THANK YOU!!! THE NNN COMMUNITY IS GRATEFUL FOR YOUR SUPPORT

The Board of Directors and staff of the Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc. extend deep gratitude to all of our supporters. We are singularly fortunate to have so many generous collaborators—individuals, corporations, foundations, and partner organizations who assist our efforts. It is only with your help that we are able to further and to accomplish our mission. Many thanks to all of you who have shared your time, talent, gifts, and financial resources with the NNN this past year! We look forward to our continued partnerships!

2015 Major Contributors
City of South Bend, Department of Community Investment
Community Development Block Grant
Indiana Association of Community and Economic Development
PNC Foundation
St. Joseph County Housing Consortium
Sisters of the Holy Cross

Contributors to Special Projects
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St. Joseph County Commissioners
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Teacher’s Credit Union
The Local Cup
Thrive Michiana

And to all of the Near Northwest Neighborhood Neighbors! Thank you for all of the gifts that you share!
The Energy of the NNN

Neighbors and Friends,

It’s such a pleasure to write the Annual Report for the Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc. (NNN) every year, taking time to reflect, celebrate what we’ve done together, challenge ourselves in the areas that have fallen short, and look forward to the future.

2015 was a year of greatly expanding energy in the NNN as we engaged in all of our work: physically revitalizing the neighborhood, strengthening the social fabric of our community, and ensuring the long-term viability of the organization.

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The most significant success of all has been the collective energy we’ve been building and gathering together. The near northwest neighborhood is your neighborhood, and more and more of your voices are shaping the place you call home - the block where you live and the entire surrounding area.

The collective energy of the NNN is the shared spirit of renewal that all of you are bringing to our community.

Energizing Neighbors

In 2015, over a dozen NNN general meetings brought residents together around a variety of topics impacting the neighborhood. We brainstormed the future of Arts Café, dialogued about Avenue’s Edge, housed a Police “roll call” to discuss neighborhood safety, explored clean energy, and experimented with digitally mapping the neighborhood, net-zero energy housing, the Leland Avenue partnership, and designing healthy neighborhoods. Partnering with other community organizations, we brought additional programming to the neighborhood, including a Job Fair conducted by the Goodwill Career Center.

Together, in 2015, a team of neighbors, including Michael and Catherine Griffin, John Horton and Brook Hardy, organized, planned, and renovated NNN space to open the Local Cup (TLC). Featuring exceptional locally roasted coffee and other local products, this instant neighborhood gathering place is now open every weekend. With its unique pay-forward model, TLC provides hospitality to all who enter the doors. The Local Cup not only provides space for neighbors to meet one another, have fun, and enjoy community; it also

In 2015, NNN’s Adopt-a-Block litter reduction program once again adopted every block in the neighborhood. Undaunted by the rain, we collectively removed over 5 tons of litter from the neighborhood. We are grateful to the City of South Bend, and to you, for partnering in this yearly effort!

Arts Café sported new attractions in 2015: a hayride “tour” of our neighborhood, and an NNN-habituated affordable housing and a Kid’s Zone celebrating the creative energy across generations. As always, the signature event provided countless opportunities to explore good food, enjoy local musicians, and discover South Bend artisans.

A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

We care about and are committed to one another, our neighborhood, and the city. Our goals are:

- Strengthen neighborly relations
- Engage and Empower local youth
- Support local and neighborhood producers and entrepreneurship
- Identify, develop, and deepen neighborhood assets and networks
- Create a vibrant, healthy, and sustainable community

We are creating a number of programs through which we can realize our goals:

The Local Cup Community Coffee Shop, founded by volunteers, and opening on a pay-forward basis, allowing neighbors of all income levels to be regulars.

Youth Leadership Development Program Leadership training and internships are offered through The Local Cup for local teens.

The Incubator Commercial Kitchen A certified commercial kitchen will allow neighbors to build a sustainable community through these initiatives. Your financial support is essential to this grassroots campaign. Contributions can be made out to the Near Northwest Neighborhood, made online (via PayPal) at nnnorthwest.org or The Local Cup.

In 2016, we have launched Neighbors Together, a $50,000 fundraising campaign, and a neighbor-to-neighbor community building initiative dedicated to creating a better and more vibrant South Bend for everyone.

We need your help! Together we can continue to build a sustainable community through these initiatives. Your financial support is essential to this grassroots campaign. Contributions can be made out to The Near Northwest Neighborhood, made online (via PayPal) at nnnorthwest.org or The Local Cup.
Alkenya Aldridge has been a member of the NNN Board for nine months, bringing a fresh perspective to the group. She loves to be part of this community where everyone is made to feel welcome. At first she was not sure of her reception, but she was immediately surrounded by friends. “It feels very much like a homecoming and the energy of the neighbors is amazing. The NNN is breaking down barriers between people, making them all feel that they belong here.”

Alkenya appreciates that the NNN, like any successful organization, never stands still. She helps in always questioning how a program can be made better. This goes even for the NNN’s most successful housing program. It has aided many people to own homes who could not otherwise afford them and at the same time goes even for the NNN’s most successful housing program. It has aided many people to own homes who could not otherwise afford them and at the same time it feels very much like a homecoming and the energy of the neighbors is amazing. The NNN is breaking down barriers between people, making them all feel that they belong here.

The NNN doesn’t rest in its efforts to build relationships. That is the guiding principle behind The Local Café as well as Andre Stoner’s recent appointment as neighborhood organizer. The NNN is creating new ways to use its community space, supporting a monthly poetry slam, organized by Brian Diggins, a farmer’s market, and helping to build an Incubator Kitchen to help neighbors start businesses. The NNN is breaking down barriers between people, making them all feel that they belong here. It feels very much like a homecoming and the energy of the neighbors is amazing. The NNN is breaking down barriers between people, making them all feel that they belong here.

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SHERRY WILLIAMS
NEW NNN NEIGHBOR

Sherry Williams is a newcomer to the neighborhood, but she already feels welcome here. She bought her home on Cushing Street last December. The house has been beautifully remodeled by the NNN with a large kitchen, refinished oak floors and the lovely woodwork one only finds in older homes. Sherry is a member of Kern Road Mennonite Church where Andre Stoner also is a member. It was Andre who alerted her to the house that was coming available through the NNN. He lives right across the street. At first some of Sherry’s friends and family were skeptical about her moving into this neighborhood, fearing that it was not safe. Sherry, however, loved the house and the garden and went ahead. Her granddaughter and her great grandson have moved in with her. Right next door to her is another member of Kern Road Mennonite Church and she has found the neighborhood to be pleasant and welcoming.

Sherry is grateful to the NNN for making it possible for people to become homeowners who would not otherwise be able to do so. When she explains what she wants to find in her new environment, it is a succinct summary of what we all hope for in the places where we live: to find a nice place to raise our families; to feel safe and secure; to become a member of the larger community. Sherry still is settling into the house, while also working full-time. But she imagines that she will play a more active part in the neighborhood in the future.

THE LOCAL CUP

The founders of The Local Cup in the Near Northwest Neighborhood had one guiding vision in starting their coffee house: “to build connections between neighbors and create community.” And they may have exceeded even their own high hopes. Within the short time of its existence, The Local Cup has grown into a vibrant and welcoming space not only for the immediate neighborhood but for a diverse group of people from all across South Bend.

In order to fulfill their vision of making connections between diverse groups and assuring that the coffee house is representative of the entire neighborhood, the four welcome every newcomer, establishing personal connections with all who enter. Since it is a “pay-it-forward” place, where people pay what they can for those coming after them, anyone can afford a cup of coffee or a homemade muffin. Despite all the behind the scenes organizing necessary to run The Local Cup, everything happens informally and organically. New initiatives are developing on this foundation, whether it’s a monthly poetry slam or a black tie event, a class meeting or an over 50 group get together. At this point The Local Cup is open each Saturday from 9am to 1pm and Sunday from 2 to 4pm. It is always packed with young and old, eager for friendly conversation and companionship and of course, good coffee.

John and his wife Nola have lived in their 1902 home on Portage for nine years. They especially love their pillared porch from where they can wave to passersby and stay connected to their neighborhood. “I can’t imagine living in a house without a porch.”

“Every home has a story, that’s what I enjoy about our neighborhood.” John and Nola’s house once belonged to the Riess family who owned a furniture store in town. Some house stories, however, reveal secrets that may come as a shock. This happened when John took down the garage, built in the 1920’s. The inside walls were wood paneled and when he turned the boards over, he discovered anti-Semitic slogans smeared all over the back.

Thinking about the future, John would like to see small shops within walking distance, such as a bakery, a hardware store, a little pizza place. He realizes the tremendous challenges in starting a new business, but he hopes that as the neighborhood develops, this may happen. “In the meantime, we may think about urban farms on empty lots. And we should support our local grocery store as much as possible.” John and Nola make it a point to do their shopping at the Portage Martin’s. “In any case,” he concludes, “we have to continue making our neighborhood attractive for young people to live here.”

NNN Community Voices

JOHN MYNSEBERG NNN NEIGHBOR

“I am more confident now about our neighborhood than ever before,” says John Mynsberge. “It has gotten cleaner, quieter, with lots more young people to bring new energy, and rich diversity.”

NNN Neighbors and Founders of THE LOCAL CUP

MICHAEL & CATHERINE GRIFFIN, JOHN HORTON, AND BROOK HARDY

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Two young couples made this happen, Brook and John Hardy and Catherine and Mike Griffin. They began with a pop up coffee house at the 2013 Arts Café of the NNN. People responded so enthusiastically that the four decided to tackle the job of having a more permanent coffee house. Seed money from the Sisters of the Holy Cross helped to rehab the room and start an internship program. Many hands participated in the renovation to make The Local Cup a fun, creative, and welcoming space. The walls feature intricate woodwork from recycled materials and paintings by local artists. If the four founders are surprised by anything, it’s the pace at which it’s all taken off.

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