



THE

CORNER POST

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Working to create safe,
attractive and healthy neighborhoods
throughout Central OklahomaSM

A bimonthly publication of
The Neighborhood Alliance, Inc.
1236 NW 36th Street • Oklahoma City, OK 73118-5604
Phone: (405) 528-6322 • Fax: (405) 521-0798 • www.nacok.org

Oklahoma's Night Out!

September 14, 2010

What's your neighborhood planning for Oklahoma's Night Out this year?

Last year over 65 Oklahoma City Neighborhoods had events in their neighborhood to join in the nation-wide celebration, National Night Out.

Since 1984, the National Association of Town Watch has promoted National Night Out on the first Tuesday in August. Oklahomans know that this is no time for an outdoor party! We've chosen to celebrate our neighborhood spirit on the more temperate September 14 this year!

Get your neighborhood together to celebrate community and connectedness. Our planning packet has suggestions for activities ranging from a simple porch light vigil to a blow-out party. We encourage you to register your event using our

online registration form. Our master list of events includes all registered events with locations, directions and maps so that local police, fire and municipal personnel can find your party and contribute to making your neighborhood a "hard target" for criminals.

Planning packets and online registration are available at nacok.org. To have a paper registration form mailed out to you, call our office at 528-6322.



Deadline for registration is August 31.

Night Out Kick-Off Event a Great Success!

To show our solidarity with the rest of the country in their celebration of National Night Out on August 3rd, we held a Kick-off event at city hall that morning. We staged our traditional photo with the Mayor and City Council on the steps of city hall and gathered in council chambers to hear the proclamations.

Sixty-three people, representing 16 neighborhoods, in addition to council members, police and fire personnel were treated to pastries and cupcakes donated by Target and water donated by Pelco Products. Everyone attending will receive a copy of the photo, signed by Mayor Mick Cornett.

As well as gathering in support of Night Out, attendees also qualified for the opportunity to be awarded Target Gift Cards.

The winners of Target Gift Cards as follows:

Neighborhood with most attendees at the Kick-Off:
College Hill, winning \$100!

Random drawing from attendees at the Kick-Off:
Cresha Redus from JFK Neighborhood, winning \$50!

Randomly drawn neighborhoods from those registered by August 3 received \$30 Gift Cards:



- Northampton HOA**
- Prairie Queen**
- Crestwood NA**
- Whitehall**
- Treadwell Hills NA**
- Medical Community NA**
- Brookwood NA**
- Denniston NA**
- Village Green NA**
- Chisholm Village II HOA**

Combatting Graffiti Beautifully!

Lions Club and Western Heights partner to solve problem



The Lions Club has had a long standing problem with their storage unit being tagged with graffiti over the years. Dawn Miller, administrative assistant at the Lions Club, met Jason Smith, a School Based Service Specialist, who works at the Western Heights Middle School at a Friends of NW 10th Street Task Force Meeting. They decided that if the students were to paint a mural on that storage unit perhaps it would deter the graffiti. Jason worked with the school administration to sponsor a contest with the winner's design being painted on the Lions facility. You can see the results of that partnership at left. Way to go Dawn and Jason! Team work and partnerships are what makes Friends such a great community coalition!

The winning mural by a
Western Heights Middle School student

planokc

planOKC is Oklahoma City's new comprehensive plan, and the long-range plan to ensure a healthy community, economy and environment for our residents.

Thank you to everyone who attended the planOKC Neighborhood Workshop at Langston OKC on July 15. Over 160 people helped identify strengths and threats that affect neighborhood livability. We are busy reviewing all of the great comments received from participants. Thank you to Neighborhood Alliance for helping organize this wonderful event.

At the meeting, we introduced **planOKC Meeting in a Box** as one tool that will help the Planning Department understand which factors residents feel contribute to the livability of their neighborhoods. Each box contains specific instructions on how to lead a meeting with any small group - your neighbors, civic group, friends or church members. If you picked up a Meeting in a Box at the workshop, please return your completed materials by October 1. If you did not attend or receive one and would like to host a Meeting in a Box, there are still some left. You can pick one up at Neighborhood Alliance (NW 36th & Classen), or at the OKC Planning Department (420 W. Main St, 9th Floor).

Citizen Stakeholder Groups will begin this fall. There will be a stakeholder group for each of the plan elements. If you haven't signed up to participate and would like to, you can read a short description of the planOKC elements at www.okc.gov/planokc and click "Feedback Form" to send us your request, email planOKC@okc.gov, or call 297-2283. More information will be sent out soon to those who have volunteered. We appreciate everyone's participation in planOKC!

Good Neighbor Training

Mustard Seed

Neighborhood Alliance and **Mustard Seed Development Corp** are encouraging Associations and other community groups and corporations to host a "Good Neighbor Seminar" for your members.

Dan Short, founder and Director of Mustard Seed Development Corp said, "Today so many people have lost touch with their neighbors, we don't know each other and we don't care for each other like we used to do."

"A sign of a civilized society is the degree to which people care for each other in good times and bad."

"We are devoted to rebuilding caring relationships between neighbors block by block in order to renew the practice of making friends in the street," Short added.

The three-hour seminar is free and available at your location or at Mustard Seed. Among issues covered are, the cultural factors contributing to the "decline of caring", historic examples of good neighboring and interactive exercises aimed at creating a block by

block model of "Caring Neighbors" on your street.

Just because, "we've lost that lovin' feelin' " doesn't mean we have to keep living that way!

We are inviting any Neighborhood Association, Corporation, or religious organization to join us in making Oklahoma City the most caring city in the USA.

Call Dan Short to schedule a Good Neighbor Training for your group @ 767-0583.

To learn more about Mustard Seed Development Corp, see, mustardseedokc.org

MUSTARD SEED DEVELOPMENT CORP.

Time to Nominate for Good Neighbor Awards!

The planning committee has been hard at work preparing the **Fourth Annual Good Neighbor Awards Banquet, set for November 4th** at the elegant Petroleum Club, but we need your help! Please consider nominating your neighbors in the following categories:

Neighborhood of the Year Award will recognize one neighborhood for excellence in making their community a better place to live. This award is given in the current year to recognize past accomplishments in the neighborhood.

Best Neighborhood Newsletter Award will recognize a neighborhood that consistently produces a quality newsletter filled with vital information for their neighborhood residents. Must publish a minimum of 4 newsletters in a year in order to be eligible.

Good Neighbor Award will honor an individual that demonstrates special care, concern and volunteer effort to make their neighborhood safer, more pleasant and a more beautiful neighborhood for all.

Best Neighborhood Project Award will recognize a special project completed in 2009 or 2010. It can be a social event, physical improvement project or an activity aimed at curbing crime. Big and small projects are encouraged to apply for this award.

Community Neighbor Award will recognize the businesses and other organizations, both large and small, that contribute to the improvement and well-being of a neighborhood.

Remember, all nominees will be recognized with a certificate from Neighborhood Alliance. This is a fabulous way of telling your neighbors that you think they are doing a great job and deserve recognition!



2009 Neighborhood of the Year
Jefferson Park

Nominations are due by September 17, 2010.

Nomination forms are available on the web at nacok.org or call our office at 528-6322.

News from the Neighborhoods

Remington NA (NW 150th/Memorial/Portland/Bluff Creek) recently honored neighborhood teens with a feature article in the Remington Exchange highlighting their accomplishments.

Linwood Place NA (NW 23/NW 16/Drexel/I-44) is resurrecting the Trolley Track Run. Set for October 23rd there will be a kids fun run followed by an adult 5K. See Fall Events on page 7 for more details.

Hope Crossing NA (NE 83rd/NE 85th/Kelley/Phillips Ave) has been chosen as a sustainable SITES Initiative Project. As one of 150 projects worldwide, their landscaping will be used to help develop a rating system for green landscape design, construction and maintenance.

Prairie Queen NWA (SW 60/SW 72/Blackwelder/Penn) is taking the fight against graffiti to a new level in their neighborhood. They have purchased a power washer to help residents remove graffiti from their properties and have started a volunteer crew to remove graffiti from fences and elsewhere in the neighborhood where needed.

Musgrave Pennington NA (NW 23/NW 16/Portland/Meridian) made a cash donation to the Regional Food Bank for the benefit of the Saint Johns United Methodist Church food pantry. By donating in this way through the food bank their contribution enabled the purchase of 15% more food than if the neighborhood had purchased the food themselves.



Include Neighborhood Alliance on your distribution list; we learn from your newsletters!

The winner of the quarterly drawing for \$50 is Rose Trobaugh, newsletter editor for Watchful Eyes Neighborhood Association. Send us your newsletter to be entered into the random drawing!

What's your opinion on tornado sirens?

Please log on and take this very brief survey for the City of Oklahoma City:

An Outdoor Warning System, often called "Tornado Sirens," consists of sirens designed to alert citizens of approaching and existing hazardous conditions that could threaten their safety. Oklahoma City is currently reviewing the City's Outdoor Warning System Activation Policy to ensure that all citizens are receiving adequate warning of potentially life threatening conditions. This survey represents an opportunity for you, the citizen, to provide your input into this process.

The 3-minute survey is available from our website: nacok.org.



Non-judicial Conflict Resolution

By Matthew Winton, Attorney

Someone once said, "Conflict represents an opportunity." Many interpret this to mean an opportunity to outsource the resolution to a judge or jury. However, a whole realm of conflict resolution exists short of taking a claim to court. This article discusses some tips and techniques for resolving a dispute before going to court.

Sometimes, a dispute arises regarding the interpretation and/or application of specific governing document provisions. For example, an ambiguity may exist within covenants on whether occupants of a house are members of the homeowners association and therefore able to vote in board elections. Before going to court, the owners within the neighborhood may resolve the issue themselves by amending the covenants to expressly provide for who gets to vote. In the event an amendment is not practical or possible, then the dispute may be sent to court for a declaratory ruling.

Other times, the association or owners have already paid for some form of conflict resolution. For example, if my neighbor has a dog that barks incessantly, a city ordinance may cover such an issue, and I have paid through sales or property taxes for government to assist me.

Speaking of barking dogs, fences, parked cars, and a whole host of other issues, the very first step in any conflict resolution is for the parties directly influencing and influenced by the matter to speak plainly and personally to one another. Recognizing that life happens all the time, circumstances may be explained in this initial conversation. Understanding may be reached that was not apparent before speaking with one another. Simply talking with one another, even after folks have hardened their positions and vilified the other party, has an almost miraculous effect on moving a conflict closer to resolution.

Now come some bulleted tips for conflict resolution:

- Think about the heart of the issue and how the other person might respond to your requests prior to speaking to the person.
- There is a difference between availing yourself of wise counsel and gossip; seek the former and avoid the latter.
- Sometimes involving a neutral third party, such as a mediator, can assist parties in the resolution of their dispute.
- Legal fees and court costs add up. You and your adversary may be able to use those dollars for a resolution rather than seeking recovery of them in court.

I know, "Easier said than done." It may be that your words do not come out the way you wanted or practiced them. It may be that your attempts at settling your dispute with your neighbor aren't met with the same enthusiasm you expected. However, remember that there are no magic words for settling a dispute. As long as you and the other party remain in control of the dispute (i.e., you haven't yet submitted the claim to a court), the parties remain in control of the resolution. And who doesn't like control?

Matthew L. Winton is a founding partner of the Vaughn & Winton law firm. He primarily limits his legal practice to community association law issues. He is admitted to all Oklahoma courts and is a member of the bar in Oklahoma and Texas. This article is one in a continuing series on Oklahoma community association topics. If there is a question you would like to see covered in this column, please feel free to email your question to mlw@vwlaw.net.

Citizens Fire Academy

Registration is open for the **Oklahoma City Fire Department's 15th Citizens Academy**. The series of 3-hour Thursday night classes starts at 6 pm September 9 and ends with graduation October 16. Participants will receive a diploma, group photo, Citizens Academy pin and a CD or video.

The program is designed to give adult participants an inside view of services offered by the **OKC Fire Department**, including:

- fire suppression
- emergency medical assistance
- rescue
- hazardous material response
- fire code enforcement
- training
- investigations
- public safety education

The Citizens Fire Academy is a rare opportunity for OKC residents to learn how their fire department responds when its citizens are in need. Participants will experience several hands-on firefighting techniques. They'll learn how regular firefighters handle a fire hose, get instruction on proper use of a fire extinguisher, and ride with firefighters on actual emergency calls.

Space in the class is limited. For an application, call the OKC Fire Department at 297-3314 or e-mail firechief@okc.gov.



Every nominee for Good Neighbor Awards is recognized with a certificate and announced in the Banquet program.
Show your neighbors you've noticed their hard work and nominate them today!

City Profile: Kristy Yager

Public Information & Marketing Officer

The Action Center – accessible by telephone, e-mail or the Internet, is an easy and dependable means for Oklahoma City residents to convey information to city officials, says OKC Public Information & Marketing Officer Kristy Yager.

“We want people to use the Action Center,” said Yager, whose busy office oversees the Action Center as well as handling numerous other communication responsibilities in today’s high-tech world.

The Action Center can now be accessed through a new iPhone application, SeeClickFix. This tool can help the Action Center make city departments aware of problems quickly.

The city is making maximum use of social media outlets including Facebook and Twitter to inform its residents about city matters.

Yager’s office oversees the Action Center, maintains the city website, handles 60 to 100 news media information requests a month and also oversees the print shop and TV Channel 20. She said it’s important that city government address problems quickly and provide accurate information to its residents.

City news is communicated to the public through the news media and also by the city government website, www.okc.gov and the CityNews Citizen newsletter (mailed with water bills).

Yager is excited about SeeClickFix, which she said can instantaneously bring a problem or situation to the city’s attention. She said officials became aware of the technology about three months ago.

“If anyone sees a pothole, for instance, they can take a picture, state the problem and submit it,” Yager explained. The message comes to the city complete with the photo and a GPS-generated locator map, and can then be routed to the proper city department for a quick response.

Word about SeeClickFix is spreading, and when an OKC television station did a story on the city’s use of it recently, usage went up dramatically.

Yager has served as the city’s primary public relations officer for the past four years and is a 14-year veteran of city government, having previously served as public information officer for the Parks and Recreation Department. She sees this as an exciting time to be in city government because of technology and the growth that is evident throughout the city.

“There is so much growth right now. This is a great city to raise children in,” she said.

So good, in fact, that Yager is optimistic that 3-month-old Alex, the son she and her husband, Patrick, recently adopted, will stay here to work when he grows up.

“I feel like my son has a better chance of staying in Oklahoma City because there is going to be so much opportunity here!”



Alex Yager with the new City Guide

Kristy Yager

Code violations can amount to hefty fines

The City of Oklahoma City has raised its fines for yard parking.

City Council voted in June to up the fine to \$100 for a first offence, or \$125 if the fine isn't paid within 10 days. The change comes after city staff members expressed concern that the \$10 fine on a first offense wasn't enough of a deterrent. Council members have indicated that yard parking is a growing problem in urban neighborhoods and often a sign of a neighborhood in decline. City officials feel confident that the higher fine will create a decline in the number of reported yard parking incidents.

And about Solid Waste Removal...

Be sure Big Blue is at the curb before 6 am on your Collection Day.

You must not put Big Blue on the curb before 7 pm or one hour before sunset, whichever is earlier, the day before pickup.

Big Blue must be taken back from the curb no later than 8 pm the day after collection.

Place Big Blues at least five feet apart, and at least five feet from cars, mailboxes, trees and other obstructions.

Make sure it's within four feet of the curb.

Got items too big for a Big Blue cart? No problem. Set the big junk out for monthly Bulk Waste Day – but, please no earlier than three days before. Early set out makes the neighborhood and our city a mess and violates city ordinance. Fines could be up to \$500. Monthly bulk waste collection days are printed on utility bills and available by calling 297-2833.

The Little Pieces of Your Neighborhood

I am hearing more and more OKC neighborhoods brag about the fact that “young families with kids” are moving into their neighborhoods. I love being invited to the family centered activities that are put on by the many neighborhood associations in the OKC area. **Cleveland Neighborhood Association**’s Easter Egg hunt is always a delight, with over 60 kids hunting for brightly colored eggs while parents visit nearby. **Miller** and many other neighborhoods hold 4th of July bicycle parades, where children decorate bikes and ride them around and around and around (and around again!) much to the delight of parents and neighbors!

National Night Out is a great time to pay attention to the young families in your neighborhood. Plan something special just for the kids. One of my favorite National Night Out memories was several years ago at **Remington HOA**. What seemed like hundreds of kids were playing in the water being sprayed by the OKC Firefighters while coincidentally, yet simultaneously, the police helicopter buzzed them from above. As if it was all orchestrated just for them, the kids yelled into the air, “Do it again, do it again!”

Recently, at our National Night Out kick off party on the steps of City Hall, we were delighted at the number of parents who brought their kids. My favorite was a young boy from **College Hill neighborhood**, holding a cupcake in each hand, chocolate icing all over his face, in complete awe as he followed a fireman out to look at the display of fire trucks. My hope is that he and the other kids in attendance will remember their trip to City Hall as a fun adventure and how much fun it is to be an involved citizen. And that sometimes cupcakes are involved!!!

I fondly remember my young neighbor, Eban, who lived next door to me several years ago. Even at 8 years of age, Eban was a great garden-helper and often spent Saturday mornings with me pulling weeds and planting flowers. One day I told him I wished I knew more Spanish so I could have better conversations with his father who did not speak much English. Eban looked at me with complete seriousness and said, “Oh Spanish is easy. It is so easy I learned it when I was a baby!” Several months later when Eban and his family moved, he came over and said “I am going to miss being your

neighbor.” Tears came to my eyes as I assured him I would miss him as well and told him anyone would be thrilled to have him as a neighbor. I sincerely hope they gave him the chance.



Georgie Rasco
Executive Director

Kids are great additions to your neighborhoods and many neighborhoods are thrilled to see them back in the mix. Welcome them and teach them how to be a good neighbor. Make it comfortable for young families to be part of your association by challenging your associations to do things differently. Figure out how your neighborhood can get involved in your local school. Encourage kids to come to your association meetings and plan activities that include all ages.

Maybe even include cupcakes, fire trucks and police helicopters!!! Okay, so cupcakes are probably plenty!

Possibilities Innovation Program

Creating Community? Possibilities can help.

Achieving connected communities is hard work. Connecting with diverse people is both rewarding and challenging. Many skills are gained through community work and there is always room for growth in managing the complexities of people working together. Possibilities, Inc. is a local nonprofit that offers tools to connect people and transform communities. Just a few examples: tools to gain confidence in public speaking, tools for effective communication during conflict, tools to engage people from all walks of life, and tools to achieve goals with others.

The yearlong Possibilities Innovation Program (PIP), just one of the programs offered by the organization, builds confidence, skills, networking and excitement for community transformation. PIP is for anyone who wants to make a difference in their community. Taking learning beyond just the classroom, participants, aka Community Innovators, practice and apply tools as they learn. Possibilities staff works side by side with Community Innovators to plan and carry out a community project of their choice. The opening retreat is Friday, September 24 through Sunday, September 26.

To learn more, contact 405-525-3131 or minnie@possibilitiesinc.org. You are welcome to join us for the People’s Network dinner on the second Monday of each month from 6-7:30 pm at 621 NW 20th Street in Oklahoma City to find out more about Possibilities and meet some amazing people at work in our communities.



PIP Class of 2009

Neighborhood Home Tours and Events

Linwood Place Home Tour - September 26th, 1 – 5 pm - With beautiful homes, horse-drawn carriages, vintage cars and clothing, and fun party atmosphere, it's a day to remember.

For more information go to: www.linwoodplace.org

Heritage Hills Historic Homes and Gardens Tour - October 9th & 10th, 12 – 5 pm - The tree-lined sidewalks and irreplaceable historic spaces of Heritage Hills offer a quality of life that only comes with age and history. Come along for an inside look at this unrivaled neighborhood in the heart of OKC.

For more information go to: www.heritagehills.org

Plaza District Festival - October 9th, Noon – 10 pm - Features performing and visual arts, interactive art activities and live music. For more information go to: www.plazadistrictfestival.com

Mesta Festa - October 9th, Perle Mesta Park - Live music, food and fun will be available from some great bands and vendors. Enjoy music, soft drinks and adult beverages all afternoon long.

For more information go to: www.mestapark.org

Trolley Track Run - October 23rd, Kid's fun run, 6:30 pm - 5K race, 7:00 pm: Save the date for this kids' fun-run set followed by an adult 5K race. For more information call 948-7295 or email: ktwebb1@cox.net.

Gatewood Home Tour - October 31, 2010, Noon – 5 pm - Get a close-up view of beautiful historic homes in this neighborhood platted in 1922, with homes dating back to the turn of the 20th Century.

For more information go to: www.gatewoodokc.com

Mesta Park Holiday Home Tour - December 4th & 5th - This tour gives you a glimpse into historic living in Oklahoma City. Take a look through five beautiful Mesta Park homes, decorated for the holiday season.

For more information go to: www.mestapark.org

The following neighborhoods received Margaret Annis Boys Trust Grants, Congratulations!

Twin Oaks Homeowners Association - \$6,870 for landscaping along NW 178th Street & North Western Avenue

The Greens Homeowners Association - \$7,000 for the landscaping of frontage along Memorial Road

Linwood Place Neighborhood Association - \$10,280 for the landscaping of medians along NW 19th Street & North Drexel Avenue

For more information about Margaret Annis Boys Trust Grants go to www.occf.org.



We are saddened by the unexpected death of David Bishop, a former Neighborhood Alliance board member and current board member for **Jefferson Park Neighborhood Association**. David died of heart complications in his home on Tuesday, August 10. Many of you will recognize David as the lead bus driver for our Beautification Station Tour on August 7, leading the convoy of 4 Kincaid buses. David was actually the tour and cruise director for **Kincaid Tours** but still liked to drive the occasional bus tour because he loved being surrounded by people. And we used him for tours as often as we could.

A couple of years ago David brought in a special donation and told the poignant story of striking up an afternoon conversation with a homeless man in McDonald's. After talking for a few minutes David confessed to the man that he was supposed to be out making fundraising calls to businesses on behalf of Neighborhood Alliance and that it was the hardest part of his job duties as a board member. The new found friend asked David to tell him more about what the organization did. After he finished, the man reached into his pocket and gave David a \$5.00 bill. David emphatically tried to give it back, but the man begged him to take the donation, saying "I once lived in a great neighborhood and I will again some day. Everyone deserves to have a place to call home. Please take this donation and continue doing what you are doing."

David had a way of bringing out the best in all of us. We will miss him.

2010 - 2011 Board of Directors

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Log on to
wnacok.org
today!

The Neighborhood Alliance
is located at
1236 NW 36th Street
(the southeast corner of
NW 36th and Classen)
405.528.6322



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Upcoming Events

Tuesday, September 7 at 6pm - New Officers Training

Open to anyone who wants to learn more about being a neighborhood officer. Light dinner served.

Neighborhood Alliance Building, 1236 NW 36th Street, OKC.
Reserve your seat at 528-6322.

Tuesday, September 14 -Oklahoma's Night Out

Get your neighborhood together and celebrate! *See page 1 for details.*

Register your event at nacok.org or call our office.
for a paper registration form, 528-6322.

Tuesday, October 5 at 6pm - Organizing Your Neighborhood

This beginners' workshop gives you the tools you need to get your neighborhood organized. Light dinner served.

Neighborhood Alliance Building, 1236 NW 36th Street, OKC.
Call to reserve your seat, 528-6322.

Tuesday, November 4 at 6pm - Good Neighbor Awards Banquet

Downtown Petroleum Club. *See page 3 for details.*

Look for your invitation in the mail and registration online at nacok.org.

See page 7 for this fall's Neighborhood Home Tours.