



Gifford Park's Pride

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

Summer/Fall 2026

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

33rd Friday Block Party August 14, EVERYONE WELCOME!



YATES ILLUMINATES
- and - **GIFFORD PARK**
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION



INVITE YOU TO JOIN IN THE FREE FUN AT

**LIVE MUSIC
& PERFORMANCES**

MARKET

**FOOD
TRUCKS**

**GAMES &
CRAFTS**

**KIDS
ZONE**

**33RD
FRIDAY
BLOCK
PARTY**

**POP-UP
SKATE PARK**



**N. 33RD STREET
BETWEEN CASS
AND CALIFORNIA**

**AUGUST 14TH
FRIDAY
5 TO 8 PM**

Next

**GPNA Neighborhood
General Meeting
Thursday August 20
6:30 p.m.
at Yates Illuminates
3260 Davenport St.**

Guest Speaker:
Erin Grace
Deputy Chief of Staff for
Communications
for Mayor John Ewing

In this issue...

33rd Friday Block Party
Sweet Circle
Health & Wellness Fair
Porchfest
Neighborhood Market
Yates Illuminates
Science Club
Community Garden
Flower Pots
Big Muddy Urban Farm
Flea Market
Fall Cleanup
Halloween Fall Festival
Youth Soccer
Youth Tennis
Pooches in the Park
Summer Games
Prohibited Vehicles
Welcome Students
Community Bike Shop
What's Happening
President's Column

**VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR THE
33RD FRIDAY BLOCK PARTY!**

Make new
neighborhood
friends!

Get involved!



Help us
celebrate
our
wonderful
community!

Scan here to view openings and sign-up for a shift

Save the Date:

Voter Education and Candidate Forum Monday October 19
at Yates Illuminates. Stay tuned for more information.

GPNA OFFICERS

President - Dr. Adrian Petrescu
 aspetrescu@innovationtrek.org 402-769-9070
 Vice President - Martin Janousek
 mjanousek2020@gmail.com 402-558-4070
 Treasurer - Paul Pellerito
 pellpa7116@live.com 402-709-0229
 Secretary - Athena Ann
 snellaa@yahoo.com 402-769-9659

BOARD MEMBERS

Chris Foster
 foster3413@cox.net 402-290-8187
 Carl Griffin
 carl.griffin@bhhsamb.com 402-415-1333
 Austin Jackson
 austin.jackson011@gmail.com 402-317-4883
 Amy Lanspa
 amlanspa@gmail.com 402-981-4994
 Aaron Marta
 aaronmartag@gmail.com 531-366-3828
 John Pappan
 awehton999@gmail.com 402-315-7471
 Tyronda Pierce
 maypierce82@gmail.com 402-598-0919
 Anthony Stepka
 anthonystepka85@gmail.com 540-820-5299

CONTACTS

Yates Illuminates
 Marie Hélène André
 mhandre@yatesilluminates.org 402-915-2808
Science Club
 Dr. Adrian Petrescu
 aspetrescu@innovationtrek.org 402-769-9070
Neighborhood Market
 Martin Janousek
 gpnmarket@gmail.com 402-558-4070
Youth Soccer
 Andrew Pellerito
 aman7116@outlook.com 402-686-7576
Community Garden/Tennis/Newsletter/Park
 Chris Foster
 foster3413@cox.net 402-290-8187
Youth Garden/Adventure Playground
 Monica Lehn
 mmlehn@gmail.com 402-660-9046
 sfadventureplayground@gmail.com
Midtown Neighborhood Alliance (MNA)
 Aaron Marta
 aaronmartag@gmail.com 531-366-3828
Membership
 Rose Carlson
 rhcarlson4@yahoo.com 402-639-5952

2026 Calendar

Women's Support Group



3260
 Davenport St
 Mondays
 6-8pm

<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June*</u>	<u>July</u>
9th	6th	4th	1st	13th
23rd	20th	18th	15th	27th
<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sept</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov*</u>	<u>Dec</u>
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



YATES ILLUMINATES AND SWEET CIRCLE PRESENT Health & Wellness Fair



October 3
10am - 3pm

3260 DAVENPORT ST
 OMAHA, NE 68131



SCREENINGS | RESOURCES | ENTERTAINMENT | PANTRY
 CLOTHING CLOSET | RAFFLES | GIVEAWAYS | ACTIVITIES | AND MORE

WWW.YATESILLUMINATES.ORG

SWEETCIRCLE365@GMAIL.COM



Tuesday November 3 - General Elections
 for Local, State, and Federal Offices



Porchfest returns for the 10th Annual event on Sunday, October 4th from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

This free community festival has over 90 performances that take place on 14 stages including 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

Every Friday Night 5-8 pm

33rd & California June 5 to September 25



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

Since 2006!



There is always something going on at Yates Illuminates!
By Marie Hélène André, Executive Director



Sometimes, you can spend every day or evening here, hopping from the Sweet Circle on Monday to attending a garden workshop with Big Muddy Urban Farm on Tuesday (picture left: planting prairie flowers at Yates), to visiting the clothing closet three days in a row, and making new friends at the Yates Games Club and Potluck every other Wednesday evening. It's only the middle of the week, but there is more to come: attend the GPNA general meeting on a Thursday.

It's the weekend! Take your first steps in Tango on Friday evening, then visit or volunteer at our monthly pantry on Saturday and share a meal and stories at the monthly Stories of O gathering with Great Plains Theatre Commons. By the way, have you seen the new dates for The Science Club? These are just a few programs offered at Yates Illuminates thanks to our partners, neighbors and friends. The list is growing and we are looking forward to welcoming new ideas...



Each month, our pantry serves up to 60 households, and the need continues to grow. The free clothing closet welcomes visitors whenever it is open. Feel free to drop off clean, gently used clothing during closet hours: Tuesday and Thursday from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Wednesday from 4 to 7 p.m.

This year, for the fourth time, we welcomed up to 70 young people from 17 countries to the two-week Free Drumming Camp. The camp ended with an amazing concert, followed by a reception featuring African food samples from the House of Bah.



Have you visited Yates in recent weeks? You may have noticed our new raised beds and seeds already sprouting for the fall harvest. This program gives seven families the opportunity to learn about gardening and tend their own raised bed. GPNA made it possible thanks to the Mayor's grant, and MCC Hydroponics and Big Muddy

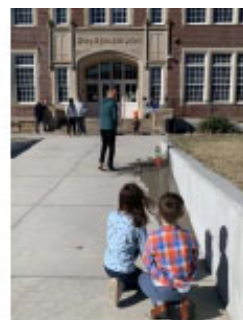
Urban Farm share their expertise about gardening.

You don't want to miss an event? Visit our website and sign up for our weekly newsletter...

Mark your calendar for our future events: Saturday, October 3: Free Health and Wellness Fair organized by the Sweet Circle, Sunday, October 4: Porchfest – 10th edition! around the neighborhood, end of October: Catrina Runway presented by Great Plains Theatre Commons, Saturday, December 5: Traditional Holiday Makers Market!

To keep the promise made during the campaign to get Yates for the community and make it a one-of-a-kind community center, we still need **YOUR** help! Make a donation to help us provide food to 60+ households every month, offer free workshops to families to learn about finances and budgeting, how to garden and become self-sufficient, or to give youth the opportunity to attend free enriching camps and make lifelong friendships. Sign up to volunteer for a few hours at our clothing closet, monthly pantry, or special event.

Contact me (mhandre@yatesilluminates.org) if you want to volunteer or start a program or activity.



During the Spring, The Science Club held 7 sessions and welcomed up to 19 young scientists!

We started our journey with Artemis II, learning about gravity, launching water rockets (thank you Burak!), how to grow plants in a container... and came back to earth to meet with Steve from Bluebird Cultural Initiative and learn about traditional uses of everything a bison can provide.



We had fun with Aaron who taught us the Art of making the perfect pasta, using the scientific method, and learned about mimicry and camouflage.

The world seen through the microscope is fascinating! You never know what you will discover!

During Kids Day on the Air, Adrian (KF0OHS) and Dudley (KD0NMD) taught us how to communicate over the radio.



And we concluded the cycle celebrating our Nation's 250th Birthday by learning about explosives and fireworks with Anthony!



Mark your Calendar until the end of 2026!

On the following Sundays, from 2 to 5 pm at Yates Illuminates:

August 23 & 30

September 13 & 27

October 11 & 25

November 1 & 15

More details about the sessions soon. Sign up your youth by sending an email to Marie Hélène (mhandre@yatesilluminates.org) with the name(s) and age(s) of the youth. See you soon!

Community Garden & Adventure Playground

As of early August the community garden at 35th & Cass Street finally received badly needed rainfall after a very dry July. Everyone is welcome to walk through the garden and Adventure Playground and check out the gardens, flowers, chickens, goats, bees, compost, two-story tree house, and memorial brick dedication feature. Our Youth Garden (GPYG) program began May 9 with our “Season Opening” event and ends with our “Pizza Garden Harvest Party” August 22. Youth participants gardened in 44 raised beds (each 30” x 30” plots) and learned from local neighborhood volunteer presenters on these topics: animal care, theater, flora mandalas, storytelling, music, superheroes, pickling, herbs, cooking & nutrition, natural dyes, sun prints, composting, art, and much more. Thanks to our many dedicated parents and volunteers, especially GPYG director Monica Lehn and our chicken-care families! For more information, contact Chris (402-290-8187 | foster3413@cox.net) or Rose (402-639-5952 | rhcarlson4@yahoo.com). For Adventure Playground, contact Monica 402-660-9046, or mmlahn@gmail.com or sfadventureplayground@gmail.com or on Facebook.



Business District Flower Pots - 20 Years

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 20th year of planting flowers and it's what has helped over the years in beautifying 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 tell them Thank You!

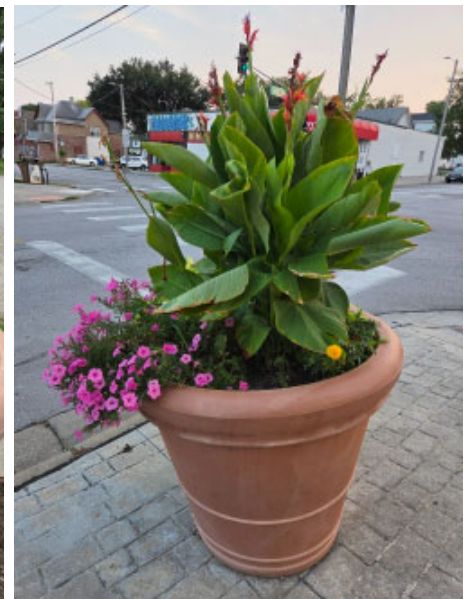
Gifford Park Business District Businesses

California Bar

Danny's Corner Store – Danny

And the following GPNA individuals.....

Stella, Martin, Rob, Chris





BIG MUDDY URBAN FARM

SUMMER 2026



ETUF WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS PLANTING NATIVE PRAIRIE PLANTS AT YATES ILLUMINATES



RAINBOW CHARD!



THAI CHILI HARVEST FROM FARMING PARTNER PARTICIPANT DAISY



ETUF WORKSHOP ATTENDEES PLANTING SEEDS FOR YATES GARDEN PARTICIPANTS

We've been busy here at BMUF this summer: running workshops, building garden beds, supporting farmers with land and infrastructure access, and hosting volunteers and tour groups. We're grateful for all the community partnerships in Gifford Park and excited for fall (mostly a break from the heat!)

We'd love to work with you; don't hesitate to reach out or stop by anytime!

Aaron French, Executive Director (aaron@bigmuddyurbanfarm.org)

SUNDAY FLEA

An Urban Flea Market on 33rd Street

Sunday - August 9th

10:00am - 2:00

Open-air market in the Gifford Park Business District for vendors selling.....vintage items, collectibles, furniture, clothing, repurposed items, kitchenwares and.....treasures!

Vendor information contact: gpnmarket@gmail.com



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.

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.



30th Annual Halloween Festival

Where:

Gifford Park
Playground Area
35th & Davenport St.



When:

Saturday
October 24th
4:00 to 6:30pm



*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!



**Help shape our
community!**

Please scan the QR code below to
complete our Gifford Park
Neighbor Survey - 2026.



Your voice makes a difference for us all!

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

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

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

Youth Soccer Camp

Thanks to Andrew Pellerito for organizing and leading Soccer Camp 2026, 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 Wednesday evenings in June and July at Gifford Park. Andrew is starting a new program at Gifford Park called 'Freestyle Tuesday'. Starting in August every Tuesday starting at 6:30pm he will bring soccer balls, cones, goals and some pinnies for anyone who wants to come to the park and play soccer! There is no structure so come with an open mind and find any skill you'd like to work on. Andrew is excited to start something new and everyone is welcome!



Youth Tennis

Thanks again to the Stanley family for leading our June and July Wednesday 10 am to Noon youth tennis program at Gifford Park. This year's program had the most kids ever participating! We also had our annual tennis block party May 13th. See information flier below on our Wednesday evenings in August program starting August 5th...the Stanleys will be there!



33rd Annual Gifford Park Free Tennis Program



For: Youth (3 to 18 years old)

Dates: August 5, 12, 19, 26
(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: _____



Pooches in the Park – Midtown a Success!

by Carl Griffin

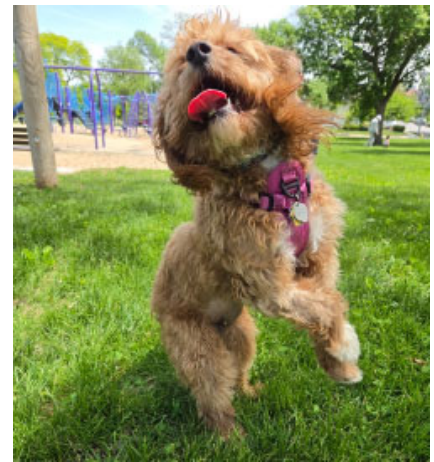
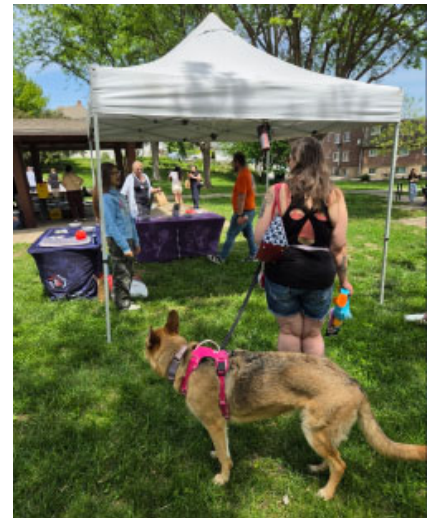
A big thank you to everyone who joined us for the 2nd Annual Pooches in the Park – Midtown at Gifford Park Saturday May 9th!

We were fortunate to have beautiful weather and a wonderful turnout of dog lovers from the neighborhood and beyond. It was great seeing so many familiar faces, meeting new neighbors, and watching the dogs enjoy a beautiful afternoon in the park.

This year's event featured adoptable dogs from Taysia Blue Rescue, dog training tips from Dog Gone Problems, treats from Long Dog Fat Cat, coffee from Myrtle & Cypress Coffeehouse, and photos with our furry friends. Thanks to everyone who attended, I was also able to continue supporting the Nebraska Humane Society through a donation based on event attendance.

I especially want to thank the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, our sponsors, volunteers, and community partners for helping make the event possible. Your support continues to make Gifford Park a welcoming neighborhood where people can come together and build community.

I'm already looking forward to seeing everyone at the 3rd Annual Pooches in the Park – Midtown next year! For more information, contact Carl Griffin 402-415-1333 | Carl.Griffin@bhhsamb.com.



Summer Games in Gifford Park

We celebrated Fourth of July with a first-time event 'Summer Games in Gifford Park' which took place around the tennis courts and ball field. Originally scheduled for July 3rd we postponed the event until the evening of July 4th due to rain. Family-friendly activities included DJ music, watermelon & frozen treats, chalk-painting, racquet sports, soccer, frisbee, bocce ball, croquet, horseshoes, ring toss, and water activities...and there might have been a few fireworks to celebrate America's 250th birthday! Thanks to volunteers Anthony Stepka, Doreen Santo, Amy Lanspa, Alex Clarke, Tyronda Pierce, the Conrad family, Nick McGill, Cody Akin, and others. We appreciate everyone coming out to the park on the Fourth of July!



Community Bike Project

by Jacob Stacy

Hey neighbors! Here is a bit of an update on things down here at the Community Bike Project! As much as we are still conducting “business as usual”, we’ve been quite a bit busier than usual organizing this place to create the most transparent, concise and efficient environment we can for our patrons. A while back we adopted a new point of sale system where everything has a price attributed to it. The goal of this is NOT to make more money but to be able to track the value of the things we give away. For instance, if you come in needing a used tire, you simply grab what you need, speak with me (Jacob) or a volunteer to let us know what you’ve got, we will then go to our point of sale and note that X person is “purchasing” a tire with a value of \$5. The customer can then say no, I can’t afford that \$5 right now, they can pay the \$5+tax, or they can pay for the tire and donate on top of that. This way we can truly meet people where they’re at financially while keeping track of the amount of value we are providing for the community. This system is applicable to all of our items valued under ~\$40, so every essential part to make a bike work plus our department store quality bikes ensures constant access to free bikes, parts, and accessories for anyone in need. Our more expensive and/or collectible items are subject to this system as well, but with a caveat that we can’t just give you a \$200 bike, so we need something in return. The options in this instance are a donation of time as a volunteer, at a fair “wage” of \$25 dollars in credit per hour of time volunteered, otherwise we are happy to sell anyone a nice bike at the discounts we do. I will add that almost everything we sell is purposely sold under market rate in order to keep stock moving and to allow people who may not have the financial means to have something really cool for a screaming deal. This is the way it has always been, and I do not ever intend to change it. The bike project is a place for people first, and we will always strive to keep the “barrier to entry” for bicycles at the absolute floor. No gatekeeping. No means testing. Only an honest cultural exchange of material goods and knowledge is needed to do your own repairs at as little cost as possible. I know this spiel is a little far out for most folks, so reeling back down to earth I’ll highlight a few happenings around here that are noteworthy. We are back on schedule with Sunday Funday rides! Join us every last Sunday of the month at 5:30pm for a beginner friendly, no-drop ride around Omaha! This is a great way for anyone curious about commuting by bike to experience the streets with the added safety of a group of other cyclists! We are also in the planning stage of a weekend full of bike activities organized by a few bike project volunteers, including an alley cat race, and a swap meet the weekend of September 19-20th. Check out @omahabikeexpo on Instagram for more information. As always, feel free to stop by the shop and hang out, work on your bike, or ask about volunteer opportunities. Current hours are Wednesday through Sunday from 12-6pm! For more information, call 402-957-2454 or email: info@communitybikeproject.org.

What's Happening Around the Neighborhood . . .

Congratulations and welcome to the neighborhood baby boy Ruzain Hassan born June 8 to Rumayel & Farzana Bithi. They are active in the community garden since getting a garden plot a couple years ago.

Congratulations to Alissa Pierce who participated in the 2026 USATF Junior Olympic Nationals in Norwalk California competing in triple jump. She represented Faith Track Family. Alissa has been one of our young GPNA shining stars participating and volunteering with youth garden, Adventure Playground, youth tennis and soccer, 33rd Friday Block Party, Sweet Circle, Health & Wellness Fair, Yates food pantry, U-Turn, church, and school. Thank you to everyone who supported her, keep up the great work!

We are sad to report longtime resident and GPNA member Lois Baumhover passed away May 27 at the age of 86. She was born in Garland, Nebraska but lived many years with her latehusband Herbert in Gifford Park in their home near 33rd & Chicago Street up until recent health issues. Lois was a great supporter of GPNA, especially children’s activities including donating Easter egg hunt prizes and GPNA holiday banquet gifts. She also included generous donations at neighborhood cleanups when paying her annual GPNA membership dues. We are glad Lois was able to live in her home for so many years in the neighborhood she loved!

We lost a great friend and supporter of Gifford Park and all Omaha neighborhoods when Sharon Olson, a lifelong resident of Omaha’s Minne Lusa neighborhood, passed away July 6 at the age of 83. She was more than a neighbor—she was the heart of Minne Lusa, a woman whose generosity, determination, and unwavering commitment helped shape the neighborhood into the close-knit community it is today. Sharon loved older homes, beautiful neighborhoods, and the people who filled them. She helped launch the Minne Lusa House on Mary Street, where neighborhood coffees were held and countless ideas took shape. Her passion for preserving historic homes led her to help restore several neighborhood houses, always hoping they would be purchased by people who shared her commitment to the community. The pollinator garden at the north end of Minne Lusa Boulevard stands as a lasting tribute to her vision and bears her name. Sharon inspired many of us in Gifford Park and other older neighborhoods with her depth of commitment to neighbors and building community.

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) is also available to purchase, check the Gifford Park Elementary PTO Facebook page or call 531-299-2040 for more information.

Prohibited Vehicles

by Jim Wilwerding

A presenter at a recent Northeast Police Precinct meeting explained the various categories of vehicles.

If an electric bicycle has operating pedals and has a max speed of 28 MPH, it is treated as a bicycle. If it does not have operable pedals or goes faster than 28 MPH it is considered a motorcycle. Unless the motorcycle is registered, it may not be operated on public streets, sidewalks, or other public property. Helmet, license, registration, and insurance regulations apply.

Minibikes, whether gas or electric powered, cannot be registered, and cannot be driven on public streets, sidewalks, or property. ATVs, except where used for agricultural purposes, cannot be operated on public streets, sidewalks, or property. Electric scooters are not to be operated by anyone under age 18 and are not to be operated on sidewalks.

Dirtbikes cannot be registered, and may not be operated on public streets, sidewalks, or property. Most of the smaller electric motorcycles are considered dirt bikes, especially if they lack lights, mirrors, reflectors and other equipment required for street motorcycles. Unless they have operable pedals and a top speed of 28 MPH or less, they cannot be treated as electric bicycles.

If minors are found to be operating an illegal vehicle on public property, the vehicle may be impounded. Parents may also be cited. Recently we have seen a number of minors operating minibikes, ATV's, dirtbikes, and electric motorcycles on our streets. In addition to being prohibited, it is dangerous for the riders, as our streets are narrow, many intersections have poor sight lines, and many car drivers have difficulty perceiving smaller vehicles. In any collision with a car, the rider may be seriously injured, or perhaps killed, particularly if helmets are not worn.

I have also seen minors operating such vehicles along the Field Club trail, endangering pedestrians and other legitimate users of the trail. If you are considering buying a prohibited vehicle for your child, please be aware of the legal restrictions, and make plans for your child to operate the vehicle in a safe and legal manner.

Welcome Students!

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!

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!



Gifford Park Identity Garden



Bob Hutton Honored for Korean War Service and 94th Birthday

Nebraska recently launched a Korean War Veteran Recognition Program to honor living veterans with a specially minted challenge coin. Our neighborhood “godfather” Bob Hutton was recognized at a special ceremony on July 24th at Memorial Stadium in Lincoln and received his coin from Governor Jim Pillen, as did other honorees. Then later that same day neighbors and friends helped Bob celebrate his 94th birthday (actually July 25th) with a surprise gathering and cake at the Friday night neighborhood market. The band played Happy Birthday and Bob graciously thanked everyone for coming. Quite a full day! Thank you, Bob, for your service to our country and our neighborhood!



Everyone enjoyed the July 13th hydrant party at 34th & Burt Street. Hydrant parties in Omaha are free, community water events organized by the Omaha Parks and Recreation Department to help families cool off during the summer. Firefighters open street hydrants, and streets or parking lots are temporarily closed so children and families can safely run and play in the water. These events often include water balloons, popsicles, stickers, and opportunities to meet local firefighters. Our neighborhood hydrant party was so well attended that the City may host additional parties next year!

Let's all get in the Arena! Again and Again. Harambe. Together.

President's Column, by Adrian S. Petrescu

I've read the US Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution in a land far far away, behind the Iron Curtain, in English of course, fifty years ago, right at the bicentennial. That radically changed my life. A quarter century ago this time I took my daughter to her first or second firework for the Fourth of July half a country away, in a place that inspired much Gifford Park about at the same time, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania. The "We hold these truths to be self-evident..." opening of the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence has been famously deemed by a brilliant writer, Walter Isaacson, the Greatest Sentence ever Written. Reading his well-written book, I must improve his take: the strength across the entire world past, present and future of the words comes from it being the greatest sentence ever read, and adopted.

It is with much pride and honor that this time we all celebrated our Nation's quarter millennium anniversary from Independence here in Gifford Park in Omaha with The Science of Fireworks, and much more. Always supporting freedom and nurturing of independent thought, your two GPNA Presidents, one former and one current, i.e. Marie Hélène and Adrian, also did -for ourselves- something we recommend strongly to everyone. We just visited Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library, opened recently in Medora North Dakota. We bring you back some other of the best words ever written, and often read and adopted as well, suited for the celebration of the greatest words ever written 250 years ago and read and adopted everywhere they carry by everyone.

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong [human] stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the [human] who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends [themselves] in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if [s/he] fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that [their] place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat." - President Theodore Roosevelt, "Citizenship In A Republic", delivered at the Sorbonne, in Paris, France on 23 April, 1910)

Here in Gifford Park, we've always invited everyone to step into the arena and act. To help make good ideas into real-life success.

In preparation for the fourth of July this year, every young future scientist made their own fireworks in a glass too. We played with fire outside, and with safety first, of course. Nurture curiosity. Always stand for independent thought.

As our record of over thirty-five years always gets better with time, these past few months a lot happened, again, in Gifford Park, in Omaha, the country and the world. You will see much of our events from here in pictures and news written all across this newsletter.

I can't really choose a favorite from among the many things that we all made happen together. They are all my favorites. Every single activity or program means a lot to me and must mean a lot to all respective participants. An opportunity that is a seed for growing a better future. Between all of the activities and programs—from youth garden to tennis and from the adventure playground to the games club at Yates, we are Gifford Park neighborhood and we are neighbors to one another, helping us--here and in all of Omaha too--all belong and become and stay happier and healthier and live longer. *Harambe. Together.* The words together in Swahili echoed sung by everyone along with the drums playing at Yates the other week at the Drumming Concert at the completion of the free Drumming Camp.

continued on next page

continued from previous page

The top few of mine that we helped make happen are the kickoff of *Gifford Park to Omaha Plate*—the formal name of the Mayor's Grant we got and that just started—, the Science of Fireworks, the Science of Pasta, Astronaut radishes and Astronaut ice cream as snacks at the Science of rockets and our solar system and exploring it and our galaxy, the Drumming Concert, and amateur radio events. All the activities and opportunities are far too many to list them all, if we also count all the theatre and other Yates partner organizations events.

2026, as you may recall, is the Year of the Neighbor in Omaha. We got the Mayor's Grant, so we—that really means Austin, Aaron French and Marie Hélène—are now running the program aptly named *Gifford Park to Omaha Plate*, from Yates Illuminates and the Big Buddy Urban Farm and across all of Gifford Park Neighborhood and beyond. Seven families already set up and planted seeds of their choice in their raised beds held at Yates, and the workshops on gardening and canning and pickling and more held by and at Big Muddy Urban Farm are upcoming.



If you didn't take part, we are sorry you missed these. Don't miss out. Make certain to come join us at a future activity, from the many we make happen, 33rd Friday Block Party on August 14, GPNA General meeting moved to August 20 to accommodate a special guest from the Mayor's Office and great neighbor, Health & Wellness Fair on October 3, Porchfest on October 4, Voter Information and Candidate Forum on October 19, all just for starters.

Read this newsletter thoroughly to learn about everything going on. Come take part in everything. Better still, please join us in the Arena: come take proactive part: come with suggestions—start by filling in our survey, but help make your ideas become reality—to help make new good things happen, so nobody misses our neighborly gatherings and there are always more fun and informative or helping out a neighbor in need things to do for everyone. See you in the neighborhood, in the arena.

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.

See the back page of this newsletter for ways to join.



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