

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc.

April 2009

Take Pride in Your Space! 7th Annual Adopt-a-Block Kick-off

The annual **Adopt-a-Block Kick-Off**, will be held **Saturday, April 18th**, 8:00 am at the NNN office and getting involved is EASY, FUN and REWARDING. Adopt-a-Block is a neighborhood clean-up program that encourages neighborhood residents and businesses to work together to beautify the community. By banding together with other residents and committing to regular monthly clean-ups, neighbors can take ownership for the overall appearance and up-keep of their block.

The City's Department of Code Enforcement and Division of Environmental Services will help by providing trash bags and gloves as well as assistance with pick-up of debris and trash. Again this year, Environmental Services will have *two trucks* in the neighborhood for *four hours* on kick-off day, and will begin picking up trash at 11:00am. Our goal is to dramatically change the appearance of the neighborhood on that day. Additionally, every registered Adopt-a-Block group will have a *stake with a flag* at their designated refuse site. If the trash is not next to one of these flags it will not be picked up as part of the program. These improvements created a much more efficient program last year and we hope for the same success in 2009.

The Environmental Committee wants this year's Adopt-a-Block to have more blocks adopted than last year - but in order to do that, we need your help! Consider being a block captain and adopting the street in front of your house. Is your street already looking good? If so, you can adopt your alley or there are other blocks in the neighborhood that are in need of a little love and attention, ready for you to adopt.

If you would like to find out more about being a block captain or how you can participate please contact Marilyn Gachaw at 232-9182. Don't forget to mark your calendars for **Saturday, April 18th at 8am**. Together we can make our neighborhood a cleaner place!

Greening the Neighborhood: Who thought it could be so fun?!

By Becky Kaiser, Chair Environmental Committee

As we all welcome the beginning of spring, residents are excited about the many positive projects that we have going on in the neighborhood; we hope they will entice and excite you! There are so many different committees, including the Environmental Committee, working on beautification and safety in the near northwest neighborhood that we hope many of you will find a passion and join us. For those of us who have participated in the planning and development of these projects, we have found that we can get a lot of work done while having a great time and building community in the neighborhood.

So come along, make new friends and spiff up the neighborhood while you enjoy great conversation, good exercise, and sometimes even great food. Highlighted below are some of the Environmental Committee's more visible annual projects, (Adopt-a-Block and the Community Garden Clean-ups) as well as the addition of four new ad hoc group projects (Dream Green Team, Prairie Garden, Community Garden/Children's Learning Garden and Muesel Grove Park) that residents hope to undertake this year. Please review the projects we have planned for 2009 and pick your passion.

Adopt-a-Block, this program is getting bigger and better every year with neighbors steering the cleanup of neighborhood blocks. Last year 87 blocks were adopted...how about we try for at least 90 this year. The Environmental Committee looks forward to seeing you April 18th at 8:00 a.m. at the NNN Offices for the 7th Annual Kick-off. I guarantee that you will have a good time and see a big difference in your corner of the world. For more information, please contact Marilyn Gachaw at 232-9182.

Community Garden Clean-ups, our new neighbor and Project Captain, Bruce McDonald

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YEAR-AT-A-GLANCE

Adopt-a-Block Kick-off

Saturday, April 18, 2009

8:00 am

NNN Offices

Spring Plant Swap

Sunday, May 17, 2009

12:30 - 2:00 pm

NNN Offices

Get Ready for Spring!

Spring Home Maintenance Seminar

Saturday, May 30, 2009

9:00 - 11:00 am

NNN Offices

Garden Walk

Saturday, July 18, 2009

9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Arts Café

Sunday, November 1, 2009

10:00 am - 5:00 pm

THINGS AROUND TOWN

AACTFest '09

American Association of Community Theatre

Fest Region III Competition

April 17-19, 2009

South Bend Civic Theatre

Eight Community Theatre Companies will

perform, including the South Bend Civic

Theatre! Call (574) 234-1112 for more infor-

mation.

Economic Hard Times: A Family Affair

Sunday, April 19, 2009

1:00 - 5:00 pm

Century Center

Run Ten Ten 10K Race and 2 Mile Mutt

Strut Presented by: CARE

Saturday, April 25, 2009

8:30 am

Howard Park

Spring Art Walk

Saturday, May 2, 2009

11:00 am - 5:00 pm

Downtown South Bend

Rashomon

April 24-26, 29-30 & May 1-3

8:00 pm (Sundays, 3:00 pm)

South Bend Civic Theatre

QUESTIONS? Call us at 232-9182

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Adopt-a-Block Frequently Asked Questions



How Can I Get Involved?

The Environmental Committee is working to identify “captains” for each block that is adopted. That person is then responsible for scheduling their regular clean-ups and for notifying their neighbors so that they can help. If you do not have time to be a block captain you can still come out and support your neighbors.

How Will the NNN and Environmental Committee Help?

The NNN and Environmental Committee members host the annual “kick-off” event complete with light breakfast. We also have extra bags and gloves on hand. Because we have found that reminder notices increase resident participation, we help captains by creating notices that can be delivered door-to-door a few days before your clean-up.

How Many Clean-ups Should I Have?

You know your block best! So you can determine how frequently clean-ups should be scheduled in order to keep your street looking tip-top throughout the summer months!

My Street is Clean, But My Alley Really Needs Help – What Do I Do?

It is okay to adopt your alley if you feel that it is in the most need of attention. Just let us know, so that we can help with the logistics. Also, you may want to check with your neighbors – maybe between all of you, you can adopt both!

My Block Is Already Pretty Clean, Can I Still Be Involved?

If you feel that your block is already looking good, you can still be involved by “adopting” another block and committing to keeping it clean and litter free throughout the summer! If you aren’t sure which blocks need adopting, contact the NNN and they can help guide you.

Does This WORK?

This program really does work. Neighbors throughout the near northwest have found that the Adopt-a-Block program is a great way to meet other neighbors, increase neighborhood ownership, and keep our streets looking clean. As time passes, residents begin to become more conscious about the litter on their street and begin to pick it up **outside** of the regularly scheduled clean-ups. Also, the cumulative effect of having already done the Adopt-a-Block program for six years in a row has significantly improved the appearances of such streets as Diamond Avenue, Cottage Grove Avenue, and Woodward Avenue.

Other Questions?

Contact Marilyn at 232-9182.

Con’t from page 1: Greening the Neighborhood

has taken a keen interest in NNN’s three community maintained green spaces which are located on Diamond Ave., Portage Ave., and Lafayette Blvd near Memorial Hospital. He would love to hear from you to help him plan planting and clean up days. If you want to help spruce up the neighborhood with your green thumb contact Becky Kaiser at 233-1631. They’re great spaces to sit a spell on a warm summer evening and visit with neighbors.

Dream Green Team, this project was initiated by neighborhood residents last fall to tackle cleaning up around vacant and abandoned homes. This consists of picking a day and getting a group together to clean up the yards of the most distressed homes. The last clean up was a great success with three abandoned properties made safer and better looking; the day also came with good conversation and chili after the work was completed. Ask us how to join the Dream Green Team, or get one started on your block. Contact Becky Kaiser at 233-1631 for more information.

Prairie Garden, the owners of the land adjacent to the railroad tracks near Vassar jumped on board for the completion of a prairie garden near Holy Cross School and Muessel Grove Park. The owner has agreed to partner with neighborhood residents in order to clean this area and then plant a prairie garden. This is the first leg of what we hope will be expanded further along the railroad tracks in the future. Ideally, this could become a feature along the railroad tracks, which might possibly become a pathway that connects to the Riverside Trail. To get involved with the creation of the prairie garden please contact Becky Kaiser at 233-1631.

Community Garden/Children’s Learning Garden, Julia Head, Jessica Mikels, John Mynsberg, John Horton, Michelle Gloss and other neighborhood residents have put together a wonderful plan for a community garden near the Grace Community Center at Harrison and Van Buren. A few 4 x 8 ft. gardening beds are still available for lease to neighbors. Our goal this summer is to add a Youth Gardening program to the Community Garden. This program would center on teaching youth in the neighborhood the benefits of gardening, what gardening means to a community, and stewardship of the land. We would like it to expand and possibly include a booth at LaSalle Square’s Farmers Market –*The Urban Garden Market*, to help teach marketing skills and also include a children’s resource library with books specifically for children gardeners. If you would like to get involved, or for more information please contact Jessica Mikels at 289-2278.

Muessel Grove Park, with the commitment of Holy Cross Grade School to stay in the neighborhood and the expansion of their facilities that includes their lovely new gym and offices, we would love to have input from neighbors on what they would like to see at Muessel Grove Park. While this park is actually on the very border of the near northwest neighborhood, it seems to be an important but overlooked part of the neighborhood. Project Captain John Mynsberg, would love to hear your ideas, so far we have had neighbors show interest in a dog park...what’s your vision for the park. Please contact Becky Kaiser with your suggestions or questions at 233-1631.

Well folks, as you can see we are just busting at the seams with wonderful ideas and commitment to make this the best neighborhood in South Bend. How about you come along with us and enjoy the ride. We’d love to have you from the smallest to the tallest.

Economic Hard Times: A Family Affair

On Sunday, April 19th, Century Center, Family & Children’s Center, and Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center will host *Economic Hard Times: A Family Affair*. This **free event** will take place from 1 to 5 PM at Century Center and will provide vital information for individuals and families impacted by the recession, unemployment, and the uncertainty of these difficult economic times.

Presentations will be offered every 30 minutes and provide helpful information on how to support family and friends, how to talk to children about financial hardships, and how to personally cope with these challenges.

Free admission & parking. For more information call 855-5858.