026. He was a respiratory therapist for over 40 years and a permanent deacon at St. Peter's Catholic Church for over 25 years. He and his wife Mary had been married 46 years and they had many children and grandchildren. Cards may be sent to Maureen Zak at 8402 N. 44th St., Omaha, NE, 68112, or there is an online tribute book through Heafey Hoffmann Dworak Cutler. If you would like to participate in the Meal Train page for gift cards for the Zak family, please email us at hello@giffordparkomaha.org or text Rose at 402-639-5952.

GPNA offers our condolences to past GPNA board member and Gifford Park resident and dedicated volunteer Lauren Alston and her family for the recent passing of Lauren's dad Willie Gerald Holley in February. We know this has been a difficult time for your family.

A big THANK YOU to our GPNA treasurer Paul Pellerito and his dedicated crew of volunteers for providing us a delicious Italian dinner for our GPNA Membership Dinner at Yates Illuminates on January 4, 2026. Thank you to ALL the volunteers who helped make this event a very nice celebration!

The GPNA board has been working with City Councilman Danny Begley and other City officials on several public safety and beautification projects including the 33rd & Cuming Street bridge and underpass, 33rd & Cass Street intersection, Turner Park North greenspace, Gifford Park improvements, business district and neighborhood planning/zoning, and others. Some of these projects and planning efforts have been on-going for decades, the GPNA board will stay active with these efforts and keep you updated.

Gifford Park Elementary (GPE) 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. GPE gear (hats, T-shirts, and sweatshirts) are also available to purchase, check the Gifford Park Elementary PTO Facebook page or call 531-299-2040 for more information.

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.

Stay tuned for a family-friendly event being planned for Friday July 3rd late afternoon and evening in Gifford Park. We plan to have a variety of yard games, sports, food, and fun! More information coming soon.

Bask in “the Riff-Raff.” Let’s calm up, purpose energy, and make it into *creative destruction*, otherwise called neighborly successful innovative entrepreneurship. For life.

by GPNA President Adrian Petrescu

This past beginning we learned new things again, at Yates Illuminates and elsewhere. Staying curious, and memories of good things help us live a better today and tomorrow. Do you remember that America was built with windmills? Not just for farming and cattle ranching, in the sandhills of Nebraska or the desert of Texas and elsewhere, but for carrying across passengers and cargo by trains... plenty of them run from Omaha Nebraska forever. This is how the Kregel Windmill Museum in Nebraska City was born. That lesson was presented in Gifford Park Neighborhood just recently by Preserve Omaha at a conference they held at Yates Illuminates. City Council chairman Danny Begley and Preserve Omaha came and spoke at our March neighborhood meeting. That was very



informative and fruitful. We even met “the two Jo(h)n” over coffee and shared mutual stories, including of the Myrtle and Cypress Coffee shop itself and its contribution to the SaveYatesForOmaha campaign, and of course plans for many future collaborations.

I heard at Yates Illuminates a story whereby someone was made happy by leaving the Riff-Raff behind, and moving out to West Omaha. OK. Thinking that it took us some serious portion of our lifetime *to get here* to the Riff-Raff, and we’ve been here fifteen years this year, I started asking why would anyone ever want to “move out of” or “move on from” the Riff-Raff? I never heard the word before, so I had to Google it. I don’t buy what Google says though.

I wasn’t born in Nebraska. I got here to try and help folks learn new things. I did a little of that, and realized and have been enjoying how many more new things I have to learn here and everywhere around us. Many of my graduate learners in my earliest years here were not from the Riff-Raff though. I learned things from them too. In part I learned that out there where they live they didn’t like the Riff-Raff. In fact it got worse—“why would I have to pay for the schools in North Omaha—through the Learning Community, brand new at the time—to get protractors, when I must keep buying protractors to my children’s school here [in Sarpy County]?” Some only somewhat fair question, if you don’t dig well enough into things. It turns out there were common things between both places. School districts everywhere seem to ignore playgrounds when they build schools. My learners were surprised, and I was too. Not the wisest allocation of funds when you think about it. They wrote and got a grant to build a playground from privately raised funds. Later on so did we here in the Riff-Raff. But did you know? When he got to Gifford Park Elementary first days of school, and to the playground, one of my favorite young Lego players here said “there are no trees at the school playground.” My type of smart young future change agent. Congratulations, Gifford Park kid! Smarter than an entire school and school district administration combined.

I have a theory: Living in the Riff Raff makes you—us all—smarter. Is it that, or is it the trees? We are after all a State recognized Urban Arboretum. We often walk. We have shade when we walk. Yet, school administrators may not (all) live here. Do they even have grown trees out in West Omaha at all? Known fact: too much sun can get to your head and you get insolation... some neighbor—was it Warren—pointed out the grace of someone planting a tree the someone will not ever enjoy the shade of... even the learners in my first graduate class of fifteen years ago learned that in fact their own fancy careers of service have been sponsored in much part by the taxes paid by us here from the Riff-Raff... but then again, President George Washington and then President Abraham Lincoln and quite a few others inbetween and ever since all called for us together standing the better stronger chance of making it a more perfect union ahead. That’s what the Riff-Raff is: us together making things work.

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In our neighborhood a while ago I tried to start something—"What America?" It was before SaveYatesForOmaha and Yates Illuminates or The Science Club, or the amazing Sweet Circle. We can do that too now. We offer the chance that we all meet and discuss questions we may have of our community and government and businesses old or new and everything inbetween, and seek and promote solutions together. Now there is Yates. Come join us some evening with your questions and ideas on how to make our Riff-Raff even better for every one of us. For today and for tomorrow. For everyone.

Quick report: we wrote two grants with Omaha Community Foundation and the Mayor's grant respectively, and are waiting their response to fund Porchfest and raised beds for planting micro-gardens across generations at Yates and enjoying the vegetables over meals together. By the time this is out I would've written another grant with Midtown Neighborhood Alliance to fund The Science Club and amateur radio within it. We shall meet May 7 from 6 p.m. again for our neighborhood general meeting and relax and play games together. Get the entire calendar herein of things happening in the neighborhood.

May you have eternal Spring.

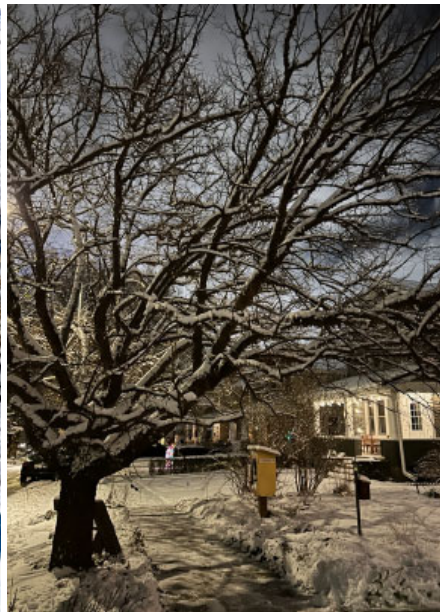


Neighborhood Photos...

33rd Friday Block Party, Market, Community Garden, Adventure Playground, Identity Garden



Neighborhood Photos... Yates Health Fare, Porchfest, Fall Cleanup, Halloween Party, Winter, Sledding





Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
PO Box 31462
Omaha, NE 68131

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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

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