



The Art of Neighboring

by Dré Northern, NNN Community Organizer

In the short period I've been honored to occupy the position of Community Organizer for the Near Northwest Neighborhood, I've been told a plurality of different stories about interactions within the neighborhood. These stories ranged from heartwarming to sometimes problematic. In the cases of many of the more problematic stories it always occurred to me that as a society we've seemed to have lost an element of what once made neighborhoods actual neighborhoods. That element is the need and desire to know our neighbors simply because these were relationships we relied on.

In a recent conversation I had with my mother, she was telling me how her next-door neighbor, a woman my family has known over 40 years, recently met for dinner and conversation. I responded to my mother how grateful I am that the two of them have each other and have a neighborly bond that seems to have gotten stronger over the years. I also couldn't help but think that this relationship would have never have begun if both women hadn't have stepped out of their comfort zones. My mother was an African American woman and at the time a new mother moving to a new home on an all-white street in the beginning of the 80s. Linda was white and was a young mother herself. Living next door to people of different races was a new experience for both women. From there, things blossomed into what has become a lifelong friendship. They go out to dinner together, they visit each other many times during the week and they talk long spells at a time on the phone.

Whenever my mother tells me about their adventures or when I visit and witness them talking to each other over the backyard fence it takes me back to less complicated times. Times when valuable relationships were forged over a backyard fence instead of cyberspace platforms. Neighborhoods felt safer because you knew those that lived around you were more than just neighbors, they were also your friends.

In a time where our lives have become more compartmentalized than ever, I think it's important that we strive once again to step out of our comfort zones. Challenge ourselves to speak to those neighbors when we see them taking a walk or going to the mailbox. Get to know them and resist the urge to suppress our natural inclinations to know the people we live amongst. The relationships we form are the very foundation of a thriving neighborhood. They inspire growth and serenity in not only in our neighborhoods but in our lives as well.

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.



THE COMMON GROUND

NEWS YOU CAN USE

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

JULY, 2021

Arts Café 2021 is a go, go, go

Great news, neighbors; we are beginning to plan for **Arts Café, September 26, 2021, 12-6 PM**, rain or shine. The NNN Arts Café is a neighborhood showcase of the NNN's home renovations or builds, a gathering of local artists sharing and selling their work, and a fall festival of local musicians, food booths, and gatherings for a perfect afternoon!

For our 2021 event we're looking to have all activities outdoors, for plenty of fresh air and space. Get it on your calendar!! Invite your friends, family, and neighbors!

Like all great events – we could really use some help planning! Do you love events and picking out how the day will go? Who will be there to perform and feed us? What the kids will do? Our small but mighty planning team would greatly welcome you to join us! We will meet periodically the next months, and be involved in the setting up and the event itself. It's quite fun! Please email Kathy Schuth, at any level, at nndirector@nearnorthwest.org.

Are you thinking more about your talents and gifts to share? Art? Music? Food? Juggling? Zumba? Please reach out, and we'd love to get you on our contact list as we organize through Jill at nnnassistant@nearnorthwest.org.

We could also use volunteers for the set up, the event, and the clean up! Generally, we need extra hands on:

- ☺ Thursday the 23rd or Friday the 24th to fetch tables, benches and straw
- ☺ Saturday the 25th to set up the tables, benches and performance area and to stake out booth areas on the street and lawn
- ☺ Sunday the 26th before during and after the event for all kinds of helper activities
- ☺ Monday the 27th to return straw, tables and benches to their owners

Stay tuned for more detail or call the office to commit to helping.

Some pictures from previous years' events:

Even in the monsoon of 2019, the Kid Zone was Rocking



We have a pretty good time when the sun is out, as well



Chapin Park Unity Garden Update

by Molly Moon

Chapin Park Unity Garden is having a very good year. Thanks to the generous grant bestowed by Farm Credit Mid-America and the hard work of many volunteers, our neighborhood now has a producing free food garden that's also a beautiful place to visit and to volunteer.

The garden, begun as a Boy Scout project nearly two decades ago, had become overgrown with invasive plants, and the wooden raised bed growing boxes were falling apart. But the generously wide brick paths laid by those Boy Scouts was in fine shape. The fruit trees and shade trees that had been donated over the years were all thriving.

So, this spring and summer, we rented bobcats and dumpsters and bought concrete blocks by the pallet. We tore down the beds, removed the vetch and mugwort-laden dirt and had it hauled away. We pruned the trees. We laid down landscape cloth and built 17 concrete block raised beds and 6 circle beds of steel and filled them with compost supplied by the City of South Bend's Organic Resources Department. The wild area bordering Portage Avenue has become a buffer zone between the garden and the traffic. It holds roses, irises, many pollinator-friendly plants, and a big, beautiful hand-cast concrete and fieldstone birdbath.

Kale, lettuce, arugula, beets, radishes and herbs are ready now, and tomatoes, peppers, okra, potatoes, blackberries, apples, onions, leeks, beans, cucumbers coming on throughout the summer. So come and pick! Or just come and sit and bring your friends.



Many hands making light work in the garden

NNN Community Center Reopens

The NNN Community Center is once again open for business. With Covid 19 cases decreasing in St. Joseph County, The NNN Board and Director Kathy Schuth decided to share space once again.

While Covid remains a public health threat, we are recommending users evaluate risks and adjust events appropriately as recommended by the CDC.

We recommend that meeting size should be capped to meet six-foot distance guidelines. This allows for maximum of 25 people. Should attendance exceed the COVID capacity limit, it is the responsibility of the event host to consider the risks and modify the event as needed.

We suggest all non-vaccinated guests wear a mask indoors.

Hand sanitizer will be placed at the main entrance.

Consider chair and table spacing to minimize risk.

Consider limiting the length of the gathering to decrease exposure time.

Cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer will also be available in the room for the convenience of guests to ensure the area is clean prior to and after their use.

We are also encouraging the use of outdoor NNN spaces. We will be scheduling only one large meeting of 25 people a day; or multiple meetings a day for smaller groups.

The risk assessment documentation we are recommending for clients is from the CDC's Considerations for Events and Gatherings. It recommends avoiding high risk activities or choosing lower risk options when available. For example, shorter gatherings, mask wearing for the non vaccinated, and serving food other than potluck style all reduce the risk of contagion.

Covid risk has lessened but not disappeared. We will watch for changing conditions or COVID spread and reserve the right to change reservations or close the community space if appropriate to protect public health. Rules are subject to change up until date of the gathering, based on Health Department guidance.

But for now, this is good and welcome news, and we will be glad to see you.!

NNN Community Dates

The indoor NNN Community Spaces are open for reservation. We are also sharing outdoor spaces. Please call the office with questions.

The Community Outreach Team is hosting **Christmas In July** for neighborhood children. **July 30 from 3-5 PM**, eligible children can get tested for lead, meet with an elf or even receive a gift.

The Local Cup has reopened fully with hours that change seasonally: <https://www.thelocalcupsb.com/>

South Bend Bike Garage at 909 Portage Ave. is open **Wednesdays from 5-8 PM**. Also reach them at 574-286-6508 or info@sbbikegarage.com.

Portage Farm Stands runs Saturdays through October 29, **10AM-Noon**. They set up in the 1006 Portage Parking lot, across from The Local Cup. Find them on Facebook [@Portagefarmstands](https://www.facebook.com/Portagefarmstands).

The **Children's Gardening Group at Sherman Ave Community Garden** usually meets **Saturdays at 10:30** in the garden at 904 Sherman. Grownups are welcome too. Evie Barton continues to host sharing circle and events at other times as well. See the NNN Listserv for current information.



The Sherman Ave Community Garden

New Neighbors in the NNN

Finally, we have some new enterprises to welcome to the neighborhood. Please welcome and support them all!

909 Portage has a new tenant in **The Botany Shop**. They will be offering plants, garden coaching and sharing space with other partners for things like cut flowers and more. Visit here for all the details: <https://www.botanyorbust.com>.

No. 6, a new neighborhood restaurant has opened at Portage and Lindsey. Try them Wednesday-Sunday and see www.eatno6.com for open times, menu and reservations.

The **Catherine Griffin House** at 1046 Lawndale Avenue, honors the legacy of hospitality and neighborliness that were hallmarks Catherine Griffin's life. It is the new home for three individuals previously residing in transitional housing.

See www.aidensmasterpiece.com for more info.



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 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 o llámenos al 232-9182.

This newsletter was produced with the assistance of the City of South Bend Community Development Program through funds made available by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development under Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1977.

Seeking contributions for the Common Ground: News You Can Use. Feel free to write 100-300 words about your non-editorial neighborhood happenings. Subject to editing and space available, we welcome your contributions. Call the office for more information.