



## NNN Community Dates

**Hope for the Hungry Food Pantry** dates are *Saturdays May 20, June 17, July 15, August 19, Sept 16, October 21, November 18 and December 16, 2023 from 11AM-1PM* or as supplies last. All dates are at the NNN Community Center, 1013 Portage. See [hope4thehungry.com](http://hope4thehungry.com) for information.

The **Artist Group** meets Fridays (and the occasional Tuesday) in the 1013 Portage Community Center, 9:30 AM to noon. Bring your art gear and join them any time.

**BOTANY, No. 6, The Portage Collective, and The Brain Lair** all share special events online at : [www.botanyorbust.com](http://www.botanyorbust.com), [www.eatno6.com](http://www.eatno6.com), [@theportagecollective](https://www.facebook.com/theportagecollective) on FB , and [www.brainlairbooks.com](http://www.brainlairbooks.com) respectively.

**The Local Cup** at 1009 Portage Ave. is open with hours that change seasonally. Currently, they are open *Tues, 7-11AM, Fri 8AM-1PM, Sat 9AM-1PM, Sun 1-5PM*. Find them on Facebook [@TheLocalCupSB](https://www.facebook.com/TheLocalCupSB).

**Miss Kim's Culinary Crew**, Meets monthly on Saturdays teaching children basic, no-cook kitchen skills. Call or email Ms. Kim to register and join the fun!!! Phone: 574-520-8408. Email: [eatyolocafe@gmail.com](mailto:eatyolocafe@gmail.com)

**French Conversation Groups** meetings take place at the St. Joseph County Public Library Main Branch classrooms, downtown South Bend Thursdays from 6:30 - 8:00PM. For details, watch the ListServ or contact [grgloster@hotmail.com](mailto:grgloster@hotmail.com).

The **NNN Ignite Grant Committee** meets to revitalize the St. Paul Bethel playground (715 Leland Ave). All are welcome to join us regardless of your level of participation in the past. The meetings will continue to be held on the second Monday of the month in the 1013 Community Center. Please call Dré Northern at 574-303-7990 with any questions or concerns.

**Financial Readiness Classes** have resumed at the NNN. Build your skills to improve your credit score or purchase a home. The next round will be in the Spring. Classes are usually held on Mondays from 5:30-7:00 and a meal is provided.

**2023 NNN Events Planned:** Please mark your calendars with our annual events

- Adopt A Block, Saturday, April 22, Starting at 8AM in the 1013 Portage Community Center
- Annual Meeting, Thursday, May 18 from 6-8 PM in the 1013 Portage Community Center
- Arts Café, Sunday, October 1, Noon-6PM in the 1000 block of California and NNN building

## Chili Supper

All the smart and available neighbors showed up at the 2023 Chili Supper March 1. The food was great; the company was even better. Don't tell the other Events, but the Chili Supper is our favorite.

Our volunteers this year were terrific. The set-up and take down were really fast, efficient and (dare I say) fun. Except for Tom Anderson getting run over once or twice. Sorry, Tom. Hope to see you all next year.



# THE COMMON GROUND

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

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

APRIL 2023

## Contextual and Affordable: New NNN Rental Housing

We know we've been talking awhile about expanding our NNN housing program to include more rental buildings, owned and managed by the NNN for income-qualified families. We're delighted that we can all share in starting to see actual buildings coming up! Our first new construction rental duplex is mostly complete and located at 1017 Demaudé Ave, right next to the NNN parking lot east of Portage. This building is designed to be contextual in design, built with high quality construction, and offers two apartments, side-by-side. Each apartment holds two bedrooms, and is roughly 900 sf in size. These apartments will be available, to an income qualified family at 80% ami or less. The NNN will own and manage this duplex as well as our other rental projects in the pipeline.



We are in the process of building an additional 2 small apartment buildings in the NNN, a four-plex (on Cushing) and another duplex (on Sherman). If you are interested in learning more about our housing programs, for sale or for rent, please find more information online at [www.nearnorthwest.org](http://www.nearnorthwest.org) or call the office at 574-232-9182.

## The NNN welcomes a neighbor-managed, envisioned, and happening Community Fridge!

From our neighbor Jackie : "I have been part of this community for 3 years, but in that time I've come to recognize that the NNN is a welcoming and comforting place to be. Because of that, when I see the needs of this community I want to create pathways to meet it. Hunger is a very real problem that can't be solved in one day, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't meet the need where it's at. In partnership with multiple businesses, organizations, and community members - we present a Community Fridge. A "Give what you can, Take what you need," initiative that brings mutual aid in a more direct way to our neighbors. We are not affiliated with any organization; instead we are community members aiming to create connections where it matters. Hunger sees no class, race, creed, or orientation as a barrier and comes knocking at many doors. We propose that we send it away with a full belly and a full heart."

The Fridge was installed in early April on the California side of the NNN building, near the patio gates. Please visit the website at <https://www.feedafriendssouthbend.com/home> and if you have ANY questions, please reach out by email: [feedafriendssouthbend@gmail.com](mailto:feedafriendssouthbend@gmail.com). They are looking for commonly asked questions to update their FAQ page. To get involved, a volunteer interest form can be found on the website.

We welcome Jackie and other community partners who are leading this creative open offering for neighbors to work together to meet needs.



## The Bright Spot

The Bright Spot is celebrating the restoration of the facade of the Ward Bakery this quarter.

This project will have tremendous impact on the health of the NNN. More than 15 years ago the Portage Avenue Steering Committee was formed to bring the voices and concerns of business owners, homeowners and city officials together to assess challenges and make physical improvements to the corridor.

The restoration of the Ward Bakery was a dream even back then! Today we can all say that dreams do come true! Everyone in the NNN should be grateful for the vision and investment of everyone involved, especially Mike Keen, Developer and President of The Bakery Group LLC. The project is located at 908 Portage Avenue and fronts the entire Southeast corner of Portage and California.

The Bright Spot is always looking for suggestions for quarterly recognition. Please send nominations to Joanie Downs, [jomdowns29@gmail.com](mailto:jomdowns29@gmail.com).



## Financial Readiness Class in the NNN

We are proud to present the Financial Readiness Classes on Monday evenings in our Community Center. The classes are free of charge and is instructed by our very own Near Northwest neighbor Marce Bingham and facilitated by our Community Organizer/Networker Dré Northern. Dré Northern is also offering one on one personal finance counseling for students. Our goal in facilitating these classes is to empower anyone who desires to achieve financial stability and achieve financial goals such as becoming debt free or purchasing a home. Please stay tuned to our Facebook page for future session enrollments, or contact Dré at [another.nnn@gmail.com](mailto:another.nnn@gmail.com).

## Ms. Kim's Culinary Crew

In 2021 Kim Phillips had a dream to start a cooking class teaching basic prep cooking skills. She started in her home with kids she knew.

Now she holds a free class, usually the last Saturday of the month, at the NNN community center. Ms. Kim & her Crew are having fun with food, exploring many no-cook recipes, and learning new skills.

In 2022 her "mini chefs" created a cook book of all the non-cook recipes they made that year.

Ms. Kim believes cooking is a fun and valuable life skill. It's also an ideal way for kids to take risks, learn from their mistakes & foster creativity. The best way to promote a healthy lifestyle is to start early and be hands-on in the kitchen.

Call or email Ms. Kim to register and join the fun!!! Phone: 574-520-8408. Email: [eatyolocafe@gmail.com](mailto:eatyolocafe@gmail.com)



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.

**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.

## Revitalizing Booker T. West Park ..... by Community Organizer, Dre Northern

Upon being awarded the Ignite Grant by the department of Engagement and Economic Empowerment of the City of South Bend, the initial challenge was deciding which of many great ideas to choose from. Additional signage was mentioned as was a dog park for the many dog lovers in the neighborhood. Of all the ideas mentioned, the one I personally advocated for I felt would bring a bright spot in a part of the NNN that arguably needed it the most: the revitalization of Booker T. West Park. After voting on all these great ideas, I was excited that the idea I lobbied for the most was chosen by the neighborhood leaders who attended our preliminary Ignite Grant meetings. The space is owned and adjacent to St. Paul Bethel Baptist Church who have agreed to be our partners in this project. I have to admit that as much as it's about providing a nearby play space for the many children in the neighborhood, its also a space tied to personal memories of my own.

At the culmination of our Restorative Justice Conversation Circles one of our groups hosted a ceremony in the space last summer that I was proud to attend. Once I stepped into the space and found my seat I surveyed my surroundings. Within moments a tide of memories came rushing back to me going back over 30 years ago. I played in this space as boy of 3 or 4 years old, many years ago in the early 80's as I was student at Brown Starr Head Start. It dawned on me that the building parallel to the playground was where I recited my ABCs, where I first learned how much I despised brussels sprouts and afternoon naps (let's just say as I've gotten older, I learned to appreciate one but no so much the other). But it was here, I thought to myself, right here I ran around in endless circles with my friends. Though most of the equipment that once occupied the space was long gone, it was still so clear in my mind's eye. Here I pretended to be He-Man on the hunt for my arch nemesis Skeletor. Right there in that sand box was were I sat with my friends, a set of identical twins who said they were making "Star Wars cookies" out of sand and I asked them "What's Star Wars?" All these years I long forgot where the space was, not realizing I drove right by it probably a hundred time either coming or going to the NNN office. I found myself smiling from the memories but within moments the bitters of this bittersweet moment began to sink in. Though it was clear the space was seen to over the years, the life and youthful exuberance that once was here was gone. It saddened me a bit to think the kids I see walking through this neighborhood every day won't get the chance to pretend to be their favorite hero here. The won't get to make their cookies of sand or spin around on the merry-go-round that was still in the same place it was when I rode on it. Growing up in the 80's I remember neighborhoods used to have these places for children. I can still remember the excitement I felt when I saw this playground looking out of my Mom or Dad's car window, exclaiming to them "That's where I play with my friends!" Then it became clear to me; those moments could be created for them if this neighborhood filled with so many outstanding people wanted it to be. The Ignite Grant wasn't on my radar yet but it was clear this was an idea to hold on to in hope an opportunity would present itself.

That wonderful opportunity turned out to be the Ignite Grant but also the opportunity will be in the project itself. The opportunity for neighbors to work side by side in revitalizing this space for our children. The opportunity for all the creative and artistic individuals who live in the NNN to express themselves in the creation of something to be enjoyed for generations. But perhaps most importantly the opportunity for the next little boy or girl walking by or riding by with their parents to say "Hey that's where I play with my friends!"

