



Gifford Park's Pride

Gifford Park Neighborhood: A Great Place to Live, Work, Learn, and Play
www.giffordparkomaha.org

July/August 2013

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Growing in Gifford Park

By Chris Foster

Decent spring and early summer rains got gardens off to a great start, but rain has been hard to come by the past month. Luckily temperatures have been much cooler than last year's severe drought. We periodically fill with city water the 275 gallon rainwater collection totes we installed a couple years ago, this lets gardeners water their plots anytime as long as there is water in the totes. Most of our vegetable and flower gardens are doing very well with nice varieties of vegetables and well maintained plots. Hopefully we will receive decent rain soon.

Saturday, June 22 we had the first pot luck dinner of the season on the community garden. Over 70 adults and children attended to celebrate efforts involving the community garden, youth garden program and "friends" of the garden. Thanks to our garden cook Neil Liberty for again grilling the burgers and hot dogs.

Weekly work nights continue each Wednesday 6 to 8 PM through the growing season. During these times water and garden tools are available for plot renters and anyone else interested in helping maintain the community garden – there is never a shortage of weeding! It's a good time to stop by the garden to see neighborhood friends or check out what's growing. Contact Mike Caban (402-341-4722, caban3321@cox.net) for garden plot information, and Chris Foster (402-290-8187, foster3413@cox.net) for other questions.



**Next General Meeting
Thursday, August 8**

**Speakers
OPD NE Precinct Capt. Scott Gray
Community Bicycle Project Omaha
Root Down Community Garden**

**7:00 pm
Morrison Seminar Room
Alegent Creighton University
Medical Center**

Youth Garden Program Update

At the time of this newsletter we have completed 10 weeks of the Gifford Park Youth Garden (GPYG) program at the Gifford Park Community Garden (35th & Cass St.). The 2013 program is each Saturday morning from 10:00 to 11:30 AM. This year we again have 44 each 30"x30" raised garden beds that each youth planted and tended since May.

To get you caught up with what's been going on, we started May 11 with our Garden Season Opening followed by the next three weeks of learning about plants, selecting which vegetables to grow, then planting their own garden plot and painting name stakes. There is always a flurry of activity during these weeks, but a lot of important work gets done. Week 4 Big Muddy Urban Farm and

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719-5108

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From the President

By Eric Purcell

My family and I were welcomed home today by a bunch of yellow tape and a dozen police cars in front of our house. Three shots had been fired and according to news reports, someone had been shot in the arm. The shooter was standing directly in front of my house.

An event like this is both frightening and infuriating. My mind wanders between, "We could have been outside when this happened and something terrible could have happened to my wife or one of my kids," to "We could have been outside when that happened and maybe prevented it simply by our presence."

It's incredible how presence can change circumstances. I can't say that the shooting would not have occurred had we been home or outside. But, I can't help but wonder how things may have been different if I had been home to engage the two people involved in the encounter. I do this regularly with the people who pass by my home: greet them, see how their day is going, ask them what their name is.

I firmly believe that our strongest most

effective action in the face of violence like this is to be present. To know people's names. To greet the people who walk by our houses every day – even if they look weird to us or make us feel uncomfortable. To be observant and watch out for each other. To take notice when something is going on that looks questionable. To be willing to call the Police if we see something going on that should not be happening. To be peacemakers in our neighborhood by befriending our neighbors...even the ones that seem to be different than us.

We can't control other people's choices or the consequences for their choices. But we can treat people with dignity and love. It's amazing what that will do to turn away violence.

I've had several calls lately from folks who are concerned about some drug issues in our neighborhood. My advice is to keep paying attention, call the police if you observe anything illegal, and be everyday peace makers by getting to know your neighbors.

There is no fear in love.

See you in the neighborhood.

Gifford Park Bunch Ball Soccer

Our second year of Gifford Park Soccer was a kick! Forty-nine different 3-8 year olds participated along with 10 great coaches! Each week about 30-40 kids showed up to have some fun learning how to play the game of soccer. They learned the basics of kicking, passing, dribbling and shooting the ball; played some fun little scrimmages; enjoyed some delicious snacks; and played some fun soccer games like soccer, soccer, goal (duck, duck, goose); the hokey pokey soccer style; a game called pigs and penguins, and a variation on the three legged race.

The weather this year was fantastic!

Last year it was over 100 degrees several of the nights. This year our warmest evening was in the low 90s. GREAT soccer weather!

A neat development that came out of this year's soccer program was the parents and older kids who wanted to play after the program was over. So, every Wednesday a small group has gathered to play. We will be continuing this through the rest of the summer each Wednesday at 7:00pm. We'd love for more folks to join us. There has even been a little bit of talk about the possibility of forming a Gifford Park Soccer Club and joining a league. If this is something that might interest you, please get in touch with Eric (402) 719-5108.

Editor's note: If you have news of interest to the Gifford Park Neighborhood, we encourage you to submit an article for the monthly newsletter. Editorials are subject to approval by the GPNA Executive Board. Please include your contact information. Articles may be submitted by email to jill.lynn.westfall@gmail.com.

Growing in Gifford Park

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Mike Caban taught us about how to care for our new chickens. During week 5, Jeannie Dickes taught us about vermicomposting (worm composting) and the how worms make our soil richer for growing plants. We also learned how the right ingredients make for good composting, and the heat this process generates to break down these ingredients to “black gold” - a few families brought their own vegetable scraps to add the compost pile at the community garden. Week 6 Ricky Green, Big Muddy Urban Farm and Frankie Hamburger organized several garden art stations, including one station with creative drawings used for design ideas for our large mural project currently being done at 33rd & California. For week 7, bee keeper Marvin Goldson and his daughter Gina and grandson Cody taught us all about bees including letting us touch a bee hive and taste the honey! Week 8 brought us the “Sound of Music” where we warmed up and then listened to songs Ricky Green, Matt Cronin, and Brent Lubbert with Big Muddy Urban Farm. We joined in with some really cool instruments - including a Nebraskan whack-a-doodle (not to be confused with a Minnesotan whack-a-don’t-ya-know!). Everyone got in on the action as we sang along to “Grow Grow Your Garden.” Between the bucket drums, the bean shakers, and the stone percussion, we made some noise! For week 9 and “Garden Movement” we enjoyed a relaxing morning in the Youth Garden as we learned about the amazing Truck Farm with Chelsea Taxman, practiced some kid-friendly yoga with Monica Lehn, and helped the chickens become comfortable in their run with Brent Lubbert! And during week 10, Lee Cheever taught us about amphibians and reptiles! He had about a dozen critters to show us - from native Nebraskan snakes to a Middle Eastern gecko! We ended the presentation by getting up close and personal with these wonderful creatures. Our young gardeners also picked ripening vegetables including zucchini, yellow squash, and cucumbers. Upcoming sessions include: Family Show & Tell, Cooking Matters, Seed Saving, Canning & Preserving, and Pizza



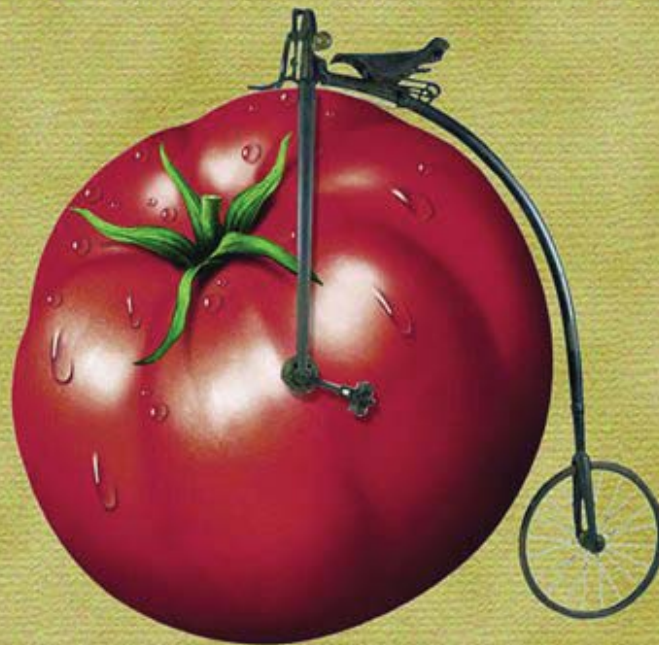
First garden potluck of the season

Garden Harvest PARTY.

As you can see the program teaches youth of all ages how to grow our vegetables, prepare, eat, and share our harvest with others. Plus, the youth are creative with art, music, and poetry; explore our natural environment; and have fun while working together and getting our hands dirty. GPYG relies upon parents and volunteers each week to provide snacks, lead lessons, and simply share their time with participating young people. Tremendous thanks to all our volunteers including but not limited to: Frankie Hamburger, Megan Kriegler, Rose Carlson, Sara Stauffer, Ricky Green, Aidan Hoehl, the Stanley family, Monica Lehn, Eric & Lisa Purcell, Dave & Jen Collie, Jackie Foster, Sallie Foster, Big Muddy Urban Farm (Ali Clark, Brent Lubbert, Matt Cronin, Dan Egan) and the dedicated parents and family members who participate with their youth gardeners. Special thanks to Mike Caban for his dedication to this program and the community garden project, neither would be the same without his leadership – thanks Mike! Please contact Chris Foster (402-290-8187 or foster3413@cox.net) or Mike Caban (402-341-4722, caban3321@cox.net) if you have questions about GPYG program.

Tour de
GARDEN

COMMUNITY GARDEN BICYCLE TOUR



SUNDAY, SEPT. 1, 2013 • 9^{AM}-2^{PM}

Hop on your saddle and join us for a one-of-a-kind bicycle adventure, visiting some of Omaha's finest community gardens.

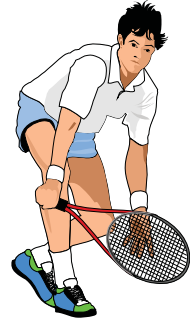
www.TourDeGarden.com



20th Annual Gifford Park Free Tennis Program



For: Youth (4 to 18 years old)
Dates: August 7, 14, 21, 28
 (each Wednesday in August)
Where: Gifford Park Tennis Courts
 (33rd & Cass St.)
Time: Ages 4 to 9 (6:00 - 6:45 p.m.)
 Ages 10 to 18 (6:45 to 7:30 p.m.)



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 shown 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.** Call **402-342-6006** or **402-290-8187** for more information.

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

Youth's Name: _____ Parent's Name: _____
 Street: _____ Street: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____ City, State, Zip: _____
 Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____ School: _____
 Parent/Guardian Phone: Home: _____ Work: _____

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. Furthermore, I give consent to any necessary medical treatment in case of emergency.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Gifford Park Neighborhood Market

On Friday nights, Gifford Park neighbors gather for our weekly Neighborhood Market for fresh produce and fun. The market is open from 4:00 - 8:00 pm and runs through September 27.

Here are a few photos of the activities at the Neighborhood Market.



Gifford Park Mural Taking Shape

The mural project with Kent Bellows Art Studios on the south wall of the KNJ Grocery Store at 33rd & California is taking shape. The youth from Kent Bellows have received input from the neighborhood for design ideas to enhance our business district and Neighborhood Market and have started preparing, priming, and painting the wall.

Stop by and check out their progress!



Community Bike Project Omaha

Charles Mitchell, Shop Manager

Just in time for summer, the Community Bike Project has been expanding its operations. Here is a quick update on what we've been up to: Starting in June, we expanded our hours and now run our Open Shop program five days a week. We've doubled the number of hours we're available to help people fix their bikes, which has been a welcome increase for many in the neighborhood. Bicyclists of all ages keep the shop bustling with activity every Open Shop. The Bike Project will also be installing an outdoor bike repair station with a pump and bike tools so bikes can be fixed even when we're not open.

To get bikes back on the streets and in the hands of those that can use them, we're also making an effort to get more affordable used bikes out to the community. Stop by the shop during our Open Shop hours to see the ever-improving retail area or check out the selection at the Neighborhood Market on Fridays. The bikes we sell make it possible for us to give away other bikes for free and stock the shop with the oil, grease, and patches that keep bikes running smoothly.

In August, the Bike Project will also be revamping its Earn-a-Bike program. Two days a week we



will open the shop for youth participants to learn more about bike repair and safe riding while also working on a bike they will then earn. Combining access to free bikes with bicycling education and mechanical skills will promote lifelong learning and cycling in Gifford Park's youth.

With all this shop activity now is great time to donate a bike, learn maintenance skills while volunteering, or help teach others more about bicycling in Omaha! Volunteer applications are available on-line (www.communitybikeproject.org) and at the shop.

Current Shop Hours:

Sunday: 3-6pm – Open Shop

Monday: 3-6pm – Open Shop

Wednesday: 6-8pm – Kids' Night +

Thursday: 4-6pm – Open Shop (16+ year olds)

Saturdays: Noon-2pm – Open Shop



Eric Purcell recognizing youth soccer players for perfect attendance and good sportsmanship at the program finale on July 17.



TOOL LENDING HOTLINE Call Chris 290-8187

Mowers - \$5 Rent for most tools - \$3



At the garden



LOCAL Campaign Update

City Leaders use the “Good Neighbor” Ordinance Ongoing alcohol-related problems at the edge of the Old Market prompted the Omaha City Council to use the “Good Neighbor” ordinance for the first time earlier this month. The ordinance, approved by the council in 2012, uses the city’s zoning powers to set conditions around alcohol-sales establishments that better reflect our community standards, and allows the city more authority to address problem outlets. The standards simply encourage businesses to be a good neighbor by not adversely effecting or jeopardizing the public health, peace or safety of persons residing, working or using the surrounding area.

This summer, police officers have had to deal with several incidents involving bar patrons that have all been located near 11th and Farnam, where the restaurant and bar Maria Sangria serves food during the day and early evenings, but becomes a nightclub on some nights. The recent violence and crime in the Old Market raised the concern of many about the area’s high density of alcohol outlets, and the outlet-related incidents that created community havoc and drained our city’s police resources.

The business will have the opportunity to clean up their business practices and abate the nuisances by adhering to acts set forth by the City Planning Department within the specified time frame. If they don’t



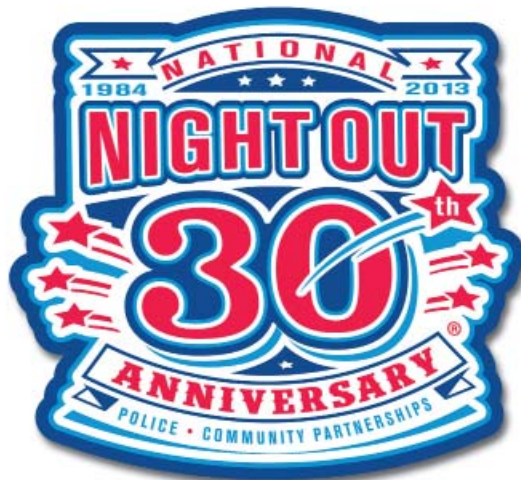
abate the nuisance as directed, the city council will have the ability to suspend or revoke the certificate of occupancy.

The City’s first use of the “Good Neighbor” ordinance sends a strong message to all alcohol-sales establishments across the city – you have a responsibility to be a good neighbor, and the city is taking alcohol-related problems seriously in an effort to improve public health and safety, reduce crime, and provide cost savings to the taxpayers of the city.

We continue to be focused on ensuring that the city uses this valuable policy tool. We are asking neighborhood representatives to help us document any problems they are having with alcohol-sales businesses in their areas. With this documentation, we can help the city craft a process that will help city leadership quickly and efficiently address problems related to alcohol-sales establishments before they get out of hand. To learn more about LOCAL, the “Good Neighbor” ordinance or to report problems related to an alcohol-sales establishment, check out our website at www.thelocalcampaign.com.

National Night Out

This year the 30th Annual National Night Out (NNO) will be observed on Tuesday, August 6th. The NNO is known as America's Night Out Against Crime. The goal of NNO is to promote neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships in a fight for a safer nation. The traditional activities associated with NNO are front porch vigils and leaving porch lights on overnight to make a statement against crime and to show support for local crime prevention agencies. NNO is a great opportunity for us all to get to know our neighbors and our neighborhood better.



On behalf of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA) we wish to thank the City Parks Department and Summer Works program for all your hard work and help sprucing up the Sun Dawg Shacks and work in Gifford Park (painted backstop, bleachers, benches, water fountain, tennis court lines, parking lot stripes, etc).



City Solutions:

Animal Bites 444-7578

Barking Dogs (sick, injured or stray animals) 444-7800

Cars (abandoned or junked) 444-5782

Cars/Trailers parked on front lawn 444-5350

City Services (complaints or information) 444-5555

Crime or Vandalism 444-5600

Empty buildings, Houses (vacant or dilapidated) 444-5371

Gang Hotline (Youth intervention) 444-6920

Garbage not picked up 444-5238

Garbage/Litter violations 444-5910

Gas leaks, waterline breaks, fire hydrants 554-7777

Handicap Parking Stickers 444-6080

Hedges, tree limbs blocking view/traffic 444-5592

Neighborhood Watch Program 444-5772

Rats, raw garbage, etc. 444-7481

Street Construction (problems or complaints) 444-5220

Tenant/landlord discrimination issues 444-5055

Zoning Enforcement 444-5364



Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
 PO Box 31462
 Omaha, NE 68131

Place
 Stamp
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Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Membership Application

The GPNA Membership year runs from January 1 to December 31.

Type of Membership: Single (\$10.00) Family (\$15.00) Business (\$25.00)

Today's Date: _____

Name (person 1): _____ Email: _____

Name (person 2): _____ Email: _____

Name (person 3): _____ Email: _____

Name (person 4): _____ Email: _____

Name (person 5): _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Volunteer Opportunities! I'm interested in helping with....

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanup/Beautification | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Delivery | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Easter Egg Hunt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Block Captain | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Spring Cleanup |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Planting | <input type="checkbox"/> Fall Cleanup |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landlord/Tenant Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Watch Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Walks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Liason | <input type="checkbox"/> Call Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Banquet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tool Lending | | | |