



## The NNN Continues Our Conversation Circles on Race

by Dré Northern, NNN Community Organizer

Happy spring Near Northwest Neighbors! The entering of a new season always has a sense of symbolism and spring is no exception. It's a season that symbolizes renewal, a fresh start and a unique new beginning for many. It also represents a renewal of a unique process for the NNN that begun last fall; our Conversation Circles on Race.

Many of you participated last fall and gave testimonies about the raw, at times stirring and invigorating experience. For those who haven't had the experience, a conversation circle is simply a safe space where people gather together and form in groups. There are questions that pertain to a particular subject and each individual has a chance to answer from their own perspective. What you share within the group stays within the group.

After enduring a polarizing and tumultuous year like 2020, we saw an opportunity within the chaos to have the always-challenging conversation about race and racism in America. We started these conversations in the fall of 2020 with the focus on race within our own neighborhood.

This most current series began on March 15th with these conversations zooming out to discuss the impact and dynamics of race and racism in the City of South Bend. Sessions are held on alternating Mondays at 7pm via Zoom. If there are any of you who may want to participate its never too late. Our next session will be on April 12th at 7pm. Please contact me at [anorthern.nnn@gmail.com](mailto:anorthern.nnn@gmail.com) or call me at 574-303-7990 and I will make sure to send you a formal invite with the Zoom link included.

We view this as a unique experience, in the spirit of spring, that will blossom into greater understanding for all. These conversations are an important first step in our continued goal of creating a neighborhood where everyone feels like they belong.



## SJC Emergency Rental Assistance

As this Newsletter is being written, COVID-related Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funding has come to the County to provide back payments or forward payments of rent for tenants impacted financially by COVID related closures and work changes. Rent, and rental utility costs back owed since April 2020 may be covered, and also for some time in to the future. Up to twelve months of rent and utility assistance may be provided (including past due balances accrued after April 1, 2020), up to monthly published limits.

### EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



Tenants will have to income qualify at 80% AMI or less, and demonstrate Covid related hardship. Tenants may apply for the program, and Landlords will be contacted for verification. However, assistance may be granted without Landlord participation. Landlords may apply on behalf of tenants, but tenants MUST be involved for the application to proceed.

This program is available as of March 25, and details and application intake may be found at [www.sjcindiana.com/era](http://www.sjcindiana.com/era). Please contact the County for further information at [sjcera@sjcindiana.com](mailto:sjcera@sjcindiana.com) or contacting one of the partner agencies listed on the website.

Applications are being collected electronically with primary contact being made through email. If this is a barrier for you, please contact us for assistance at 574-232-9182.

# THE COMMON GROUND

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc. 1007 Portage Ave. South Bend, IN 46616 574.232.9182

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### Infill and rehab construction in the NNN

NN Neighbors, if you've been around the intersection of Portage and California avenues lately, you'll have already heard the sounds of warmer weather: hammers and construction equipment! There's a lot of current activity, and upcoming activity in 2021 – and we know you are eager to hear more about it. A mix of new and ongoing infill and rehab construction projects are proposed and many already underway:

- Firstly, if you've not yet had a chance to check in on the **NNN Neighborhood Plan** that the city completed in 2020, please check it out here: <https://tinyurl.com/t5twmdj6>. Some highlights in this plan include an overall look at vacant lots and land in the NNN, and especially planning target areas between Harrison and Sherman, Leland and Scott, and Portage Ave (near Cushing and California).



- The **NNN organization** itself hopes to have a busy building year, and has lined up new construction of four single family homes, available to income qualified families. We also have two single family rehabs underway, and are working hard to line up the construction of two small rental properties, a duplex and a fourplex. Please contact us with questions! These project sites are in a variety of locations, including Cottage Grove, Rex, Cushing, California, Sherman, Cleveland, and Harrison streets.

- Cross Community Inc.**, which has grown out of a partnership with Kingdom Life Christian Cathedral (located at Sherman/Lindsey) and Holy Cross Parish, plans to build five new construction homes in the 700 block of Harrison this year. Through the program, homeowners would only have to pay for the appraised value of a home. The difference between the home's appraised value and the construction costs will be paid for by Cross Communities, in an effort to increase the development of affordable housing in the city.

- Oasis Community** is currently fundraising to create an Intentional Neighboring Community with safe, affordable housing for youth aging out of foster care by pairing them with active seniors, individuals and families committed to living together in community. This project would utilize six currently vacant lots in the 800 block of Harrison and Sherman. [https://www.villagetovillageint.com/special\\_projects/oasis/](https://www.villagetovillageint.com/special_projects/oasis/)



- Thrive Michiana** is building two new energy homes behind the 909 Portage building. Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/z7wcjd8a>

- And with great excitement, the Ward Bakery building on Portage Ave is receiving a new roof currently, and many repairs are underway to convert the building into a "collaborator village" called **Portage Place**. If you have interest in how you might be able to be a tenant at

Portage Place (small office use, business incubator, maker space, etc.), contact Mike Keen at 574-514-2096, or [mfkeen@gmail.com](mailto:mfkeen@gmail.com). A great blog post regarding the project has been written by WestSB and can be found here <https://westsb.com/features/ward>



## Muessel School – What’s Next

Beginning in the Fall of 2021, the NNN’s Muessel school will be among the South Bend Community School Corporation’s redesigned schools. The school has received a failing grade from the state of Indiana for numerous years.

The anticipated new school model is considered an Innovation Network Zone and was designed to improve academic achievement. This change will reflect an extended learning day, put an emphasis on stronger curriculum, and invest in school leader development and training, and identify community partners that support the redesign efforts.



The decision to reorganize the school was aligned with district’s strategic focus of academic success, financial sustainability, and equity and inclusion.

At a virtual information session held specifically for the NNN last month Superintendent Cummings assured neighbors that Muessel would still be considered a neighborhood school and student selection will stay within this area. For more information on school changes, @Muessel Elementary School has an active Facebook page and you can always get the most recent information on the South Bend Community School Corporation website at <http://sb.school>.



## NNN Community Outreach Post COVID

by Laura Yahya

Have you been asking yourself what the NNN Community Outreach Team has been up to? It’s been a whole year since COVID has plagued the world and community outreach has taken on a new look for us all. Going door to door to greet neighbors has been essentially non-existent these past few months.

I know I am not the only one who misses a closer form of human interaction. Until we return to normalcy (if ever) we’ve been increasing our efforts of virtual outreach. Take a look at the list below and tell us what you think; what more you would like to see. Email me at [laura@nearnorthwestneighborhood.org](mailto:laura@nearnorthwestneighborhood.org) if you’d like further information on any of our outreach initiatives.

### NNN 2021 Virtual Community Outreach

- Increase social media presence
- Hold small socially distanced events outdoors like the Pumpkin giveaway and Lead Testing event we did in the fall and the Spring Outreach event we are having April 11
- Produce “How to stay lead safe at home video”
- Improve NNN website, add Lead Safety Resource Links
- Facilitate outdoor Pre-K Lead Testing at local schools this fall
- Do porch Lead Test Kit Drop Off & Pick Up
- Partner w/ neighborhood schools, churches, and daycares to ‘Get the Lead Out!’
- Assist with City of South Bend Lead Protection Grant Application Drop Off, Pick Up, and give virtual help w/ completing

We are always looking for Neighborhood Ambassadors to help spread kindness and resources. If you or a neighbor you know would like to donate your time or resources please give us a call at 574.232.9182 or email me at [laura@nearnorthwestneighborhood.org](mailto:laura@nearnorthwestneighborhood.org). We need help with things like delivering newsletters and setting up for events. In addition we need neighbors like you to like and share our Facebook page.

## NNN Community Dates

*The indoor NNN Community Spaces remain closed due to Covid 19. We are sharing outdoor spaces. Please call the office with questions.*

See the Page one story for details on the **2021 Adopt a Block** April 26-May1.

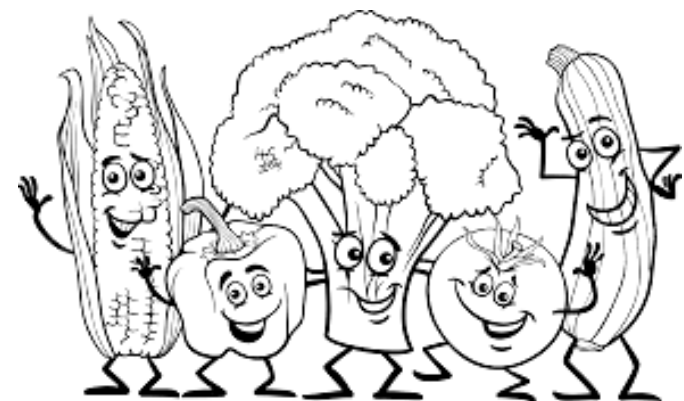
**April 11**, from 1-4 PM, the Community Outreach Team is holding a **Spring Outreach Event** with Lead Testing Available. The event is outside the 1013 Portage Ave. Community Center, and lead testing will be available for ages 6 and under. There will be COVID-friendly games for the children.

**The Local Cup** has reopened for carry out. Check their website for hours which change seasonally.

**South Bend Bike Garage** at 909 Portage Ave. reopens Thursday March 25 and will be open weekly on that night from 5-8 PM. Also reach them at 574-286-6508 or [info@sbbikegarage](mailto:info@sbbikegarage).

**Portage Farm Stands** opens for the year May 22 and runs Saturdays through October 29, 10AM-Noon. They set up in the 1006 Portage Parking lot, across from The Local Cup.

Their partners this year include Barn Swallow Farm, Julian Of Norwich Farm, Restoration Farm, Sunchoke Farms, Ten Thousand Villages And Underhill Farm & Bakery. Find them on Facebook [@Portagefarmstands](https://www.facebook.com/Portagefarmstands).



## Adopt a Block in 2021

Great news, neighbors; there will be an Adopt a Block! However, it will change from tradition to accommodate safe practices since Covid 19 remains an issue. It will be a week long, DIY affair. Clark Glover once again will head the effort.

Bags, directions and gloves will be available Mon-Thurs, April 26-29, 9-5, at the NNN office or on Saturday May 1 anytime between 9-11AM outside the 1013 Community Center. There will be no formal gathering. You decide when and what areas you clean up. You get to pick good weather or convenient times to do your clean up.

Bags of trash can be placed at our flashy pink stakes located throughout the neighborhood between May 1<sup>st</sup> and the morning of the May 3<sup>rd</sup> when Code enforcement picks them up. No large items please, and please place any food waste into your own trash container, to discourage animal scavenging.

If you want to clean beyond your own yard, please call the office for suggestions of where to help. If you are in need of help for your yard also call the office Mon-Th, 9-5. If there are volunteers, we will be happy to put them in contact with you.

## Lead Grants Available

Funding is still available through the City of South Bend for grants to income-qualified homeowners for lead abatement or interim controls that make your housing safer. Additionally, property owners and landlords that rent to income-qualified tenants may qualify for grants.

Who is eligible? Renters and homeowners who earn less than 80% of median income (\$56,650 for a family of 4).

Call 311 for more information or more information is online at: <https://311.southbendin.gov/knowledgecenter/article/?id=KA-01818> or call the NNN Community Outreach Team (COT) at (574) 850-1296.

## Reduzca el Plomo de su Casa - Subvenciones Disponibles

Los fondos aún están disponibles gracia a la Ciudad de South Bend para subvenciones a propietarios de viviendas con ingresos calificados para la reducción del plomo o controles provisionales que hacen que su vivienda sea más segura.

Además, los propietarios que viven en su propia casa y los propietarios que alquilan a inquilinos con ingresos calificados pueden calificar para estas subvenciones.

¿Quién es elegible? Inquilinos y propietarios que ganan menos que el 80% del ingreso promedio (\$56,650 para una familia de 4).

Para mayor información llame al 311 o visite la página web Lead Protection Program (<https://311.southbendin.gov/knowledgecenter/article/?id=KA-01818>)

También puede comunicarse el Equipo de Proyección Comunitaria de NNN (COT por sus siglas en inglés) al (574) 850-1296.

Would you like to be on the NNN ListServ and be in contact with your neighbors about Community information and announcements? Please email or call us with your name and email address to [nnnassistant@nearnorthwest.org](mailto:nnnassistant@nearnorthwest.org) or 232-9182.

¿Le gustaría ser parte del grupo de emails de “NNN ListServ” y estar en contacto con sus vecinos/as respecto a la información de la comunidad y sus anuncios? Por favor, mándenos un email al [nnnassistant@nearnorthwest.org](mailto:nnnassistant@nearnorthwest.org) o llámenos al 232-9182.

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