



Gifford Park's Pride

Gifford Park Neighborhood: A Great Place to Live, Work, Learn and Play
www.giffordparkomaha.org

June 2008

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Community Garden Kickoff A Rainy Day Success

Neighbors, friends, and gardeners joined in commencing the 2008 growing season on Saturday, May 10th, at the Gifford Park Community Garden. While overcast with heavy rainclouds, many people took advantage of a relatively dry two-hour timeframe and braved the elements to participate in the day's fun activities. **Mary Ledbetter** greeted garden guests. Kids had an opportunity to construct a birdhouse with **Bob "The Builder" Hutton**, his son **Darryl**, and **Ben Spahn**. **Cynthia Shuck** and her NY gardening pal **Murphy** assisted young woodworkers in painting their new avian abodes and directed adult gardeners in decorating their plot-identifying name stakes. A few lucky youth had their faces painted by the always designing **Dana Carlton-Flint**. Children signed-up for library cards and received free books from **Kay Scarpello**, Children's Librarian at the Omaha Public Library A. V. Sorenson Branch. **Mike Caban** welcomed new and renewing members to the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association and Community Garden. Parents registered their children for the fifth summer of the ever-popular **Gifford Park Youth Garden Program**, and kids crafted Mother's Day bracelets from edible seeds. **Green Man**, a.k.a. **Clarinda Karpov**, made a verdant appearance despite the damp day and brought along her famous musical friends, including **Ivy** and **Christine**. Everyone was able to take home free wildflower seeds and white pine trees provided by the **Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District**. Attendees also had an opportunity to learn about the growing **ReTree Nebraska** initiative. **John Barna** led the mixing and embellishment of the garden stepping stone project, and **Kate & Etta Bodmann** monitored the first-ever Seed Swap. The compact, colorful, and reusable **Chico** shopping bags were made available for purchase as a garden fundraising project individually for \$5 or five for \$20. Contact **Dana Carlton-Flint (346-4575)** if you are interested in the purchase of this hip green gear.

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**Next General Meeting
Thursday, June 5
7:00 P.M.**

Speaker: Chris Combs

Topic: Sweet Thymes Gardens

**Creighton University
Med Center
Morrison Seminar Room**

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| **Reminder: No July Meeting!** |
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Mayor Rides From Gifford Park - Local Shop Seeks Support

Monday, May 12, was the easiest commuting gets! Starting from the **Community Bicycle Shop Omaha (CBSO)**, **Mayor Mike Fahey** rode with over 60 cyclists to the new downtown pedestrian bridge. With snacks, coffee, a rolling barricade, and even music from one rider's bike-mounted speakers, the pedaling just couldn't have been more pleasant.

CBSO was pleased to partner with **Activate Omaha** and **Bikeable Communities** to bring the third annual Mayor's Ride to Gifford Park. More than just a ride, the Mayor announced the release of the new Omaha Metro Area Bicycle Map, available for free from bicycle shops. Significantly, the mayor also described a new project to create an on-street bicycle route system to include new bike lanes, shared traffic lanes, and signage. The route will create a loop that connects downtown Omaha with the zoo and UNO. A new advisory board, still to be named, will work with the city to design our streets for pedestrians and cyclists along with motorists.

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**Fly The Flag Proudly On
Flag Day - June 14**



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Dana Freeman 850-9611

Easy & Inexpensive Tips For Raising Green Children

When I became pregnant with my first child I recall fretting to my grandmother over how expensive having a baby would be. In her aged wisdom she replied with a smile, "Dear, the only thing you really need is a dresser drawer and some cloth diapers ... and if you don't have any cloth diapers, then you can use dishrags." Looking back on this pearl of wisdom it has occurred to me that my grandmother captured the essence of raising green children: simplicity. As I walk through the aisles of the local shopping center and see all the fancy toys made out of newly manufactured plastic I can't but help but hear her words ringing in my head.

Our environment and the way we use it is growing more and more important. With food shortages, landfills of massive proportion, decreasing amounts of fossil fuels, and impending global warming, it is our responsibility as parents to raise our children to be very conscious of how they consume. My husband and I have always felt it important to raise our children with an awareness of the environment, but what we weren't expecting was that in so doing, it actually made our lives easier and less expensive. Here are some ways for you to green up your lives and, at the same time, teach your children valuable environmental lessons.

1. "Your presence is our present, no gifts please."

No-Birthday-Present Parties for Kids: a) Reduces the amount of plastic toy clutter in your house. b) The parents of other children will *really* appreciate not having to spend \$5-\$10 on a toy (trust me, they will). c) Children will have nearly 500 toys in their lifetime, but only remember a few. d) Handmade birthday cards are more memorable and easier to scrapbook than molded hunks of plastic. e) When you do purchase gifts, buy green. Some easy green gifts are: books, toys made from wood or bamboo (Target has a line of these), or craft kits like paper airplanes or origami.

2. "Wait... so, mom, giving stuff away to thrift stores and buying from thrift stores is recycling?"

For every new piece of clothing or household item that is produced there is also some waste produced. That is why it's important to teach kids not to just throw away what they don't want anymore but instead to donate it. Great websites for second hand clothes and other children's items: Freecycle.org & rerunsrfun.net

3. There is a great website dedicated exclusively to hand made items called **Etsy.com** which supports craftsmen and artists and can direct you to local sellers. Don't forget about your local thrift store! Buying second hand saves you money and cuts down on the amount of new products produced, which also cuts down on the waste produced. Things bought second hand or handmade are just as good as things bought new.

4. Find durable and sensible lunch boxes that are made to last for years, at laptoplunches.com. Using these has drastically cut down on the brown bags and plastic bags that inevitably end up in the trash.

5. Raising green children also means teaching them how to be green consumers. Buying second-hand and hand-made is a great start, but that doesn't cover the weekly grocery trip. Buying in bulk greatly reduces the amount of packaging and saves you money. Organic foods are prepared with much fewer chemicals. The chemicals used in regular food build up in ground soil and eventually diminishes the amount of usable land for foods. Foods that have traveled a long way to the store did so by burning fossil fuels and foods from factory farms are the leading producers of

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Editor's note: If you have something that would be of interest to our neighborhood, we encourage you to submit an article for our monthly newsletter. Editorials must be approved by the GPNA Executive Board. Articles can be mailed to P.O. Box 31462 Omaha, NE 68131; please include your name and phone number. Contact Sue Wilwerding (342-2795) or Chris Foster (342-6006) for information regarding the newsletter.

Mayor's Ride . . . continued from page 1

As an advocate for cycling, CBSO teaches bicycle mechanics through a free Open Shop program. On **Saturdays from 12-4pm** and **Wednesdays from 6-8pm**, volunteers help guests make repairs to their cycles and refurbish donated bikes. CBSO's flagship outreach program is **Earn-a-Bike**, which provides a quality bicycle and new helmet to participants completing 9 hours of service in the shop and community. With other programs like the Girls' Night and Volunteer Night, CBSO is finding a solid footing in its second year of service at **525 N 33rd Street**.

CBSO values mentoring and bases its programs on volunteer support. With an emphasis on safety and injury prevention, one of the shop's major expenses is helmets which volunteers distribute to youth at no cost. Please consider a donation to support this work. For \$7 CBSO is able to provide a helmet to an Earn-a-Bike participant. Contact **Stuart at 216-1235** or omahabike@gmail.com to learn more about CBSO.

by Stuart Shell

Garden Kickoff . . . continued from page 1

Thanks again to all of the folks who volunteered to make this event a great success. Those behind-the-scene folks not mentioned already include **Chris & Sallie "The Photographer" Foster, Diane Kaye, Meghan Thomson**, and everyone who brought a snack to share. Sharing food is an important part of what we're all about. The company of new partners like the **Octopuses Garden Art Alliance** and old friends like our very own **Senator Gwen Howard** illustrated the range of connections made by the Gifford Park Community Garden. The impact of community gardens like ours is significant, and the large number of cheerful people present that rainy day can attest to the fact. Thanks to everyone for coming out to see what's growing this year in Gifford Park.

by Dana Freeman

Music In The Park Is Coming In July!

Look For Details
In Next Month's
Newsletter!



Happy
Father's
Day!



The Octopuses Garden Art Alliance

The newest non-profit organization in Omaha will be in ~~the Gifford Park neighborhood~~ **Saturday, June 21st**, from **11 a.m. to 1 p.m.** The **Octopuses Garden Art Alliance** will be leading & assisting the Youth Garden participants with a variety of "common ground" art projects. Wear your garden/paint clothes & take part in art!

The Octopuses Garden Art Alliance's mission is to help build dignity & self-esteem through art and reaching out and building a community where art & culture are valued, realizing we are all special and we all have special needs.

T.O.G.A.A. is accepting donations of art supplies and materials, particularly all types of paint, brushes, rollers, wood, etc. To see the complete Wish List, calendar, and to find out more go to: www.octopusgardenart.org. No Internet? Contact us directly: **344-8061**

T.O.G.A.A. would like to thank the Gifford Park Community Garden for all its efforts in continuing to build a community that is active and supportive in planting positive seeds. TOGETHER we can make a BIGGER DIFFERENCE!

Green Children . . . continued from page 2

methane gas in this country. So when you can try to shop local, organic, and plant based for the health of the earth and your family.

6. "Mommy, can the worms eat this?"

Educating children on green living can be a family experience that gives life long lessons on living independently. Beneath our kitchen table is a worm bin that we put our dinner leftovers and other foods that have sat in the fridge too long. My youngest daughter is absolutely fascinated by the worms and we often work on them together. My children are able to see how nature really works when they put their food scraps in the worm bin and watch the worms make healthy fertilized soil. Then we use the soil in our garden. My kids actually get to see and experience the full circle of nature and, in the end, get to reap the "fruits" of it. Part of being green is being self-sustainable, which is not often taught in schools today. So even if having a box of worms in your kitchen is just not your thing, gardening with your children in the back yard or even a pot on the table can be fun and gives them a sense of pride for having grown their own food.

There isn't a trick to raising kids green. All you have to do is become mindful of what you consume and throw away. Being green is just living more simply, not spending as much money, and being more self-sustaining, all of which would benefit us, our families, our communities, and our earth.

by Alaina Hickman

Youth Garden Still Growing Strong

The **Gifford Park Youth Garden** will be five-years old this summer, which is admittedly older than some of the youngest program participants. In our neighborhood, we think it's never too early to begin developing a green thumb. New and returning gardeners were ready to get growing **Week One** on May 17th. **Kate Bodmann** and **Cynthia Shuck** led the youth in collectively proposing and deciding upon program rules and expectations. The children had an opportunity to paint and personalize their garden plot name stakes. These tall wooden pickets add beautiful and colorful adornment to the garden each year. Each child selected the vegetables they would like to plant in their individual plots the following week. Parent **Dana Carlton-Flint** provided a snack for all present. **Week Two**, May 24th, was a very busy planting day. Parents and volunteers like **Chris Foster & Kate Bodmann** helped every child make a garden for their very own. **Mike Caban** drove the name stakes in the ground. Children's tools were tightened by **Handy Bob Hutton** in preparation for digging, hoeing, and raking. Seeds were distributed by **Cynthia Shuck & Sue Freeman**, who were also responsible for growing the abundant tomato, pepper, and flower transplants. New Youth Garden volunteer **Kiera Nagle** was indispensable in, among other things, the painting and clean-up process. At the closing, gardeners shared in an appropriate snack of sunflower seeds. Gardeners can look forward in the next month to planting tepees, tunnels, and trellises, feeding worms, working with their dads, painting rain barrels, and catching lots of bugs. You and your child(ren), too, can join the community gardening movement. Check us out at <http://www.giffordparkomaha.org/YouthGarden.html> or give **Dana Freeman (850-9611)** a call today to enroll in the program or see how you can volunteer in this exciting project. Thanks again to all of our dedicated volunteers. You help make the program happen each summer Saturday morning.

by Dana Freeman



A Little Painting, A Little Planting, A Lot Of Fun!

On Saturday, May 17th, the kids and some of their parents rolled up their sleeves and began the new season at the youth garden program with a list of rules that all the gardeners will follow this season. One by one the kids added rules like: **don't pick someone else's crops; respect your elders; listen to instructions; help your neighbor; don't walk on someone else's plot; and have fun, among other common sense rules.** **Kate Bodmann** stepped up and led the group's activities that first Saturday, due to **Dana Freeman's** hospitalization that weekend. Thank you Kate, you did a great job. She also had the kids make a huge "Get Well Soon" banner that all the kids signed and wrote individual messages to Dana. It was delivered to her at the hospital, and we're sure it helped her recover sooner. We're happy that Dana was back on her feet, and returned to lead the Youth Garden Program the following Saturday. So far the 2 ½ foot by 2 ½ foot raised plots have been weeded, the dirt turned over, individual plot stakes have been painted and hammered into place, and the seeding of each plot has begun. Soon we'll start seeing all kinds of nutritious veggies growing in those plots.

by Mike Caban

Spring Cleanup Recap

Good weather was again on our side for this year's Spring Cleanup, held Saturday, May 3, in Gifford Park. The usual trash compactors were filled by neighborhood volunteers. The most notable statistic was the fact we hauled away 53 tires – where did they all come from? We recycled a good deal of metal and appliances, and salvaged some bicycles for the Community Bicycle Shop's use. Something new we did this year was to collect hazardous material and paints and take them to "Under the Sink" (located near 120th & I St.) for proper **handling and recycling.** **Many thanks to the City of Omaha and Keep Omaha Beautiful** for continuing to support this very important program. There were many great efforts on this day, too many to list (however **Cynthia Shuck** deserves special thanks for her efforts), but the GPNA appreciates all the volunteer's commitments to make this a very successful event.



Tennis Block Party Highlights

The GPNA partnered with the **Missouri Valley Nebraska Tennis Association** and the **Omaha Tennis Association** to put on a Tennis Block Party at Gifford Park on Wednesday evening, May 28. Nearly 100 youth participated in the event, where they learned the basic tennis skills. Thanks go to **Godfather's Pizza** again this year for giving us a good deal on 27 pizzas for the event. Everyone attending received a T-shirt and prizes. Many thanks go to all the wonderful tennis instructors – **Jane Hines, Dan Bratetic, Don Gildon, Jenny Foster, Jim Lang, Charlene Liesveld, Randy Samson, Nancy Samson, Tony Lopez, John Lopez, Jim Wilson, Jamil Brown, Kara Schuele, Mary Schuele, John Schuele, Kathy Schuele, Lou Harrison, Rob List, Jackie Foster, Kirk Peck, and Michaela Peck**. Thanks to **Jan Franks, Brittney Rubek, Zach Rubek, Bette Tanner, Betty Slayden, Kayleen Slayden, Jim Wilwerding, Mike Caban, Dana Freeman, Chris & Sallie Foster, and John Barna** for helping with registration, setup, food and prize giveaway. **State Senator Gwen Howard** was our special guest, and she read "**Governor Dave Heineman's Tennis Proclamation**", and "**Mayor Mike Fahey's Tennis Proclamation**". Several police officers attended, talked with kids, and handed out badge stickers. Also, KETV did a nice news story on the event.

We are offering to some of the older youth (9 to 19 years old) the opportunity to continue playing tennis with a few instructors on **Wednesdays 10 to Noon from June 11 – July 16** at Gifford Park. Anyone interested, please contact Chris at **342-6006** for a registration form. One final note: many thanks to the **City of Omaha Park Maintenance Department** and **Graffiti Van** – on very short notice (just a few hours before the tennis party) they painted over and removed graffiti on the tennis backboard, benches, and Sun Dawg shack.

by Chris Foster



Former Kum & Go Liquor License Application Update

On Wednesday, May 28, several GPNA members **and Senator Gwen Howard** testified in Lincoln before the **Nebraska Liquor Control Commission (NLCC)** to oppose the former Kum & Go (now called Infinite Oil located at 33rd & Cass St.) liquor license application. The NLCC has decided to take a month to review the documents and evidence before making a ruling. This is unusual that the commission did not render a decision right away. For the record, the GPNA is opposed to this application; the main reason is the GPNA believes additional alcohol outlets will have a negative impact on our neighborhood, and the neighborhood already has enough alcohol outlets. GPNA members have written opposition letters and testified at City Council and NLCC hearings; we appreciate your efforts.

Special thanks to **Margie Magnuson** for her tireless efforts in creating and sustaining a group called the **Alcohol Impact Coalition**. This group is made up of neighborhood leaders from mostly in and around the midtown area and is committed to studying the impact of alcohol within our neighborhoods and acts as an advocate for supporting neighborhoods during the liquor license application process. This group has many hard-working individuals supporting each other's neighborhood efforts to oppose liquor applicants who the group feels will have a negative effect on the neighborhood. Thanks Margie for your leadership and perseverance.

by Chris Foster

Yates School Update

The effort continues to get Yates School back as our neighborhood school. Things look very positive for this to happen in the coming years (there will likely be a school bond issue by next year sometime). The next step is for people from the community to work with **Omaha Public Schools (OPS)** to decide how best to use the current Yates building at 32nd & Davenport for the short term (next couple years) to benefit our neighborhood. The individuals involved with this effort will meet in June with OPS representatives; if you are interested in being a part of this discussion, please contact **Chris** at **342-6006**. As we have said all along, **Senator Gwen Howard** has been extremely supportive of the Yates effort and has personally made it a top priority. We will keep you posted.

by Chris Foster

TOOL LENDING HOTLINE
342-6006



What's Happening In The Neighborhood . . .

Once again, Gifford Park is a full-time site for the **Sun Dawgs Youth Program**. This program offers youth ages 6-15 a fun summer by providing a wide variety of playground programs... arts & crafts, games & sports, swimming, special event field trips, music & drama, climbing wall, water tag, and hydrant parties. The variety of activities offered through the program is the result of the collaboration between the **City Recreation Division** and numerous local organizations, such as the **Henry Doorly Zoo, Western Bowl, Omaha Royals, McLean Ice Arena, Skateland**, and the **Omaha Public Library Summer Reading Club**. The Sun Dawg program runs from **June 9 – July 31**. Activities are scheduled for **Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.** The cost is **FREE!** The GPNA wishes to thank the **City of Omaha** and all of the private contributors for keeping this valuable youth program in our parks and community centers. Parents are always welcome to assist with supervision during activities. The purple and yellow Sun Dawg shack is located in the west end of Gifford Park.

SNAP! Productions is proud to present the regional premiere of *The Little Dog Laughed*, by **Douglas Carter Beane**. This comedy gives a satirical look at the movie industry when one deviates from the mainstream. This naughty send-up of show biz morality is proof positive that laughter is the best revenge. A fast-paced and hilarious look at the world of celebrity, *The Little Dog Laughed* tells the story of a hot Hollywood actor who may be about to win the role of the century, if he can keep his sexuality under wraps. The production is currently being presented at **3225 California St.** through **June 22**. For ticket information or reservations, call **341-2757** or consult the SNAP! Productions website: www.snapproductions.com

Low-cost vaccination/microchip clinics for cats and dogs will be held on **June 7th, 1-4 p.m.**, at **Sherman Community Center, 5701 N. 16th St.**; and **July 12, 1-4 p.m.**, at **Christie Heights Recreation Center, 5105 S. 37th St.** (37th & P). 1-year rabies; distemper combo; and kennel cough vaccinations: \$5 each. Leukemia vaccine, \$7. 3-year rabies, \$10 Microchipping, \$25.

Many thanks again to longtime GPNA member and resident **Lois Baumhover**; she frequently donates needed items to the GPNA for many of our neighborhood events. In May she donated 100 stamps for our newsletter mailing – thanks Lois!



Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA)

P.O. Box 91462, Omaha, NE 68131-0462



Membership Application

*Note: The GPNA membership year runs from June 1 through May 31

Today's Date: _____

Type of Membership: Single (\$10.00) Family (\$15.00) Business (\$26.00)

If Business, Name of Business: _____

Name: _____

Spouse: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES I am interested in helping out with... (Circle Interests):

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Delivery | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Easter Egg Hunt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Book Club | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Spring Cleanup |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Planting | <input type="checkbox"/> Fall Cleanup |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Liaison | <input type="checkbox"/> Wash Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Walks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tool Lending | <input type="checkbox"/> Cal. Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Banquet |

What's New Pussycat? Update

Clarinda Karpov's column, **What's New, Pussycat?** will now appear only in the advertisement issues (odd-numbered months) of the *Gifford Park's Pride*. In the meantime, for humane solutions to garden wildlife nuisances, please contact **Nebraska Wildlife Rehab, 341-8619**, or go to www.nebraskawildliferehab.org (Click on Site index, "Problems with Wildlife"). For cats unwelcome in gardens, call **Clarinda (553-3736)**, and watch for info in next month's **What's New, Pussycat?**

City Services Information
Mayor's Action Office
444-5555