

VOLLINTINE EVERGREEN

N E W S

A Neighborhood Publication Sponsored by VECA, the Vollintine-Evergreen Community Association

MARCH 2011

Leadership Development Grants for Your Street Transforming Memphis Neighborhoods while Transforming Rhodes

VECA and Rhodes are inviting Vollintine Evergreen residents to develop projects in our neighborhood blocks. We are excited to help support you in your efforts to build community and neighborhood engagement.

What is the name of the program? It is called Transforming Memphis Neighborhoods while Transforming Rhodes proposal for Leadership Development Block Grants

What is the program? A collaboration between VECA and Rhodes College will make funding available for projects at the block level or several blocks.

This is an opportunity for residents to address a particular concern or issue in their section of the VECA neighborhood. Residents should use their imagination and talk to others about what is needed. There are many other possibilities beyond the sample list provided below.

What is required once the grant is made to a group?

- ◆ The group needs to do what it said it would do in the proposal.
- ◆ The residents working on the project are asked to take photographs of their work and come to an event at the VECA Welcome Center at which all of the projects are displayed.
- ◆ Request for funds will be made to the Rhodes Project Manager who is located at the VECA Welcome Center, 1680 Jackson.

How do we apply for funds? The application can be handwritten or typed – an electronic copy is available at veca.org. Hard copies of the application are available at the VECA Welcome Center at 1680 Jackson Avenue.

Is help available in writing the application? Help will be available for any group wanting assistance writing the proposal. A person can come to your street to meet with several people or you can come to the VECA Welcome Center.

Ideas for Funding:

- ◆ Sponsoring Dumpster Day, a multi-street cleanup
- ◆ Trimming and maintaining over-grown trees and shrubs

- ◆ Creating and preserving a public flower garden
- ◆ Working with police to identify crime issues
- ◆ Compiling a street phone list
- ◆ Doing cleanups of the street, sidewalks, and properties – even cleaning out the garages
- ◆ Cleaning vacant houses and lots
- ◆ Boarding vacant houses or paint the boards on vacant houses
- ◆ Sponsoring Neighborhood Watch meetings
- ◆ Improving City services
- ◆ Sponsoring annual block picnics and other social events on the block
- ◆ Supporting National Night Out
- ◆ Installing neighborhood signs to enhance neighborhood identity
- ◆ Planting visible trees and flower gardens
- ◆ Adopting a vacant house or lot – purchase mower or weed eater
- ◆ Planting a community garden on a lot
- ◆ Working on neighborhood crime prevention – leaflet or informational campaign
- ◆ Cleaning up alleys owned by the city
- ◆ Helping an elderly neighbor by cleaning up around the house



For assistance, questions and concerns:

Call 901.276.1782 (VECA)
Call 901.843.3280 (Rhodes)
Go to the VECA Welcome Center, 1680 Jackson
Email: veca@veca.org

Send your application to one of the following:

The Vollintine Evergreen Community Association
Attn: Leadership Development Block Grants,
1680 Jackson Avenue, Memphis, TN 38107

Rhodes College
Attn: Leadership Development Block Grants
2000 North Parkway, 200 Palmer Hall,
Memphis, 38112

Email Attachment to: veca@veca.org
Attn: Leadership Development Block Grants

**The Time to APPLY is NOW!
Let us know how we can help!**

VECA Poster Welcome Center Fundraiser



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Celebrate your historic home with a unique gift idea! Featured will be the historic description of the home along with a photograph of the home. Please allow 30 days to process the order. Three sizes are available: \$15, \$20 and \$25.

The order form is online at veca.org. You may also call the Welcome Center, 901.276.1782 for an order form or email veca@veca.org to request an order form.



Lighting Up the Neighborhood One Street at a Time

By Marci Hendrix and Maura Weber
Does history really repeat itself? Rick Maxwell is hoping so and he is well on his way to finding out. After moving to Sheridan Street between Jackson and Vollintine, one of the first questions his neighbors asked him was, "Did the former homeowners leave the Christmas lollypops?" Now, Maxwell is the one encouraging neighbors to decorate Sheridan Street for the holidays like the days of yore. When he moved to Sheridan three years ago there were few houses decorated with lollypops, and, now, this past December, about 50% of the homes decorated for the holidays.



Maxwell credits the Sheridan block club with the success of getting out the message that connecting with neighbors is important. Maxwell got to know his neighbors through the block club and decided to further the connections by developing an email list. About six months ago, he made a small "sign-up" flier to put on his neighbor's doors. He also decided to expand that list to include Barksdale and Kensington neighbors.

Maxwell uses the mailing list to inform his neighbors about happenings in their small area including lost pets, suspicious activity, holiday activities, and general public service announcements.

One of the fun consequences of starting the email list is that he has been able to encourage the revival of the Christmas lights. This summer, he is hoping to help organize a summer workshop to prepare for the 2011 holiday lights. He is also planning a date for a yard sale for the area, and sure, why not for the entire neighborhood!

When not working on block club activities, Maxwell keeps himself busy restoring and enjoying his two story brick, Tudor Revival along with his partner, Robert. He is an ambassador for the neighborhood and tells everyone that it is Midtown's hidden jewel with wonderful homes and great neighbors.

Who else better to recruit to our VECA Communications and Facebook committee than such an enthusiastic neighbor!? We are excited that Rick Maxwell has jumped in to help us and we look forward to hearing more about his projects.

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Sweep Around Your Own Front Porch: One Neighbor's Story

By Maura Weber and Marci Hendrix

For several generations, Barbara Gavalas and her family have called Brown Street home. She was born in the family home on Brown and is now living in the house that for years her grandmother called home. Tucked away in the northeast corner of the Vollintine Evergreen neighborhood west of Springdale, this section of Brown was once considered tranquil and charming. Like many urban areas, by the 70s the street had deteriorated resulting in several vacant lots. Litter is constant and criminal activity is not uncommon. The street is still vulnerable, but it won't stay that way if Gavalas has her way.

With the heart of an ambassador, Gavalas makes it her duty to get out regularly and talk to neighbors and business owners about sweeping, picking up the litter and instilling neighborhood pride. During the summer she works hard to maintain several vacant lots on the street. Since city-owned lots are mowed infrequently, Barbara takes it upon herself to make sure they are regularly cut even if that means paying for it out of her own pocket.

Ms. Gavalas credits her family for teaching her the importance of being productive and staying involved. Her mom always encouraged her to try different activities and organizations in school. Growing up, she watched her mom and neighbors work together through the neighborhood club. Now, she and her sister, Belinda Kersch, who also lives on Brown, are involved in the Brown Block Club and have been for years. They host clean-ups with the adults and children in the neighborhood and feed them afterwards. They sometimes have spontaneous clean-ups, and always there is food.

Ms. Gavalas truly believes that a clean yard is contagious; and

she sees it catching on. Her long-term hope is that the entrance of Brown and Springdale – the gateway to Brown – will transform into a well-groomed area with businesses and homes that are nice and neat. She is the enthusiastic campaigner for a new mindset for the betterment of the neighborhood. Clean it up, fix it up, and paint it up. In her words, "Who told you we have to be ghetto."



When she isn't tackling issues on Brown Street, Gavalas lends her time to the neighborhood as a whole. She initially got involved with VECA by attending events at the invitation of her brother. When she was nominated to become VECA Board member, she accepted enthusiastically. She works on the VECA Business Committee, the VECA Block Club committee (now known as the Neighborhood Networks committee), and she has partnered with Springdale Baptist Church on neighborhood cleanups.

With summertime cookouts and neighbors out visiting, Brown Street is an enjoyable street to call home, (from the friendly neighbors, to the Cypress School students who walk to and from

school). With Barbara's help, Brown continues to be an even better place. She wants to see a beautification take place and thinks there is no reason why the Brown area can't do what the Cooper-Young business area accomplished. All it takes is a collective community effort. Her next project is to build a community garden in an empty lot adjacent to her house.

While we don't expect any one person to do all that Barbara has done for her neighborhood, she said it well, it's the small things that count. So next time you see some litter in your neighborhood, let's follow Barbara's example and clean it up!



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VECA Annual Meeting Recap

On January 23rd, VECA hosted its first ever Saturday annual meeting. Traditionally held the fourth Monday of January, the VECA board voted to try something new this year and hold the meeting on a Saturday morning. The adjustment was effortless, attendance was higher, and there were many first-time attendees. Best of all, the Saturday morning breakfast spread was lavish and delicious. Thank you all for the wonderful breakfast contributions!

Traditional elements of the meeting remained the same. The VECA committees reported on their activities and goals for 2011. The elections of the 2011 board and the VECA president were conducted. VECA is pleased to announce Dr. Paul Herron's reelection as VECA president for 2011. This is year two of Dr. Herron's term (the VECA president may serve three consecutive, one-year terms).

A special thank you to the delightful staff at St. John Orthodox Church for acting as host in more ways than one. The meeting venue exceeded expectations. The staff at the church helped set up, made coffee, and welcomed the guests. They even helped

clean up. An exceptional treat for attendees following the VECA annual meeting was a tour of the church sanctuary by Fathers John and Nicholas.

Five service awards were presented at the VECA annual meeting.

Bestowed to VECA neighbors who embody the principles of neighborly and community action, the Margaret Dichtel Award was presented to three VECA neighbors.

Barbara Gavalas received the Dichtel Award for her exceptional work at the grassroots level in her neighborhood and for doing fundraising for VECA through memberships and newsletter advertising.

Wayne Stanfill received the Dichtel Award for working on problem properties on Lyndale Avenue and for providing leadership through recruiting residents for cleanups of the vacant lots.

Ann George received the Dichtel Award for her faithful dedication to the Welcome Center by working two mornings a week at the office; for her reliable assistance with sorting and distributing the newsletter; and for helping with various projects such as


windshield surveys and assisting at numerous events.

Bestowed to VECA Board members who have rendered exceptional service to the Board, the Heinemann Award was presented to two VECA Board members.

Chris Floyd received the Heinemann Award for her consistent, thorough, and dedicated work compiling and providing documentation of the board's work through her minutes; for her resilient and devoted leadership to the code enforcement effort; and for her involvement in a myriad of events throughout the years.

Lilly Gilkey received the Heinemann Award for her outstanding work with the block clubs; for planning an excellent health fair last summer; and for her significant contributions to the management and finance of VECA through work on the VECA managing committee.

The VECA annual meeting is a time to join and renew annual membership in the organization. Membership dues help fund projects and events in the neighborhood. There's still time to join your neighbors and Join VECA now. All dues are tax deductible.



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**Scoop the poop
yard signs
are available at
The VECA
Welcome Center.**

VECA Annual Meeting Recap



CyberWatch, a Blue Crush program, provides useful information about public safety and additional ways to communicate with the Memphis Police Department. Within a defined radius of your home, you can get daily reports on reported crimes, location of sex offenders, and outstanding

arrest warrants. Join CyberWatch today. Go to: www.memphispolice.org and sign up by clicking on the CyberWatch logo.



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Protect Yourself and Your Home

By Garnette Stephens

If we can't feel safe in our own homes, where can we feel safe? Being burglarized leaves us feeling like we – and our personal space – have been violated. It's a feeling that does not easily go away. How can we protect ourselves and our homes? First of all, improve your home security, get to know your neighbors, form block clubs and always report crime. Listen to "gut feelings" and call the police if you see anything that doesn't seem right. Another way to protect yourself is to understand the mindset of burglary. Burglars select or target a house based on key factors described below.

Familiarity and convenience:

Burglars tend to commit crimes relatively close to where they live.

Vulnerable houses include:

- ♦ Houses near a ready pool of offenders including large youth populations, drug addicts, and urban, high-crime areas.
- ♦ Previously burglarized houses are up to 4 times more likely to be victims again generally within 6 weeks of initial crime, often due to homeowners replacing stolen items.
- ♦ Houses near burglarized houses as they may be of a similar floor plan with neighbors of similar life styles, with similar possessions, etc.

Occupancy: Most burglars seek entry when residents are away from home. High risk houses include houses:

- ♦ With accumulated mail and newspapers and no lights on inside house which are indicators of absentee residents (vacation, etc).
- ♦ Routinely vacant during the day. Houses that appear occupied during the day with activity, vehicle in drive, audible noise from within, and lights on are less likely to be burglarized. Even houses near homes occupied during the day are less likely to be burglarized.
- ♦ In areas with lots of rental properties, as residents may move frequently and may not readily form well-established social networks.
- ♦ Without dogs as most burglars avoid houses with dogs as they either make too much noise or may pose a physical threat.

Visibility: Burglars consider the risk of being seen and select houses accordingly. Vulnerable houses include:

- ♦ Houses with cover, including dense shrubs near doors and windows, privacy fences, and latticed or setback porches.
- ♦ Houses with poor lighting. While burglaries are more likely during the day than at night, inadequate lighting helps an offender go unseen.

Vulnerability or Security: How easy is it for a burglar to enter? In about two-thirds of reported U.S. burglaries, the offenders used forced entry. In the other third, they entered through unlocked or opened windows and doors. Accessibility opportunities include houses:

- ♦ With weakened entry points. Poor building materials or older houses with rusting hinges or locks, worn or decaying door and window frames may make a house more vulnerable to burglary.
- ♦ Next to alleys. Alleys provide distance between neighbors, facilitate access to the back of houses, and provide an escape route from customary street and foot traffic.
- ♦ With side and back doors which are the most common entry points.
- ♦ Burglars are more likely to avoid a house with visible signs of security as

wrought iron doors or window guards, dead bolts, window locks, beware of dog sign, monitored alarm sign, locks on gates, etc.

Potential Rewards. There would be few burglaries if it was not profitable.

- ♦ Burglars look for signs of wealth including the size and condition of a house and the type of cars in the drive, all of which are indicators of the value of a house's contents.
- ♦ Cash, jewelry, weapons, electronics, and prescription drugs are items of choice.
- ♦ Burglars most often dispose of stolen items within 24 hours, selling them to either a pawnshop or a stranger or occasionally trading the items for drugs

Always report a burglary which helps the Memphis Police Department establish a pattern of burglaries. Call 911 for a burglary in progress or to file a report, call 901-545-COPS (2677).

Safety and Security Committee Meeting Topic: Safety for Children

Tuesday, March 22, 5:30-6:45 PM
VECA Welcome Center, 1680 Jackson Ave



The United Way campaign allows you to donate directly to VECA!

United Way donations are used by many nonprofit organizations and is a great opportunity for you to give to your neighborhood! **To Donate to VECA:** use the back of the yellow sheet of the United Way form. The bottom of Item 3 has the following statement: "You may also support another health and human services organization in the United Way of the Mid-South service area." **Enter VECA or Vollintine Evergreen as the agency name and the amount.** Please contact VECA at 901.276.1782 or veca@veca.org for any questions or to let us know about your contribution!

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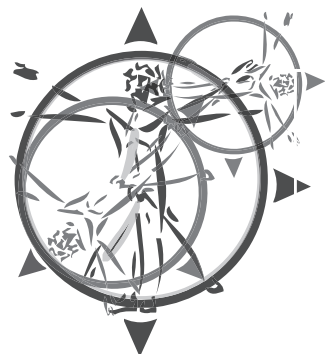
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Help Maintain the V&E Greenline

This past year has been another good one for the V&E Greenline. The V&E Greenline is a 1.7 mile linear community park that was formerly an abandoned railroad track and is now owned by the neighborhood. It has never looked better. During the year, volunteers planted trees, mowed the roadbed, did landscaping, improved the drainage, and managed contractors that did additional trail maintenance.

Even though much upkeep for the V&E Greenline is provided by a group of dedicated neighborhood volunteers, there are ongoing expenses such as equipment repair, paying property taxes, servicing the tractor and mowers, and paying for fuel.

An unprecedented number of people are using the V&E Greenline as a place to walk, run, bike, and walk their dogs. VECA has healthier and happier residents because they are using the Greenline for exercise.

In the month of March, you will see signs at the entrances to the Greenline, reminding you "Upkeep Costs Money – March Is Contribution Month." Please support this beautiful neighborhood amenity by mailing a tax-deductible donation to the V&E Greenline (c/o VECA Welcome Center, 1680 Jackson, 38107).

No amount is too small. Thank you for your support.



Junk Cars Are an Eyesore!

Article By: VECA Neighborhood Preservation Committee
Abandoned and junk cars pose an eyesore for neighbors. They also provide a breeding place for vermin and are an attractive yet dangerous place for children to play. An abandoned vehicle is any vehicle that is wrecked or partially dismantled or inoperable for more than 10 consecutive days.

Do you want to get rid of a junk car? Contact an auto salvage yard or consider donating the vehicle to a charity.

Additional violations relating to vehicles:

- Please refrain from parking any vehicle on the lawn. Vehicles must be parked on concrete, asphalt or other approved hard surface.
- The number of vehicles parked at a dwelling shall not exceed more than 4 vehicles in a 10 day period of time.

Please report violations to the Mayor's Citywide Call Center at 901.576.6500. Reports can also be filed through the Online Support Center at memphistn.gov.

Online Support Center:

https://ebusiness.memphistn.gov/OA_HTML/jtflogin.jsp



Newsletter Corrections: In the January 2011 article about V&E Greenline improvements, we noted that the standing water that needed fixed was 2 feet high. We want to clarify that it was actually 2 inches of standing water (considerably less, but a problem nonetheless). Even more, we regret misspelling the name of our faithful contributor, Jeff Hulett. We are happy to point out our mistakes and apologize for these errors.

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Don't Monkey Around: It's Time to Trim Your Monkey Grass

Excerpts used with permission (sugarcreekgardens.wordpress.com)

Monkey grass is also known as Lily Turf or Liriope Grass and is pronounced (lir-RYE-oh-pee). Liriope is a tough groundcover plant.

It survives in full sun or deep shade, wet or bone dry conditions. It will stop erosion on even the steepest hillsides. It will spread and fill in quickly. Weeds don't stand a chance in the thick mass of solid Liriope.

There are two types or species of Liriope Grass. The spreading type, Liriope spicata, that when planted in direct sunlight will spread and smother everything in its path that's not substantially larger than it – like a tree. Liriope spicata planted in part sun or shade will spread at a slower rate.



Type two is Liriope muscari which is the "clumping" kind that does not spread by runners and basically stays where you put it. It blooms purple and it shares all the good qualities of the spreading kind – incredible toughness and adaptability, without the invasive behavior. There are lots of great varieties of Liriope muscari.

Regardless of which variety you have, it's time to trim it. Liriope can be cut by hand, weed whacked or mowed. Liriope stays evergreen all winter, but looks tattered in the spring. If you look closely, you will see the new growth shooting up. Cutting back the old growth will allow the new growth to freshen things up.

VECA Annual Membership Form - Become a Member

Join your neighbors in helping Vollintine Evergreen be the great neighborhood it is! Dues are tax deductible.

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Be one of the following types of team members:

Member \$20 ▪ Neighbor \$30 ▪ Supporter \$50 ▪ Leader \$100 ▪ Champion \$500 ▪ Benefactor \$1000

\$30 or more: Historic Plaque _____ or Poster _____ or Notecards _____ or Bumper Sticker _____



VECA: Vollintine-Evergreen Community Association—Contacts

VECA is a neighborhood organization made up of volunteers and paying members. The newsletter, VECA email, the annual meeting, and committee activities are the ways in which VECA communicates with its residents, businesses, and other stakeholders. The VECA area is bounded by Watkins on the West, Cypress Creek on the North, Springdale on the East, and North Parkway on the South.

901.276.1782 Fax: 901.276.1784 1680 Jackson Ave
Email: veca@veca.org Website and Calendar: veca.org

VECA Housing: Chuck Fox V&E Greenline: Len Cobb
Lick Creek: Mary Wilder VECA Businesses Committee: TBA
Historic Committee: Cathy Marcinko Safety and Security: Garnette Stephens
Communications Committee: Marci Hendrix
Neighborhood Preservation Committee: Chris Floyd
Neighborhood Network Committee: Gloria Singleton
VECA Board and Fundraising: Paul Herron

Rites to play - Community Carnival

Saturday, April 9, Noon-3pm

Rhodes College

Free and open to the public. Hot dogs, cotton candy, snow cones, and other carnival favorites will be available. There will be music, face painting, a moon bounce, a dunk tank, games, free books distributed by the Rhodes student organization First Book, and more!

Rites to Play is open to all ages, though it is geared towards elementary school ages. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Call 901.843.3498 to RSVP and for questions.