



Gifford Park's Pride

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

June 2014

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Tennis Block Party 2014 Highlights

By Chris Foster

Cool weather and even a few sprinkles didn't stop over 75 youth participants and over a dozen volunteers at the annual Tennis Block Party held Wednesday May 14 in Gifford Park. Youth learned the basic tennis skills along with rally courts, and we finished up with watermelon and snacks for everyone. Many thanks go to our dedicated tennis instructors – Ric & Jane Hines, Buddy Hogan, Jim Wilson, Lou Harrison, Calvin Webster, Roger Freeman, Laurie Bolte, Jenny Waltemath, and Vince Emery. Again this year we had some of the older youth participants to help with our rally courts, they did a great job, thanks Stanley sisters (Dawn, Crystal, Justine, Witney), Ari Manzo and Tyler Bolte. Thanks also to our other volunteers Jan Franks, Brittany Rubek, Tyffaney Slayden, Kayleen Slayden, Eric & Lisa Purcell, Paul Pellerito, and Chris & Sallie Foster, they helped with multiple tasks including registration, signage, setup, taking pictures, and food. After the tennis lessons, Officer Robert Wiley said some inspiring words for everyone about the importance of hard

Next General Meeting
Thursday, August 14

Theme:
Celebrating Neighborhood
Diversity

7:00 pm
Alegent Creighton Medical Center
Morrison Seminar Room

work, practice, sportsmanship and taking care of our park.

We are offering to the older youth the opportunity to continue on playing tennis with several instructors on Wednesday's (10-11 AM for ages 9-11, 11 AM to Noon for ages 12 & over) starting June 11 – July 16 at Gifford Park. Anyone interested, please contact Chris at 402-290-8187 for a registration form, or you can show up at the tennis courts.



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From the President

By Eric Purcell

This past weekend a service team from Iowa and Minnesota were in the neighborhood doing some work at the Community Garden. They asked me to say a few words to them about our remarkable neighborhood. One of the things that I communicated to them, and find myself sharing often, is the fact that the people in this neighborhood have a great deal of vision, a "let's go for it" attitude, and a whole lot of perseverance!

My first experience of this came shortly after my first meeting as an At-Large Board member. Two years ago I had this idea for a kids soccer program. Because of the big vision of this neighborhood and its leaders, the answer was, "Yea! Go for it!" And the board invested \$700 into getting the program up and running. This will be my third summer leading the soccer program for 3-8 year olds. A lot of people have invested and worked hard to make this happen. And each year the dream gets bigger! (Just take another look at last month's newsletter for more on that!)

Perhaps the most impressive example of the vision, enthusiasm and persistence since Lisa and I moved into this neighborhood three years ago is the Gifford Park Neighborhood Market.

It started out small. Six years ago Martin and Rob Janousek spent an

afternoon selling sweet corn out of the back of a pickup truck in the lot between K-N-J and Cali Bar. That day a new idea was born: a vision for a neighborhood market that would contribute to the revitalization of our business district. Three years ago when we moved here there were just a handful of vendors. (I remember not being too impressed. Sorry Martin!) What is impressive, however, is the perseverance of our neighbors to keep dreaming, keep showing up and each week, month and summer to make the market better.

Last summer the market took some major leaps forward with monthly kid nights, live music and a growing number of vendors. (I even got in the spirit of it and sold hot dogs one week!) This summer it continues to grow and is becoming an important asset in our community. There is live music, weekly kids activities, a vibrant atmosphere, and an ever expanding number of vendors-including veggies, jams and jellies, soaps, cured meats and cheeses, doggie treats, baked goods, jewelry, handcrafted aprons and rugs, and more!

So if you are in the market for inspiration and want to see in action a neighborhood with vision, the willingness to take risks, and determination, every Friday night from 5-8 the Gifford Park business district is the place to be. And be sure to bring a little money because you're sure to find something else you may like too!!

See you in the Neighborhood!

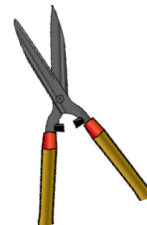
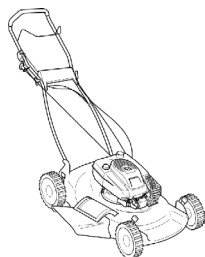
Editor's note: If you have news of interest to the Gifford Park Neighborhood, we encourage you to submit an article for the monthly newsletter. Editorials are subject to approval by the GPNA Executive Board. Please include your contact information. Articles may be submitted by email to jill.lynn.westfall@gmail.com.

TOOL LENDING HOTLINE

Call Chris 290-8187

Mowers - \$5

Rent for most tools - \$3



Tennis Block Party 2014



Community Garden Updates

By Chris Foster

Our annual Season Opening event was held Saturday May 10th, at the Community Garden (35th & Cass Street). We had a variety of family activities including Youth Garden program registration; information about the community garden, Teen Market Garden and Big Muddy Urban Farm; information from the County Extension Office; children's take home project (Mother's Day painted potted plant); face-painting; free library books and kids memberships; free seeds, plants and refreshments. We also let out the chickens for the children to see and handle – the hens are now a year old! Many thanks to all the volunteers and families who came out for the event.

With all the May and especially June rain (nearly 5" fell on June 3 alone!) most plants are doing ok, but we can use some warmer weather. Everyone is encouraged to check out the sights and sounds at the community garden including the chickens, located in their coop on the upper-north part of the garden. Wednesday work nights and will continue each Wednesday 6 to 8 PM through the growing season. During these times water and garden tools will be available for plot renters and anyone else interested in helping maintain the community garden – we always need weeding of the flower beds! It's a good time to stop by the garden to see neighborhood friends or check out what's growing – things are changing fast! 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.

Youth Garden Program Update

On May 3 volunteers built and set 45 each 30"x30"x6" raised beds made of cedar wood – thanks to the Mutual of Omaha Foundation for their generous grant, and Micklin Lumber for providing the material at a good price. Volunteers included Jim Wilwerding, Bob Hutton, Michaela

Wolf, Ricky Green, Mike Caban, Luther & Deb Larson, and Chris Foster. The first four weeks of the Gifford Park Youth Garden (GPYG) program has seen lots of activities including children getting familiar with the garden, learning about seeds & plants and how to plan what to plant in their plots, and actually preparing the soil and planting their plots. We also have chickens in their new coop so our young gardeners can learn about raising chickens. The program is each Saturday morning from 10:00 to 11:30 AM through August 23rd. Below you will find the schedule. This free program teaches youth of all ages how to grow our vegetables, prepare, eat, and share our harvest with others. Many thanks to the parents and wonderful volunteers (especially Big Muddy urban Farm) who make this program work! Please contact Chris Foster (402-290-8187 or foster3413@cox.net) or Mike Caban (402-341-4722, caban3321@cox.net) if you have any questions about GPYG program.

Gifford Park Youth Garden Program
Remaining 2014 Schedule
Saturdays 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

June 14	All about compost
June 21	Sound of Music
June 28	Art in the Garden
July 5	Wildlife
July 12	Truck Farm and Garden Movement
July 19	Bugs & Insects
July 26	Family Show & Tell
August 2	Cooking Matters
August 9	Canning & Preservation
August 16	Seed Saving
August 23	Pizza Garden Harvest PARTY! (Big Muddy Farm)
	Rest of growing season - tend your plot

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

Neighborhood Market Starts May 23

By Martin Janousek

The Gifford Park Neighborhood Market is back for another summer and popular as ever. On May 23, the market had its earliest ever opening since it started with one table back in the summer of 2006. Now in its 8th year the market through September 26 between the hours of 5:00pm to 8:00pm. The location will be the same as in past years, in the empty parking lot between the K n J Grocery Store and the California Bar.

Many of our vendors will be back again this year selling items such as vegetables, fruits, jellies & jams, cheeses, handmade soaps, vintage items, honey, eggs, handmade stationary and the list goes on. Music by some of our local talented

musicians will entertain. On the last Friday of each month we will have our Kids in the Market activities.

A Big Thank You goes out to the Mutual of Omaha Grant and the Mayors Grant for awarding the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association funds for signage and other needed supplies. As you know, there is no cost to be a vendor at our market so receiving these grants is a big help for this volunteer effort.

If you're interested in being a vendor or know of someone please contact us at gpnmarket@gmail.com or "Like" us on our Facebook page [facebook.com/giffordparkneighborhoodmarket](https://www.facebook.com/giffordparkneighborhoodmarket).

Newsletter Wins Gold in National Competition

Our neighborhood newsletter, The Gifford Park Pride, received a Gold Award at the annual Neighborhoods, USA (NUSA) Conference. The award recognizes excellence in neighborhood newsletters in sharing information about the local community.



Gifford Park Neighborhood Market

Every Friday :: 5 pm to 8 pm
May 23rd thru September 26th
33rd and California



hand crafted items
local produce flowers canned goods
honey FRESH HERBS **BAKED GOODS**
and more!

Find us on Facebook for weekly updates
Contact us at gpnmarket@gmail.com

Community Bicycle Project Update

By Charles Mitchell

Now that school is out, the Community Bike Project's youth volunteers have more time and energy to invest in the shop. During our youth meetings, our dedicated young volunteers have an opportunity to dream up and then implement some inspiring new projects.

At our most recent youth meeting, it was decided that having a presence at the neighborhood market could help promote and support the Bike Project. The whole meeting group committed to running our market stand, and did a wonderful job. Next time you're at the market, keep an eye out for Mohamed, Motasim, Ukash, Mumin, Dave, Sam, Fausto and others. They can answer your questions about the shop or help you buy a bike.

Youth have also been putting in some dedicated volunteer hours as part of our Earn-a-BMX competition. For the month of June, our young volunteers are earning a point for each hour they volunteer at the shop. At the end of the month, the top five volunteers are going to earn a high quality BMX bike! In addition to working on bikes and helping others, volunteers have been doing a great job keeping the shop tidy and creating chalk drawings that promote the Bike Project.



Youth meetings have also focused on creative ways to make the Bike Project visually welcoming and vibrant. Be on the lookout for some building improvements both inside and outside the shop that our youth volunteers are currently undertaking.

We're also celebrating summer break by organizing monthly rides. Join us on June 29th for a fun, family-friendly ride around Omaha (and maybe Iowa) and meet the young volunteers who are devoting their energy and expertise to the Bike Project!

Come Stroll the Secret Gardens in Midtown Omaha!

The Midtown Historic Neighborhood & Landmark Garden Walk will be held Sunday, June 29th at 10 am to 3:30 pm. The cost for the Garden Walk is \$8 per person, no charge for children.

The Garden Walk will feature many home gardens in neighborhoods throughout Midtown Omaha, along with community neighborhood gardens, the building grounds of Joslyn Art Museum, and the Gerald R. Ford Birthsite.

Gardens include a rock and waterfall garden, a net zero energy and rain garden, flower havens, vegetable gardens, ponds, the Big Muddy Urban Farm, Douglas County Health Center Garden, stately historic homes in Field Club and a Tuba in the Pond garden downtown.

Postcards which list all the garden locations will be available at Hy-Vee at 51st and Center and Indian Creek Nursery at 303 North Saddle Creek Road after Monday, June 23rd. Postcards will also be available at starting point locations including the Ford Birthsite at 3202 Woolworth.

The Midtown Historic Neighborhood & Landmark Garden Walk is sponsored by The Urban Bird & Nature Society of Omaha and Children's Hospital & Medical Center. For questions contact Diana C. Failla, Garden Walk Coordinator at theurbanbirdandnaturesociety@cox.net or call 402-651-5779.

Gifford Park Neighborhood School Effort

The Omaha school district continues to work toward a possible November school bond referendum to pay for school construction projects, including building upgrades and new schools. As we have said before our Gifford Park and surrounding neighborhoods are still very much in the hunt to bring back a neighborhood school. As you probably know in 1999 our neighborhood school Yates Elementary at 32nd & Davenport Street was closed by OPS because the building was too small to handle the number of children in our neighborhood. Currently of the 353 Yates attendance area children in grades K-6, 165 are assigned to Kellom School, and 188 of our children are bused to 39 different schools in the district. Letters of support to bring back a neighborhood school have been sent to OPS from the Gifford Park NA, Joslyn Castle NA, Dundee Memorial Park NA, Bemis Park NA, Leavenworth NA, Midtown Neighborhood Alliance, Councilman Chris Jerram, First Presbyterian Church, and residents.



GPNA member (and mother of a young child) Joy Doll recently wrote this letter of support:

“Dear Mr. Snow, Mr. Wayne and Mr. Evans,

I am writing to express my concern about the lack of a community school to support midtown Omaha, specifically Gifford Park and Joslyn Castle Neighborhoods. We own two homes in the 68131 zip code, one being our primary residence and one being a rental property that we intentionally rented to a family with a small child. I am saddened that on 38th Avenue where we live, children go to up to 5 different schools. These children have no sense of community and no interaction due to being divided by schools. We are geographically closer to Dundee Elementary (1.75 miles) and Washington versus Kellom which is truly out of our neighborhood at over 2 miles distance. I really am concerned about the quality of education my two year old daughter will receive by going out of her community for school.

Omaha Public Schools offers a high quality education and I intend on sending our daughter to

public school. But I am very concerned about her going to a quality school in her community. As an occupational therapist, I understand the value of social relationships to development and proximity to children in one’s social circle is important. Neighbors are important – we need a neighborhood school to support our community. I intentionally chose to live in East Omaha because of its diversity and wonderful homes. Please support us in our efforts to create a community to support generations to come in Omaha and beyond. Thank you for your time and attention in this matter.”

We expect to have more details soon from OPS officials. For more information on this effort, please contact:

Chris Foster (GPNA Board member):

402-290-8187, foster3413@cox.net

Marque Snow (OPS Board member):

605-675-9251, marque.snow@ops.org

Sara Howard (Nebraska State Senator):

402-699-5514, saraehoward@gmail.com



Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
 PO Box 31462
 Omaha, NE 68131



**Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
 Membership Application**

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

Type of membership: ___ Single (\$10) ___ Family (\$15) ___ Business (\$25)
 Today's Date: _____

Business Name (if applicable): _____

Business Phone (if applicable): _____

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

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

Name (3): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name (4): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name (5): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

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

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Call committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Banquet | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Distribution | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanup/Beautification | <input type="checkbox"/> Landlord/Tenant Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> School Liason | <input type="checkbox"/> Tool Lending |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Memberships | <input type="checkbox"/> School Achivities | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Planting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easter Egg Hunt | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Walks | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Garden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Watch | <input type="checkbox"/> Teen Garden | |

Return completed form along with check or money order to:
 Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, PO Box 31462, Omaha, NE 68131.