



# Gifford Park's Pride

*Gifford Park Neighborhood: A Great Place to Live, Work, Learn, and Play*  
[www.giffordparkomaha.org](http://www.giffordparkomaha.org)

September 2014

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

## Community Garden Updates

*By Chris Foster*

Our Gifford Park Community Garden was one of nine host community gardens during the recent 3rd annual Tour de Garden event Sunday August 31, over 50 bicyclists took part. Participating community gardens on this bicycle tour included: City Sprouts, Farnam Farm, Dundee, Benson, Gifford Park, Root Down & Creighton Blue Jay, The Big Garden, John Pollack's Urban orchard, and Hands to Harvest. Of note, Matt Cronin with Big Muddy Urban Farm made salsa for the Tour de Garden after party salsa contest (between each participating community garden on the tour) at the Benson Community Garden. Gifford Park's salsa was voted third best! Thanks to Gifford Park's own Ricky Green for organizing the event again this year.

Gifford Park's own Erin Grace wrote a great article "Urban agriculture is where vegetables, and cities, thrive" that appeared on the front page of the September 2 Omaha World Herald. The article highlighted the community garden, youth garden program, Big Muddy Urban Farm and the "Growing Cities" documentary which will air on PBS in late October. Erin, who lives near 35th & Webster with her husband, Morgan, and their three children, actively participate and volunteer in the youth garden program. I want to recognize the GREAT efforts of Kate Bodmann who started and directed the youth garden program beginning in 2003, and Dana Freeman and her mom Sue who directed and grew the program for five years starting in 2007. There has been tremendous support from volunteers, parents and youth participants to make this program so valuable to our neighborhood,

**Next General Meeting  
Thursday, November 13**

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



especially to our young gardeners...and future leaders. One more person I wish thank is Mike Caban, he has been a true "backbone" to both the community garden and the youth garden program since the beginning in 2001. Thanks Erin for the very nice article!

Our next pot luck dinner for our community gardeners, youth gardeners, volunteers and their families will be Sunday, September 28. Gather at 4:00 pm to socialize with dinner at 5:00 pm at

*continued on page 9*

**2014 GPNA OFFICERS**

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## From the President

*By Eric Purcell*

A big CHEER to Gifford Park Neighborhood for another fantastic summer! As the kids head back to school and the temperatures start to drop off a bit, high season in Gifford Park is slowing down as well.

Each summer it is apparent how deeply many of our neighbors believe in and work toward our mission:

*As members of Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, we are committed to preserving and protecting our neighborhood. In the spirit of volunteerism and teamwork, and through dedication, integrity and communication with neighbors and local government officials, our goal is to help make Gifford park Neighborhood a great place to live, work, learn and play.*

I am really proud of all of the amazing folks who work so hard to make this mission statement a reality. Looking back over the last five months this neighborhood has come together to host a neighborhood clean-up day, our annual Easter Egg hunt, our annual Cultural Celebration with Yates, a seven-

week summer soccer program, a tennis block party and a four-week summer tennis program, another fantastic community and youth garden season, community potluck, neighborhood block party, and a vibrant neighborhood market that continues to run every Friday evening through September. It's quite incredible and a BIG thank you goes out to everyone who volunteers to help make these things happen!

As we start winding down and head into our low season, I want to remind us that it is just as important now as ever to continue investing in the relationships around us. After all, it is the relationships that we build in our neighborhood that ultimately make it a strong and safe place to live. Officially, GPNA will offer a few opportunities to stay connected with an informal get together in October, our next General Meeting in November where we will elect a new slate of board members, and our annual Holiday Banquet in December. But don't let that be the end! Create some new connections with your neighbors, and foster some old ones! Because that is what truly makes Gifford Park a fantastic place to live!

See you in the Neighborhood!

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## Registration Now Open for IN the Neighborhood Conference

Save the date! Friday, October 10 and Saturday, October 11 the Metro area is set to host its first ever Neighborhoods Conference. The two-day Iowa/Nebraska (IN) the Neighborhood Conference will be held at Metro Community College's South Omaha Campus. Friday will feature neighborhood tours in both Omaha and Council Bluffs. Saturday will start off with opening remarks from Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert and Council Bluffs Mayor Matt Walsh. The Luncheon Keynote Speaker is Gus Newport, a nationally renowned community activist who encourages neighborhood planning from the "bottom up, not top-down." Additional workshop speakers include neighborhood advocate and Creighton University Law Professor Kate Mahern, and Empowerment Network President Willie Barney. Morning and afternoon breakout sessions will cover a range of topics from Neighborhood Identity & Connectivity in a Regional Context to Raising Poultry in the City.

To register for the IN the Neighborhood Conference, visit [www.intheneighborhood.org](http://www.intheneighborhood.org). Early bird registration ends on September 21.

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](mailto:jill.lynn.westfall@gmail.com).



## Community Bicycle Project Update

*By Charles Mitchell*

After celebrating the end of summer at the Gifford Park Neighborhood Market's 33rd Friday Block Party, the Bike Project is looking forward to more bike work, rides, and events in the cooler weather.

On September 28, we're co-hosting a Full Cycle Supper bike tour and farm dinner with our friends and neighbors, Big Muddy Urban Farm. This joint fundraiser will explore all of Big Muddy's farm plots by bike and will feature farm-fresh courses at each site prepared by local chefs. Learn more and buy tickets at [www.communitybikeproject.org/full-cycle](http://www.communitybikeproject.org/full-cycle). In October we'll resume our monthly Sunday Funday rides. Open to all ages and levels of cyclists, the Sunday Funday rides are a fantastic way to see Omaha by bike and meet many of the amazing volunteers who keep the Bike Project rolling!

All of our Earn-a-Bike programs (Kids' Bike Club, Youth Earn-a-Bike, and Adult Earn-a-Bike) are also continuing on as fall settles in. Planning on biking through the winter? Now is a great time to start building a durable and dedicated winter bike. Volunteer for 5-10 hours during our Open Shop program to earn a free bike that can be subjected to the elements of winter riding.

Summer Open Shop hours will also continue through the fall. There's still plenty of time to get your bike tuned up for some fantastic fall riding or decked out for snow cycling. Open Shop is usually calmer during the fall, which also makes it the perfect time to take on those bike projects you've been dreaming of. If you want to learn how to build a wheel or give your bike the complete overhaul it needs, we can teach you how to accomplish your bike maintenance goals.

### Fall Hours/Programming

Sunday:

2-6pm – Open Shop

Wednesday:

2-5pm – Youth Shop;

5-7pm – Youth Earn-a-Bike Class

Thursday:

2-5pm – Open Shop (16+ year olds);

5-7pm – Youth Earn-a-Bike Class

Friday:

4-8pm – Open Shop

Saturday:

11am-12pm – Kids' Bike Club;

12-6pm – Open Shop





# 33rd Friday Block Party





## 33rd Friday Block Party

*By Ali Clark*

Thank you to everyone who came to celebrate the 33rd Friday on 33rd Street! While other neighborhoods throughout Omaha host events on first, second, third and fourth Fridays, 33rd Friday comes only once a year and we hope that it becomes a tradition in the neighborhood as a time to celebrate all that Gifford Park has to offer. This year, 33rd Friday fell on Friday, August 15. The evening was filled with community and diversity, and it showcased the many wonderful things happening in the Gifford Park neighborhood. We were happy to have organizations like Yates, SNAP productions and the Shelterbelt Theater, Cali Commons and The Year of the Startup share information how they are involved in the area. Activities like carnival games, face painting, hoola

hooping and a bike rodeo made the night fun-filled for our younger neighbors, and live music, the neighborhood passport and the market provided much entertainment for everyone.

As with any community event, there are many individuals who contributed their time prior to, during and after the event to make it all possible. Thank you to everyone who contributed in different ways to make the evening such a success. Consistently the neighbors in Gifford Park show great pride in this community, and it is inspiring to see how we can come together and create something beautiful. While 33rd Friday has passed for this year, it will be exciting to see how it unfolds next year -- on Friday, August 14th, 2015!

## Being a Good Neighbor

*By Leo Wilwerding*

I am 84 years old and have lived for over 70 years in the neighborhood. Over all these years I have learned quite a few lessons and still try to learn something every day. However one of the most important and somewhat surprising was one I learned at 12 years of age in 7th grade. We were studying a subject then called "Civics" when the teacher told us as a member of society that just by being born -- we all had a bunch of responsibilities. I didn't like to hear that because up to then I thought my role in life was having fun! She began to list these responsibilities however, telling us that to make our civilization effective that everyone had to do their share of the work and follow certain rules called laws. These rules are meant to make relation between us flow smoothly and pleasantly.

Abraham Lincoln was once asked his definition of "Liberty." He paused and then said, "I can tell you what it isn't. As citizens we certainly can't do whatever we want to do any time we want to do it. Any fool can tell you that won't work! We have to be considerate of others and not infringe on their rights." Sometimes we need to be reminded of common sense rules which make our neighborhood a pleasant place for all of us.

A few of these might be:

1. Mow your lawn and cut your weeds -- nothing makes a place look bad as overgrown yards.
2. Rake your leaves. Don't leave them to blow on your neighbor's yard. They shouldn't have to do your work.
3. Shovel the snow off your walks. This will make it safer and more convenient for others to walk on them.
4. Observe all parking laws -- don't block sidewalks or driveways or don't park on the grass.
5. Paint your house and keep it looking nice. It is against the law to have run down or littered property.
6. Plant some flowers, shrubs and trees. Make the neighborhood attractive. Properties in our area now look their best in 30 years! Do your share to keep it that way!
7. Don't inconvenience your neighbors by playing loud music or making loud noise, particularly after 10:00 PM. They have a right to their peace, quiet and rest.
8. Do your share of the work in promoting neighborhood activities such as cleanups, Easter egg hunts, and other neighborhood events.

By all of us doing our share of the work, pulling our share of the load and being considerate of each other, we have a great place to live. It all boils down to being a "Good Neighbor!"

## 21st Annual Youth Tennis Program Highlights

*By Chris Foster*

We lucked with the weather as we had no rain-outs despite threatening rain for both the first session and our “finale” session. This was our 21st annual August Youth Tennis Program in Gifford Park. This year we had about 75 youth participants and 36 with perfect attendance. We had tremendous help from our volunteer instructors for each of the four Wednesdays in August for this free program. The kids learned basic groundstrokes, volleys, rallying skills, and played “around the world” at the end of one session.

Godfather’s Pizza gave us a good deal providing 10 pizzas for our program finale. Neighborhood volunteers also provided delicious treats. Many thanks go to all the wonderful instructors for their support and dedication to this program: Ric & Jane Hines, Jim Wilson, Vince Emery, Roger Freeman, Jackie Foster, Jenny Waltemath, Calvin Webster, Laurie Bolte, Allie Gardner, Donnie Gildon, Ron Goodman, Michaela Wolf, Perry Mitchell, Elder Thompson, Elder Bug, and Chris & Sallie Foster. Thanks also to our neighborhood youth who helped teach: the Stanley girls (Dawn, Crystal, Justine, & Witney), Tyler Bolte, Matthew

White, and Marcus Anderson. Also during June and July, volunteer instructors Jim Wilson, Lou Harrison and the Stanley girls taught small group tennis lessons on Wednesday mornings in Gifford Park - this was the 7th year for this free program for kids with a strong interest in tennis.

Special thanks go to Jan Franks, Brittney Rubek, Betty Slayden, Tyffaney Reichert, and Kayleen Tran for help with registration, awards and lots of other administrative duties – thanks ladies! Thanks to Laurie Bolte who took excellent pictures at the finale, and Mike Caban for always helping out when needed most. Thanks also to the Omaha Tennis Association, the Nebraska Tennis Association, the United States Tennis Association, and the City Parks & Recreation Department for their generous support over the years. In fact, the Nebraska Tennis Association (NTA) provided us with a \$500 grant for tennis equipment (youth racquets and Quick Start balls) – thanks to Jane Hines for submitting the grant. Thanks also to Jackie Foster and another donor for purchasing the very bright neon yellow Gifford Park tennis t-shirts for youth participants and volunteers, you will probably see them around the neighborhood! If anyone who participated in the tennis lessons is interested in more advanced lessons, please contact Chris Foster at 402-290-8187.









## Youth Garden Program Update

*By Chris Foster*

Now in its 11th year, 2014 was another great year for the Gifford Park Youth Garden (GPYG) program. It began May 10 with our "Season Opening" event and ended with our "Pizza Garden Harvest Party" August 23. In between these dates we had over 60 registered youth participants gardening on 44 raised beds (each 30"x30"), a few children shared their plots. Amazingly there were no rainouts again this year, although our tents came in handy a couple times it did rain.

Last newsletter I gave an update through week 11, here are highlights of the last four weeks of activities: Week 12 we learned what to do with all of those veggies we're growing with the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) and their famous "Cooking Matters" class led by Annette Toomer and Chef Wilson Calixte. They demonstrated valuable secrets to proper food preparation and cooking, and in the end we all enjoyed a healthy and delicious meal from vegetables we grew in our gardens this summer. The presentation was educational, entertaining, and delicious!

Week 13 was all about canning and preserving our harvest. Brent Lubbert from Big Muddy Urban Farm with help from Eric & Annemarie Noll and son Preston taught us how to make refrigerator pickles - as well as myriad other vegetable/herb combinations! Volunteers helped our young gardeners explore their gardens for additional vegetables and helped with preparation of vegetables and herbs for everyone! It was exciting to learn a quick, easy way to save vegetables for later use.

Week 14 we learned a great deal about seed saving from Betsy Goodman (she started Omaha's Common Soil Seed Library). Besides Betsy's leadership, Ricky Green and Brent Lubbert from Big Muddy Urban Farm taught us about the cyclical nature of seed saving and how to use this process in our own gardens. Ricky taught us how to save tomato seeds - which involve a fermentation, sorting, and drying process before the seeds become viable. Betsy took us on a "treasure hunt" around the community garden where we looked at different plants and learned how they are pollinated in order

that they might produce seeds. Brent taught us how to collect seeds from the plants once they are formed.

Week 15 we celebrated another wonderful year of programs at the Gifford Park Youth Garden on Saturday morning with a Harvest Party! We enjoyed homemade pizzas prepared by the kids and Big Muddy Urban Farm's Brent, Matt, and Ricky (Ricky made superb potato pizza crusts). Each pizza was topped with an assortment of bountiful veggies harvested from Big Muddy's gardens and our young gardener's plots. While the pizzas were baking the kids participated in a Team Scavenger Hunt lead by Mike Caban. After all the pizzas were ready, we enjoyed each other's company while we gobbled up the harvest and ate some awesome homemade fruit pies baked by Michaela Wolf! We encourage our young gardeners to continue tending your plots for the rest of the growing season.

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: Michaela Wolf, Paul Pellerito, Megan Kriegler, Rose Carlson, Tyronda Pierce, Mike Sheldon, Sara Stauffer, Ricky Green, the Stanley family, Sara Polachek, Maria Diaz, Teresa Vizcaya, Monica Lehn, Andrea Lawse, Eric & Lisa Purcell, Erin Grace, Jackie Foster, Sallie Foster, Big Muddy Urban Farm (Brent Lubbert, Matt Cronin, Ali Clark) 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.



## Community Garden Update

*continued from page 1*

35th & Cass Streets. Besides our normal grilling of burgers and hot dogs, Chef Wilson Calixte (chef at Le Voltaire French Restaurant) will treat us to some entertaining food preparation and grilling, so be sure to come early between 4:00 and 5:00 to enjoy his expertise. Also special thanks to Roger Freeman for his special attention to the front flower gardens with weeding, watering and maintaining them. Roger also weeds and waters the Gifford Park flower beds – great work Roger!

We continue to have work nights Wednesdays 6 to 8 pm through the growing season. During these times water and garden tools will be available. It's a good time to stop by the garden to see what's growing or see neighborhood friends. Contact Mike Caban (402-341-4722, [caban3321@cox.net](mailto:caban3321@cox.net)) for garden plot information, and Chris Foster (402-290-8187, [foster3413@cox.net](mailto:foster3413@cox.net)) for any other community garden questions.





## Save the Date: Oct. 5 REO Tour to Highlight Life along Historic Florence Boulevard

An Omaha neighborhood rich in architectural history and filled with residents dedicated to preserving it is the site of Restoration Exchange Omaha's (REO) annual fall tour. The Florence Boulevard Neighborhood Tour is set for Sunday, Oct. 5, from noon to 5:00 p.m. The event, sponsored by AIA Omaha and made possible by a local North Omaha historical grant, will feature eight historic homes along stately Florence Boulevard. The Miller Park Pavilion will also be open on tour day, where attendees can view historic photos and architectural plans for the neighborhood. The tour is \$10 per person or \$15 for two. Creighton University will provide free shuttle service to the homes, and an easy biking route is also available. Tickets can be purchased at the Miller Park Pavilion the day of the event or in advance.

### The Featured Homes

- 4802 Florence Boulevard – a Prairie style home featuring a gabled roof with exposed roof rafters and triangular knee braces at the roof and wall junction
- 4811 Florence Boulevard – the land where this home sits was owned by John I. Redick, who came to Omaha in 1859 and was one of the first

lawyers in the city

- 4823 Florence Boulevard – built by the proprietor of the Rome Hotel in Omaha
- 6129 Florence Boulevard – a brick Prairie style home with a low-pitched hipped roof, an asymmetrical layout and three gabled dormers on the third floor
- 6140 Florence Boulevard – described in a 1946 Omaha World-Herald ad as the “prettiest location on the prettiest mile”
- 6141 Florence Boulevard – once owned by Thomas Dennison, also known as the “Old Grey Wolf” who had strong connections to the government, the police and various businessmen
- 6531 Florence Boulevard – typical American Foursquare or Prairie Box style home with many Craftsman style elements
- 6532 Florence Boulevard – features a full width front porch supported by square Craftsman columns and low overhanging boxed eaves with exposed roof beams at the roof and wall junction

Tour proceeds support REO education and advocacy activities. For more information or to volunteer for the tour, visit [www.restorationexchange.org](http://www.restorationexchange.org).





## Gifford Park Has a Little Free Library!

Dana Freeman and Stuart Shell are excited to be the stewards for Little Free Library (LFL) #15835 on behalf of their neighbors and community. Dana & Stuart designed and constructed the library completely from recycled materials. They recently installed the LFL in front of their home at 3435 Webster Street.

The way it works is simple:

- Dana & Stuart initially stock the LFL with a variety of good quality books and seeds that they hope will interest their neighbors.
- You stop by and take whatever catches your fancy.
- You return and bring books and/or seeds to contribute.
- LFL books and seeds are always a gift—never for sale!

Little Free Library is a movement started by Todd Bol and Rick Brooks of Wisconsin in 2010 and has grown to include little libraries in most states and dozens of countries. Little Free Library's mission is to:

- Promote literacy and the love of reading by building free book exchanges worldwide.
- Foster a sense of community and connection as we share skills, creativity, and wisdom across generations.
- Build more than 2,510 libraries around the world (the number of "real" libraries built by Andrew Carnegie)!

Check out the LFL story at [www.littlefreelibrary.org](http://www.littlefreelibrary.org) to look at examples of little libraries and for more ideas on how you can support the project. Don't forget to explore your neighborhood LFL by taking a walk down Webster Street!



## Neighborhood Market

*By Martin Janousek*

This summer if you haven't had a chance to visit the Gifford Park Neighborhood Market, you should do it soon, there are only three more Friday nights before it closes for the season on September 26. Anyone who's visited knows it's not your typical market. Open from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm on Fridays, it's a great way to start the weekend. Selling everything from vegetables and fruits to jams, pickles and cheese, the market is never the same from one Friday to the other. We've had smoked meats, local honey, and homemade soaps. There have been vintage clothing, CD's, books, jewelry, cupcakes, handmade items, and even Henna. We've had some great music by

amazing local talent under our stage tent. A few weeks ago, someone visiting the Gifford Park Neighborhood Market for the first time commented how envious they were that they didn't have something like this in their neighborhood. Though flattered by the comments, we let them know that the Gifford Park Neighborhood Market they loved so much has been growing and evolving for years. What they saw today started off with one vendor selling sweet corn for one day on the sidewalk over nine years ago. So, if you're looking for a market that's been cultivating "community" for years, stop down to the Gifford Park Business District before summer is over.





Gifford Park Neighborhood Association  
 PO Box 31462  
 Omaha, NE 68131

Place  
 Stamp  
 Here

**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.