



# Gifford Park's Pride

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

September 2016

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

## ABC: News from Around and Beyond Gifford Park and the City

By Adrian S. Petrescu

Earlier on during May of this year the GPNA board selected me to represent the GPNA at Midtown Neighborhood Alliance (MNA) meetings, replacing our former representative, Cynthia Shuck, who no longer lives in Gifford Park.

Over the past four months several interesting things happened within MNA or were brought to the attention of the neighborhoods through MNA. Generally, I let the GPNA board know right away and they act on information as soon as the need arises. Some items are however less timely and are of general interest and worthy of being known by everyone. Here is an outline of the most important happenings.

### 1. The Bus Rapid Transit

As some may know, work is under way to bring to Omaha by the end of 2018 a state of the art Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) that would run on Dodge Street from downtown to Westroads. The BRT would have dedicated 60 foot long modern buses passing every 10 minutes during peak hours, every 15 minutes during off-peak periods, and every 20 minutes during the evenings. The tentative map of stations is included in the picture herein. Bus stations would be elevated at level with the bus for fast and easy loading and unloading of passengers.

More information, including how costly this project is, more details on the buses, the stations designs, features and amenities, and

**Next General Meeting**  
**Thursday, November 10th, 7:00PM**

**Speaker: TBD**

**CHI Health-Creighton University**  
**Medical Center**  
**Morrison Seminar Room**

who are the funders, is available online at ometro.com. MNA asked project leadership that each bus station have signage listing all the neighborhoods served by that station, to better improve knowledge of all of our neighborhoods for anyone using the BRT system. The goal is that passengers, whether from Omaha or visiting from out of town, do not simply pass through on the Dodge corridor, but rather stop, take their time to visit what a neighborhood has to offer, patronize businesses and thus contribute to the economic development of each neighborhood. *continued on page 9*



### 2016 GPNA Officers

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**Chris Foster, Landlord Rep**

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### Opportunities – Contacts

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**Community Bike Project**

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**Community Garden/Youth Garden**

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**Adventure Playground**

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**Yates Community Center**

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**Youth Soccer**

Eric Purcell 402-719-5108

**Youth Tennis**

Chris Foster 402-290-8187

**Spring Cleanup**

Luther Larson 402-616-9350

## From the President...

At the time of writing this note, I realize it has been exactly 3 years since we got the key to our house in Gifford Park Neighborhood! We were so happy to finally have our house! That day, we had a small party with some of our friends... not really from the neighborhood though as we didn't know anyone... yet!

It didn't take long to realize Gifford Park Neighborhood was the right place for us...

First of all, we got the GPNA newsletter. It was hanging at the door, as a welcoming message: people in the neighborhood already knew we were here! For us, it was a way to get to know Gifford Park Neighborhood. The newsletter is such a great source of information and inspiration!

Then, there was the Friday Neighborhood Market: small and local, but with such a wide offer! It is also the best place to meet people, to engage in conversations, and have a good time while learning more about the neighbors and the neighborhood.

A couple of weeks later, my husband Adrian attended the GPNA general meeting (held at the California Taco that time) – I was still attending MBA classes then, and was thus unavailable. He came back home happy and enthusiastic: he met some of you and he felt welcomed. We had to be part of the GPNA, such an active association!

Then came the potluck at the Community Garden. We learnt about it in the newsletter... We had missed all the summer programs that year (tennis, youth garden, soccer, and so many more), we didn't know about them... but we wouldn't miss the potluck! What better place to get to know some of you than around a table? And once again, we felt welcomed.

Three years later, I know so much more about Gifford Park Neighborhood, and I am much more involved too. I realize things would be different, hadn't it been for all the 'little' things mentioned earlier. All these little things are possible thanks to the involvement of many of you. All these little things make Gifford Park Neighborhood vibrant, colorful and welcoming!

Thank you all and... keep up the good work! Summer is almost over, but we still have so many ideas to share, projects to develop and implement, and new neighbors to welcome like we were welcomed three years ago!

-Marie Hélène André

Editor's note: If you have news of interest to the Gifford Park Neighborhood, we encourage you to submit an article for the monthly newsletter. Editorials are subject to approval by the GPNA Executive Board. Please include your contact information. Articles may be submitted by email to Brent Lubbert at gpnewseditor@gmail.com.

## Community Conversation

By Megan Sperry

Dear neighbors,  
I have an invitation I want to extend to you all. Its an invitation to a community conversation and the topic is winter. Winter and community, community and winter. But let me give you a little backstory...

First, let me introduce myself. My name is Megan Sperry and I live on Webster Street with my sweet family. We have lived in Gifford Park for a little less than five years. Over this time we have loved all the opportunities that have opened up for our family in this incredibly active neighborhood, and we have been inspired to join with many of you in the care of this place.



My husband Brandon and I work with a non-profit organization called Rooted Way. You might know a few other neighbors who are part of this awesome ministry: Eric and Lisa Purcell, and Brandon and Melinda Dockum. Our vision is to see neighborhoods and places all over the world thrive by helping followers of Jesus discover how to tangibly love, serve and honor real people in real places.

In my own personal effort to take care of my family, love people, and listen to my place I started a group called "Mom Village". The idea was to give moms in the neighborhood a place to connect and let life flow from there. I have loved journeying with these women over the past year and a half and I can honestly say it has sustained me through hard seasons home alone with my children. I have come to realize that there are a lot of stay at home moms in the neighborhood, as well as families who have no support in the area. Families who are trying so hard but have no community or extended family to help them. One of the goals of mom village is to foster an environment where support is possible.

As we all know winter is coming. A lot of us hibernate during this time in Gifford Park, and we don't see each other at all. One thing that I, and the rest of the Rooted Way community, have learned from spending time with many families in this neighborhood is that winter is long, hard, and often lonely. I think that we all can change this together. I think there are options. I think we can create a space that will help families in the neighborhood have rest, community and play.

...And so, we want to invite you all to a conversation. Lets talk and brainstorm together about how we can make winter just another opportunity to be a community that is there for one another and is moving towards sharing life together. We are excited to listen with you all and dream about what could be, so If you are interested in being a part of this conversation please join us and contribute your stories and ideas.

"WINTER:STAYING CONNECTED"

Saturday September 17th @ 2pm

Location: OMAHA WHOLE LIVING



## 33rd Block Party Recap

By Eliza Perry

We had a huge turnout again this year for 33rd Friday Block Party - thank you for celebrating summertime and culture in Gifford Park Neighborhood with us!

The event could not have happened without every single individual who volunteered their time and talents to the planning and execution of the event:

Anna Deal, Maranda Allbritten, Isabel Petrescu, Alex Goswami, Luther Larson, Chris Foster, Adam Sherrerd, Lauren Herrod, Hannah Rudolph, Jenny

Waltmath, Mike Caban, Dawn Stanley, Wendell Stanley, Rachel Stanley, Witney Stanley, Ali Clark, Bob Hutton, Martin Janousek, Eliza Perry, Eric Purcell, Jim Kyler, Colleen O'Doherty, Nancy Gaarder, Darryl Hutton, Charles Mitchell, Sharon Olson, Bryant Pasho, Angie Pasho, Matt Cronin, Erin Higgins



*more photos on next page*

We thank Yates Community Center, Lotplar Laywah, Susan Mayberger, Kumar Gurung and Maggie Jones for their work to bring incredible Karen dance performances to the event, and also to Marie Hélène André and Joan Wallace for bringing Omaha International Folk Group. The Omaha International Folk Dancers are a part of UNO's The Moving Company's Community Engagement initiative.

Our Market vendors are giant stars, too. Without their lively presence, we wouldn't have local foods and crafts to meet our grocery and Christmas shopping needs. And without their generosity, we wouldn't have had such a successful raffle to support the Gifford Park Neighborhood Market - we raised over \$300 toward our challenge grant from the Peter Kiewit Foundation. Special thanks to Maranda Allbritten and Anna Deal for their planning efforts.

For years, Sharon Olson of Minne Lusa House has donated prizes for kids who play and win carnival games made by Mike Caban of Gifford Park Neighborhood. They both went above and beyond this year and we are sincerely, infinitely grateful to them for their generosity year after year. Thank you both for all you do for our youth and our neighborhood!

Ultimately, the event aims to bring together people of all ages, nationalities, languages and income levels to have fun and celebrate Gifford Park's cultural diversity. We are always trying to improve and would love your input. Join the planning committee by emailing Eliza Perry at [yrrepazile@gmail.com](mailto:yrrepazile@gmail.com). We need your ideas, time, talent, connections, and/or insights!

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## 2016 Restoration Exchange Fall Tour: Aksarben Neighborhood

Sunday, October 2, 2016 Noon to 5:00pm

The 2016 Fall Neighborhood Tour will feature a church and a mix of Tudor, Revival, Bungalow, Spanish Colonial and Foursquare style homes in the Aksarben neighborhood (Leavenworth to the north, Center Street to the south, 50th Street to the east and 72 Street to the west).

Tickets are \$15 each or 2 for \$25. If you're a REO member, it's \$10 each or 2 for \$15. You can purchase tickets online here or on the day of the tour at Mount Calvary Church, 5529 Leavenworth St. If you purchase tickets online, you can pick them up the day of the tour at the church. Become a 2017 Restoration Exchange Omaha member at the tour and your ticket is FREE!



## Photos from 33rd Friday Block Party and Neighborhood Market



## Photos from Community Bike Shop's Ninth Birthday Party





## Gifford Park Neighborhood School/Save Yates Effort - Looking Ahead

By Chris Foster

I'm sure you have heard the good news that Omaha Public Schools (OPS) will be building our new neighborhood elementary school on the parking lot property near 32nd & Webster, and OPS does not anticipate changes to Yates Community Center (at 32nd & Davenport). On behalf of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association and the broader Neighborhood School/Save Yates Effort, we want to express our gratitude to EVERYONE in the community who has supported this effort.



Regarding design and curriculum plans for our new school, our neighborhood leadership and community members (Gifford Park, Joslyn Castle, Bemis Park neighborhoods) plan to host a neighborhood visioning session in early November to discuss plans. This meeting will help us come prepared to share our vision with OPS in January 2017, which is OPS's scheduled time to begin official planning. We look forward to partnering with OPS to design the best school possible from all angles – physical design (building footprint and urban design & architecture to fit in with our neighborhood); safety; walk/bicycle routes; car/bus/transportation traffic routes & parking; curriculum/programming (i.e. potential magnet for dual language, STEM, STEAM, agriculture, economics, other magnet focus); student assignment plan for the new school attendance boundaries; PTA/PTO; principal selection; properly technology & resources; etc. We will inform everyone of upcoming opportunities to provide community input – stay tuned!

Current OPS planned schedule for new Gifford Park neighborhood elementary school is:

Jan. 2017-Sept. 2017 – building design

Jan. 2018-July 2019 – construction

Oct. 2017-Dec. 2017 – construction procurement

Aug. 2019 – move in

On another note, unfortunately most of our “Save Yates” yard signs were stolen in the last month or so. My neighbor told me a man came up to him one day and said, “...you heard Yates has been saved so I am here to take the signs...”. This was probably someone wanting to reuse the signs for other political signage. Certainly our community would like to think Yates Community Center and the programs are saved, but we assume nothing and continue to work with OPS, local foundations and the community to make sure we do NOT lose Yates and the current programming. So even though most of the “Save Yates” yard signs are gone we ask you continue to support the effort of this vital community asset.

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### Welcome, Students!

We have a large number of university students living in the area who have returned for another year of school, or who are just starting college this year. To both categories, congratulations, and welcome (back) to Gifford Park. The Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA) has been working very hard with the city and police to improve the appearance and safety of our neighborhood. The goal of the GPNA is to improve the neighborhood and make it a better place for all residents, and we would ask our new student neighbors to become a part of this effort.

The largest part of being a good neighbor is consideration for others. First we ask students to be considerate in terms of noise, especially after 10 PM. Many families in our neighborhood have children or go to work early. Parties are another problem. Unfortunately, parties always seem to end up bigger

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**GIFFORD PARK**  
**NEIGHBORHOOD**  
**MARKET**

33rd and California

EVERY FRIDAY  
 9 AM - SEPTEMBER 5-8 PM

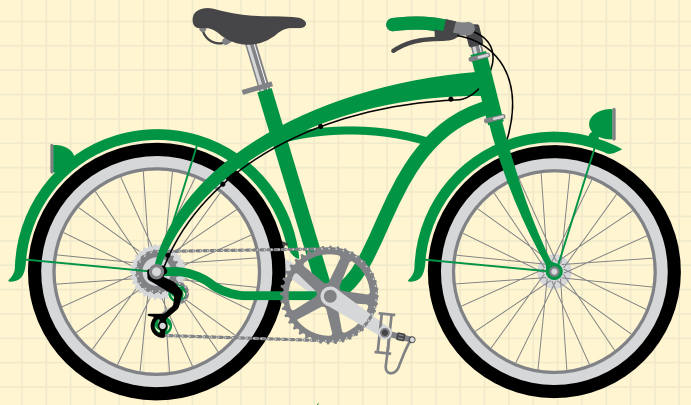
Like us on Facebook!

We accept Cash, Credit, Debit + EBT

Special thanks to our sponsoring vendors:



Find these vendors and more at the Gifford Park Neighborhood Market!  
 contact: [gpmarket@gmail.com](mailto:gpmarket@gmail.com)



**Tour de Garden**  
 Community Garden Bicycle Tour

City Sprouts Big Garden Pollack's Orchard Big Muddy Gifford Park  
 Root Down (Creighton Blue Jay Community Garden) Farnam Farm Dundee Benson  
[TourDeGarden.com](http://TourDeGarden.com)

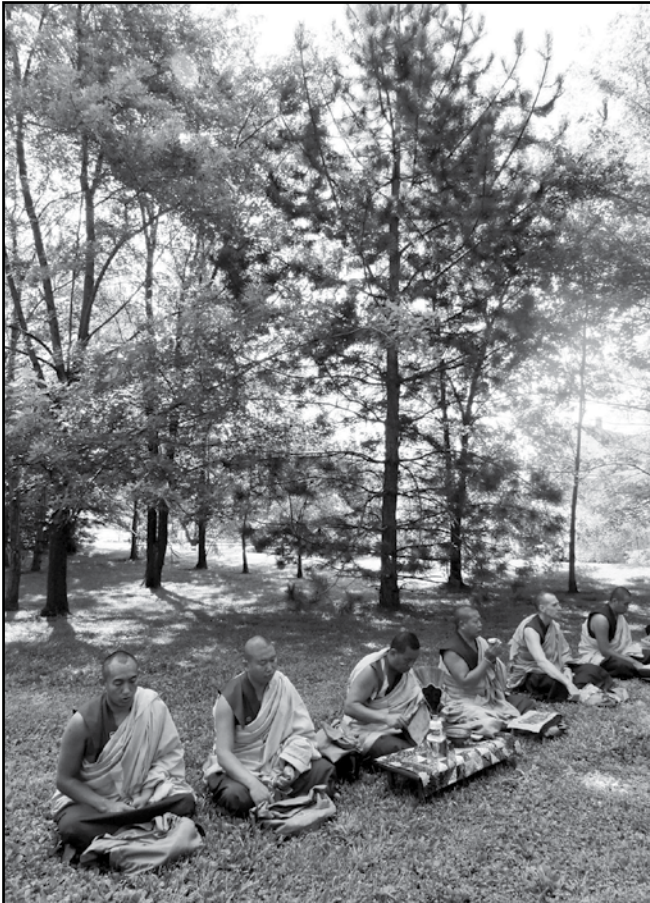
**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2016**

Ride Starts @ 9 am at  
 Omaha Bicycle Co. (6015 Maple St)

Sponsored by



Music, Salsa Competition & After-Ride Party  
 @ 12 - 2 pm at Benson Community Garden



**COME TO THE GREEN SPACE BLESSING!**

Join us for a beautiful Green Space blessing by Tibetan monks from the Gaden Shartse Monastery in India. The monks have been visiting Omaha for more than 20 years, emissaries from The Dalai Lama on a mission of spreading compassion and sharing Tibetan culture.

**Sunday, September 11 • 4 p.m. • rain or shine**  
**Cass St. and Cottage Grove, beginning at 30th St.**  
*(There will be tents for shelter in case of rain.)*

Come relax on the grass under the trees, and enjoy the peaceful chanting of the monks, the tinkling of bells, and the singing of birds in the Green Space! Bring blankets or lawn chairs, if you wish. You don't have to understand the ceremony to receive the blessings it bestows.

The Green Space, which belongs to Boys Town Hospital, is a beautiful park-like green, home to urban wildlife, songbirds, and mature trees – including rare American Elms.

More about the Tibetan monks' visit and events:  
[www.CompassionOmaha.org/happening-now](http://www.CompassionOmaha.org/happening-now)



## SNAP Productions' "Quality of Life"

By Colleen O'Doherty

Community. Diversity. Tolerance. Compassion. These are values that are at the core of SNAP! Productions (<http://www.snapproductions.com>) a small theater located on 33rd and California, right by California Taco. Our productions have covered a range of topics: gentrification of neighborhoods ("Clybourne Park" 2013), race relations in America ("We are Proud to Present" 2014), LGBT life throughout history ("Voices from the Closet" 2014), living with autism ("Autistic License" 2010) and being deaf in a hearing culture ("Tribes" 2014). The thread that carries them all is the desire to educate and build community. Our current production, "Quality of Life" is a touching, witty comedy about the strength of familial bonds in the face of death and terminal illness. We sincerely hope people in the Gifford Park community will come and see this wonderful, life-affirming production. Performances are at 8pm Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays and 6pm on Sundays. The final performance is at 2pm on Sunday, September 18th. We have student rush tickets for students who arrive 20 minutes early with a valid student ID. Check out our website or e-mail us if you are interested in getting involved. We're thrilled to be in the center of such a wonderful community. We look forward to seeing you all!



CERTIFIED ORIGINAL

**SHELTERBELT THEATRE**

3225 California St. • [www.shelterbelt.org](http://www.shelterbelt.org)

Omaha's Home  
For New Plays

Coming October 7-30, 2016

## REVELATION

by Samuel Brett Williams

directed by Elizabeth Thompson

Suddenly, people are disappearing, the Hudson River turns to blood, and Ohio comes down with a bad case of boils. Thus, begins a road trip from NYC to Arkadelphia, AR to find the New Jerusalem. Explore faith, love, and the American landscape in Revelation — a pitch black comedy about the End Days. **Featuring:** Nick LeMay • Katie Hurst • Meganne Storm • Craig Bond



## **ABC: News from Around and Beyond Gifford Park and the City**

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The BRT project leadership is also looking for a better moniker for the project than the letters BRT, something that would endear the project to residents. The “Fast and Furious Bus” didn’t really cut it... [insert smiley face]. If you have any ideas for a neat name, please let someone on the GPNA board or myself know, and we’ll pass them along to the Transit Authority of the City of Omaha for consideration.

### **2. NUSA report to MNA by GPNA leadership, Urban Farming, and getting ready for the 2017 NUSA Conference in Omaha**

As many would remember, the Neighborhood USA (NUSA) Conference was in Memphis Tennessee this year, May 25-28. From the GPNA, Chris Foster, Martin Janousek, and Brent Lubbert of Big Muddy Urban Farm participated. It was there where in fact the Adventure Playground received a well-deserved national second place for creativity of an activity in a neighborhood, as it was reported at the time in the newsletter.

Chris, Martin, and Brent reported recently to MNA about their experience at the NUSA Conference in Memphis, detailing some initiatives and activities that other neighborhood associations nation-wide are doing, with the scope that we too in the GPNA and in all the participating MNA neighborhoods learn from those and may replicate best practices found nationwide. Brent presented to everyone the details on the Aspiring Farmer Residency that Big Muddy is offering on a competitive basis. The idea was well received at MNA, just as Big Muddy’s work impressed the NUSA participants in Memphis as well. Remember that the application is due on October 1. More information is available from <http://www.bigmuddyurbanfarm.org> Work is under way to prepare for the Omaha hosted 2017 NUSA conference. One of the many things that are planned is the walk through neighborhoods. We

are trying to use this opportunity to make a self-guided walking tour of neighborhoods available for everyone forever, but ready to go before the NUSA conference in Omaha in May 2017.

### **3. Project X scope and update**

Vincent Furlong of Restoration Exchange Omaha leads Project X that has set aside a little money supporting Midtown neighborhoods in their efforts. It supports with matching funds businesses façade improvement on a competitive basis. It is now working on a developing a cross-neighborhood self-guided walking tour that would improve everyone’s knowledge about historic buildings, and would aim at making more people aware of the gems, both historic and contemporary that we all have within walking distance from home. Just as it would help get visitors to Omaha, and not only at the NUSA Conference of next year, to better know and enjoy what the town has to offer. After all, why should we keep California Tacos or Marrakech Gourmet Restaurant a secret? Vince is working to replicate on smartphones in Midtown what he has already done in South Omaha with the walking tour he organized successfully there. There will be a cross-neighborhoods set of paths, signage, and mini-information system and online guide on smartphones to be used by residents and tourists alike who want to learn new things about old historic places while enjoying a stroll around Midtown’s rich and friendly neighborhoods. It is part of a broader idea to cross-promote all Midtown neighborhoods, including with the Omaha Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center. From Gifford Park, we remember that we have listed in the National Register of Historic Places the Garneau-Kilpatrick House at 3100 Chicago St., The Melrose, at 602 N 33rd, The Nottingham Apartments, at 3304 Burt St. The old Yates School has historic value that is certainly worth visiting, and an effort is on the way to list it in the National Register, and Duchesne Academy and the Shelterbelt theater may also be of interest. Certainly, several other places of interest may make the object of the walking tour as well, in addition to the historic places, from California Tacos and Marrakech to the community garden, community bike shop and the adventure

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## Youth Garden Program 2016 Highlights

By Chris Foster

Now in its 13th year, 2016 was another terrific year for the Gifford Park Youth Garden (GPYG) program. It began May 7 with our “Season Opening” event and ended with our “Pizza Garden Harvest Party” August 27. In between these dates we had over 60 registered youth participants gardening on 44 raised beds (each 30”x30” plots), some children shared their plots. We again had no rainouts!

Last newsletter I gave an update through week 10, here are highlights of the last five weeks of activities: Week 11 Brent Lubbert with Big Muddy Urban Farm taught us all about chickens, and everyone helped spread mulch to cover our front flower gardens and we added mulch to our chicken coop to keep them happy! Week 12 we learned what to do with all of those vegetables we’re growing with the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) and their famous “Cooking Matters” class led by Chef Wilson Calixte and Neva Wolf. Chef Wilson grilled us a roasted vegetable salad made with vegetable donations from our youth garden and Friday Night Neighborhood Market. Week 13 Matt Cronin “with a little help from his friends” brought us the “Sound of Music” where everyone broke out into small groups into different parts of the garden to create music out of a variety of materials. Matt also led us in singing “This Land is Your Land”. Week 14 we were treated by presenters Chad & Cynthia Lebo (owner of Cure Cooking), Anna Deal, and the Noll family (Eric & Annemarie, Preston and Lucas). They had us make bread & butter, and jars of pickled refrigerator vegetables in hot vinegar. This was great fun led by our very talented presenters! Week 15 we celebrated another wonderful year the Youth Garden program with a Harvest Party! We enjoyed homemade pizzas prepared by the kids, Big Muddy Urban Farm, and volunteers. Each pizza was topped with an assortment of bountiful veggies harvested from Big Muddy’s gardens and our young gardener’s plots. After all the pizzas were ready, we enjoyed each other’s company while feasting on our harvest. We encourage our young gardeners to continue tending your plots for the rest of the growing season.



*more photos on next page*

As you can see the program teaches youth of all ages how to grow vegetables, prepare, eat, and share our harvest with others. Plus, the youth are creative with art and music; explore our natural environment; and have fun while working together and getting our hands dirty. GPYG relies upon parents and volunteers each week to provide snacks, lead lessons, and simply share their time with participating young people. Tremendous thanks to all our volunteers including but not limited to: Anna Deal, Maranda Allbritten, Matt Cronin, Eliza Perry, Leif & Jennessa Bade, Paul Pellerito, Amy Lanspa, the Stanley family, Jasmine Frierson, Teresa Vizcaya, Monica Lehn, Francisco & Blanca Manzo, Daniel & Andrea Lawse, Andy & Leslie Wessel, Veronica Saavedra, Eric & Lisa Purcell, Erin Grace, Michaela Wolf, Rose Carlson, Tyronda Pierce, and Jackie Foster. Huge thanks to Brent Lubbert (Big Muddy Urban Farm) for his planning & commitment to the program nearly every week! Thanks to the dedicated parents and family members who participate with their youth gardeners. And very special thanks to my comrade Mike Caban for his incredible dedication year in and year out to this program and the community garden project, neither would be the same without his leadership and guidance – thanks Mike! Please contact Chris Foster (402-290-8187 or foster3413@cox.net) or Mike Caban (402-341-4722, caban3321@cox.net) if you have questions about GPYG program.



## Community Garden Update

Again this growing season we have had very timely rain, no one is complaining except trying to find time to mow! Our Gifford Park Community Garden will be one of a nine host gardens on this the fifth annual Tour de Garden event Sunday September 11, 9am to noon. A Salsa competition will happen after the tour at the Benson Community Garden – see this newsletter for more details.

Our next pot luck dinner for our community gardeners, youth gardeners, Adventure Playground, volunteers and their families will be Sunday, September 18th at 4:30 PM Socialize, 5:00 PM Dinner at 35th & Cass Streets. Besides our normal grilling of burgers and hot dogs, Chef Wilson Calixte (chef at Le Voltaire French Restaurant) will treat us to some entertaining food preparation and grilling, so be sure to come early around 4:30pm to enjoy his expertise.

Everyone is encouraged to check out the community garden including the 12 chickens located in their coop on the upper-north part of the garden. Also check out the always-changing Adventure Playground on the west part of the garden, including the 2-story tree house. Wednesday work nights continue each Wednesday 6 to 8 PM through the growing season. During these times water and garden tools will be available for plot renters and anyone else interested in helping maintain the community garden – we always need weeding of the flower beds. Contact Mike Caban (402-341-4722, [caban3321@cox.net](mailto:caban3321@cox.net)) for garden plot information, and Chris Foster (402-290-8187, [foster3413@cox.net](mailto:foster3413@cox.net)) for other questions.

## Photos from 2016 Youth Garden Program





## 23rd Annual Youth Tennis Program Highlights

We had pretty decent weather with just one rainout for this year's 23rd annual August Youth Tennis Program in Gifford Park. This year we had 82 youth participants and 34 with perfect attendance. We had tremendous help from our volunteer instructors for each Wednesday in August for this free program. The kids learned basic groundstrokes, volleys and rallying skills.

Godfather's Pizza gave us a good deal providing 12 pizzas for our program "finale" on the last day. Neighborhood volunteers also provided treats. Many thanks go to all our great instructors for their support and dedication to this program: Ric & Jane Hines, Jim Wilson, Vince Emery, Leif & Jennessa Bade, Roger Freeman, Jackie Foster, Jenny Waltemath, Laurie Bolte, Donnie Gildon, John Aerni, the Stanley ladies (Dawn, Crystal, Justine, & Witney), Ari Manzo, Tyler Bolte, Travis Bolte, and Chris Foster. For the finale we were grateful to have the Creighton Prep boy's tennis team (2015 State Tennis Champs!) volunteer to teach, including coach Mike Higgins who also shared some words of wisdom with everyone during the sportsmanship awards. Also during June and July, volunteer instructors Jim Wilson, Lou Harrison and the Stanley girls taught group tennis lessons on Wednesday mornings in Gifford Park - this was the 9th year for this free program for kids having a stronger interest in tennis.

Special thanks go to Jan Franks, Brittney Rubek, Betty Slayden, Tyffaney Reichert, and Kayleen Tran for help with registration, awards and lots of other administration duties! Thanks to Mike Caban and Paul Pellerito for helping out on the finale activities. Thanks also to the Omaha Tennis Association, the Nebraska Tennis Association, the United States Tennis Association, and the City Parks & Recreation Department for their generous support over the years. If anyone who participated in the tennis lessons is interested in more advanced lessons, please contact Chris Foster at 402-290-8187. Keep your eye on the ball!





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playground, depending on the age of the visitor. Unfortunately, Vince's project may not take so many entries in the app being developed, but we hope we will augment that project with signage from one attraction to the others.

### **4. The demolition ordinance issue, and participation of neighborhoods in development decision process**

The City Council had this summer under consideration the vote on the process attempting to save from demolition a building with historic value when it was being considered for condemnation.

As one can imagine the issue was and remains highly contested. As with anything regarding property rights, there are many differing positions and interests at stake. The neighborhoods, including GPNA, would have preferred input in the process regarding the historic nature of a building, if it was older than 50 years, and in case a valid argument was to be made about such historic value that the building had a good chance to stay and that the owner be asked to renovate and maintain the building properly. Developers generally find such input unnecessary and they would prefer a streamlined condemnation and demolition decision so that the development on the sites can start earlier rather than slower. Owners who let their property fall in disarray also prefer, naturally so, that they be left alone to exercise their right to sell and that they are not forced to renovate and/or maintain a building simply because someone else (the neighborhood, the city preservation authorities etc.) thinks their building is of historic value.

Obviously sometimes these views are overly simplified and may also be shortsighted. After all, a building with historic value has—or may have if properly preserved—well, more value for itself and for the neighborhood overall property values as well. Value on the other hand is a

relative concept. Most often it is seen in dollars and sense in the real estate market. Beauty to the passer by rarely has universally accepted criteria for establishing a dollar value. Return on investments on property owned and redeveloped for investment into denser condominium buildings beats often the “value” to the neighbors’ “pleasure of the eye” who may have liked better the old Victorian brick house that was standing there before but was let to live a slow death by its previous owner. Just as with value, whether real in the market or solely perceived in beauty for some uncertain future, influence on decision-making can also be relative. Generally however it has been the case that those with more objective dollar power may have stronger influence in decisions. After all, we rarely see “pretty” as an attraction point to a neighborhood. It’s much easier to see (and measure, and then tax too) property values, and when those go up we know that the neighborhood is attractive to new residents. Nobody can tax “pretty” and nor can it be rented out for value. And yet, shouldn’t we value “pretty” more somehow? Recognizing that after neglecting “pretty” for too long, if and when all the historic buildings are gone, a line would be crossed and there’d be no return. How do we know then when we passed that line of no return? Meanwhile, while we are pondering this hard question, in July the Omaha City Council voted against the position of neighborhoods, supported by Councilman Chris Jerram, thus against giving itself the power to block demolition of potentially historic buildings. In case you missed it, learn more here: [http://www.omaha.com/news/metro/omaha-city-council-votes-against-giving-itself-power-to-block/article\\_27a7320c-4881-11e6-af63-83b24375651e.html](http://www.omaha.com/news/metro/omaha-city-council-votes-against-giving-itself-power-to-block/article_27a7320c-4881-11e6-af63-83b24375651e.html)

City Council does however ask all developers to get neighborhood input on their projects in the initial planning stages. We learned the hard way that not always do the final built projects resemble 100% the negotiated plans that had the neighborhood input incorporated. Cost savings and other changes in conditions may change quite radically the original plans. Along with the GPNA itself, MNA is acting to ensure that

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## **ABC: News from Around and Beyond Gifford Park and the City**

*Continued from page 13*

updates are being shared by developers as they occur, and who knows, maybe the updated plans can even be posted on a dedicated website for projects' progress, bringing this entire process into the twenty-first Century.

### **5. Emerald Ash Borer awareness and plant a tree work**

You must have seen the dark green plastic bands looking like "crime scene: do not cross" police lines surrounding trees. They are part of a city-wide awareness campaign on understanding the risks posed by the Emerald Ash Borer bug. Diana Failla, the President of MNA, will come (TBA) to address all the details at the GPNA November meeting. Meanwhile, you can get better informed online at <http://nfs.unl.edu/nebraska-eab>.

At the same time, there is an ongoing effort to replant trees. MNA is collecting locations where each neighborhood could replant the ones allotted to it from the dedicated grant. If you think of a good location, let someone know. We are collecting locations and we will let MNA know where we feel new trees may be needed.

### **6. OPPD workshop on Smart Steps to Saving Energy**

From the description by OPPD itself, with this particular program "OPPD strives to:

- Educate on the use of energy-efficiency measures in your home
- Link financial assistance and energy-efficiency resources
- Be a resource available to help customers address energy needs

Winter is coming. You can learn how to meet it with an energy cost-saving plan. All participants will receive an educational Smart Steps kit, which includes: 12 monthly folders for use in filing income and payment receipts, a Budget Activity Guide along with various brochures and weatherization items. There will be NO COST to participants. If you want to participate, please feel free to go to the September meeting of the Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association and participate in the workshop hosted there. That meeting is Monday, September 12 at 7-8:30 pm at St. Cecilia Parish Center, 39th and Burt St. Please RSVP with Margie Magnuson at [magnuson1@cox.net](mailto:magnuson1@cox.net)

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## **Gifford Park's Newest Resident**

Congratulations to the Daniel and Andrea Lawse family to the birth of Kora Lawse who was born 8/10/16 and weighed 9 lbs, 2 oz. The Lawses' are long-time GPNA members and volunteers.

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## **Photos from Adventure Playground** (Open Saturdays, 2-6pm at Community Garden)





## Big Muddy Aspiring Farmer Residency Application is Open

By Brent Lubbert

Do you (or someone you know) want to get involved in sustainable agriculture? Big Muddy is pleased to announce a very exciting opportunity to live in a house with fellow farmers, grow crops on seven lots in Gifford Park and learn from the structured experience. Resident farmers receive room and board as long as their educational and 20 hr/wk field work responsibilities are upheld. The education is designed around hands-on, decision-making experiences managing a small market farm in the urban environment so that residents acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for their next steps in food system work.

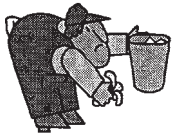
For more information and to fill out the application please visit [BigMuddyUrbanFarm.org](http://BigMuddyUrbanFarm.org), or stop by the 3320 Burt St. residency house on open house dates (check facebook events for dates). Please note that applications are due October 1st, 2016. The supportive Gifford Park Neighborhood allows this educational opportunity to take shape and flourish, making an impact on the health and resiliency of our community. For this, we are extremely grateful. Thank you! For questions contact Brent Lubbert (402)-213-9646 // [brent.lubbert@gmail.com](mailto:brent.lubbert@gmail.com)

## Welcome, Students!

*Continued from page 6*

and noisier than first planned, and the police have been more active in enforcing noise and underage drinking ordinances. Another difficult problem is parking. Our neighborhood has barely enough parking (like school), so you may not always be able to park directly in front of your residence. Please do not park on lawns, across sidewalks, or on the wrong side of the street (facing traffic). Besides being a serious safety issue and making the neighborhood look bad, all of these are parking violations and are subject to ticketing. Also, please do not litter and help us to keep our neighborhood picked up. Many of us pick up trash that we did not leave and we ask that you would help us by doing the same.

Finally, consider coming to our quarterly neighborhood meetings and perhaps joining our Association. A \$10 yearly single membership will get this newsletter delivered to you every month, and you will meet your neighbors and many other wonderful people during our activities such as neighborhood cleanups and holiday events. We welcome students for the upcoming year, and we hope that you will help us continue to make the Gifford Park neighborhood a better place to live, work, learn and play!



### Gifford Park Cleanup and Playground Celebration



**What:** Gifford Park Cleanup and Playground Celebration

**Where:** Meet at Gifford Park Playground at 35th Ave & Davenport

**Who:** EVERYONE (adults & children)!

**Date:** Saturday, September 17, 10am to Noon

**Activities:** Playground & Park Cleanup, Pickup Litter, Weeding, Mulching, Raking (tools & gloves provided)

**Food:** Sandwiches & Refreshments for Volunteers



NEW AMERICAN DISH

Sept. 8 - 14

Kitchen Table and Block 16



Gifford Park Neighborhood Association  
 PO Box 31462  
 Omaha, NE 68131

Place  
 Stamp  
 Here

**Gifford Park Neighborhood Association  
 Membership Application**

*The GPNA membership year runs from January 1 to December 31.*

Type of membership:      \_\_\_ Single (\$10)              \_\_\_ Family (\$15)              \_\_\_ Business (\$25)  
 Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Business Phone (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Name (1): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (2): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (3): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (4): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (5): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteer Opportunities! I'm interested in helping with...**

- |   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Call committee         | <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Banquet        | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Watch      | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanup/Beautification | <input type="checkbox"/> Landlord/Tenant Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Distribution | <input type="checkbox"/> Tool Lending  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Garden       | <input type="checkbox"/> Memberships            | <input type="checkbox"/> School Liason           | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Planting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easter Egg Hunt        | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Market    | <input type="checkbox"/> School Activities       | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Garden  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History                | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Walks     | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer                  |  |

Return completed form along with check or money order to:  
 Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, PO Box 31462, Omaha, NE 68131.