

VOLLINTINE EVERGREEN

N E W S

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

JULY / AUGUST 2012

Fire Stations: The Next Damsels in Distress?

By Lee Harris, Memphis City Council

A few short weeks ago, I learned about cuts to fire services across the city, cuts that would have a direct impact on communities in North Memphis and the Downtown core. Since that time, I have been one of the major critics of these cuts. However, long before I joined the Council, the plan to "realign" (as the cuts have been called) Fire Services was already out of the gate. As I understand it, the process to realign and cut Fire Services began at least a couple of years ago, prior to my arrival on the City Council. Nonetheless, I have fought hard to stop the realignment from affecting our neighborhoods or at least to slow the process down. I have visited several of the affected fire stations. I have talked at length with firefighters at Station 28 (1510 Chelsea Avenue), Station 19 (2248 Chelsea Avenue), and Station 11 (1826 Union Avenue). I called for a special City Council meeting to discuss the realignment. I also scheduled time for the Council to discuss restoring funding to the libraries that were slated to close.

At that meeting, the Council approved a plan to restore funding to the libraries. When the discussion turned to Fire Services, the director of Fire Services assured me and the rest of the Council that public safety would not be compromised by these changes. As the plan had been in place for a couple of years, no changes were made by the Council. However, I was still worried about this realignment process. My next move was to try to restore funding for Fire Services in the budget. My hope was that if I restored money in the budget for Fire Services, we could at least save the ladder truck at Station 28 on Chelsea. I talked with the Mayor's Chief Financial Officer, Roland McElrath, to figure out how much money we would need to fund that ladder truck. I then worked with Councilwoman Fullilove, among other members of the Council, on a proposal to restore \$150,000 in funding to Fire Services so that Station 28 could keep its ladder truck in service. That proposal that I drafted to restore \$150,000 to Fire Services to maintain that ladder truck was amended at a Council meeting and, ultimately, it was unsuccessful.

Again, I am against the Fire Services cuts that affect North Memphis and the Downtown core. After pretty extensive investigation, I am not convinced these service cuts are the right move for the city and I have worked hard to try to slow down these cuts. The communities in these areas have a high number of historic homes that can create a real fire hazard in the case of an emergency. These communities are dense, with homes built closer together, which means that a fire can spread quickly from home to home. Our communities also have a high number of elderly residents who rely on fire services. For these reasons, I think we need fully equipped fire stations and I will continue to do what I can.

Lee Harris

Memphis City Council—North Memphis, Frayser, Uptown & Mud Island
www.leeharrisformemphis.com

Family Dollar Set to Open in August

By Jeff Hulett

Family Dollar construction is in full swing on Jackson Avenue and I know lots of people are wondering what to make of this addition to our neighborhood. I reached out to Josh Braverman, communications director at Family Dollar, and asked him some questions.

What can Vollintine Evergreen neighbors expect from the new store? Our store on Jackson Avenue will be something that the neighborhood can be proud of. As a company, Family Dollar has been working hard to provide our customers with a compelling shopping experience. We have increased our assortment of the name brands people trust as well as improved the quality and selection of our private brand. We offer more of what our customers need, in a clean, welcoming and engaging shopping environment.

What will the new store look like? Will the look and feel blend with the neighborhood? We do our best to ensure that the store fits in to the community.

Do you plan on joining the VECA neighborhood association? Typically we do not join local associations, chambers of commerce or other similar organizations. However, we are open to the possibility if necessary to being a good community partner.

What is the timeline going forward – e.g., projected dates for hiring, opening, etc.? The store is slated to open in early August. Interested people who would like to apply can go to www.familydollar.com and click on "careers."

What are the basics about the company – footprint, why they choose locations like this, their vision and how they serve the neighborhood? Our stores average 7,000 square feet. We have 7,200 stores in 45 states. We put our stores in the neighborhoods where our customers live. Our vision is to be the best small-format value and convenience retailer serving the needs of our customers in the neighborhoods in which we operate. Our corporate giving program is based on a grassroots philosophy as we mostly give to the organizations that help to meet customers' needs right in their neighborhoods.

What will they sell and who do they market to – what's the product mix and typical customer? Family Dollar is a mass market retailer. We sell the same food and household cleaning supplies you'll find at your grocery store; we just price them lower. We've got a growing selection of food from dry cereal to pasta and pasta sauces to refrigerated dairy and frozen entrees. We also carry health and beauty aids, apparel, seasonal items, and household goods.

Thank you, Rhodes Plough Grant Community Development Staff!

By Werner Viser

These past two years working with the Rhodes-Plough Transforming Communities Grant in the Midtown North and VECA neighborhoods has been a whirlwind. I have learned more than I ever thought possible and have made invaluable connections and relationships that I hope will last for many years. I would be lying if I said that my time here has not had bumps in the road, but I can honestly say those bumps have taught me more than I could have ever thought possible; I would not trade them for all the smooth sailing you could wish for.

An invaluable lesson I have learned over my tenure with the grant is that communication is key. I thought I understood this, but what I didn't realize is that you can never go too far in reaching out, asking questions, and making sure everyone's voice is in the discussion. We all have the right for our opinion to be heard, and, more important, be taken into serious consideration. Allowing someone's voice to be heard – simply listening – can be extremely powerful for everyone.

I became part of a group of extremely passionate people who have more knowledge and experience than I could have ever imagined. I learned very quickly that I needed to be a sponge, to soak up all of this information and use it to the best of my ability. Nothing is too small. Everyone's experiences are their own, and I would be nowhere without the community members and their advice that have led me along the way. No matter how out of left field a phone call or question might have seemed, there was always someone around who had experienced the situation firsthand.

Since the last Plough update, many new grants are flourishing. The V&E Greenline has launched a sustainability grant under which they will encourage more charitable giving for the V&E Greenline. Two

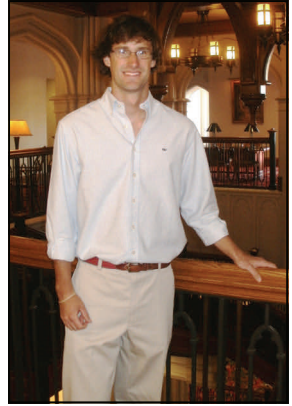


efforts have begun in VECA to support cleanups and the boarding of vacant houses. These initiatives will reduce crime and illegal activity and continue to make the neighborhood a beautiful and healthy place for everyone. The Barksdale block club began a pilot project to install security cameras on that street to cut down on crime. The VECA Lick Creek Committee has been working hard with a sub-grant to buy tools and equipment to help keep the creek clean and reduce flooding.

As I head off to graduate school, my hope is that the Plough grant will continue to blossom during its last year. It has been a pleasure to get to know each and every one of you. Thank you for everything you have given me during these past two years. It has been a journey that I won't forget.

By Michael Castellarin

Having spent the past eight months working for Rhodes and the Vollintine Evergreen Community Association, I think it's necessary that I take some time to reflect on my experiences with VECA and share my perspective on why this neighborhood is a unique and beautiful place. It's been said that the population within the VECA boundaries is in many ways reflective of the population of the entire city of Memphis. Like the city as a whole, VECA supports a mixed-race and mixed-income population, therefore defining itself by doing what most neighborhoods cannot. It's this diversity that gives both VECA and Memphis their character.



On the corkboard in the main room of the Welcome Center, I try to pin up things that celebrate this character and the people that make VECA what it is. It's no coincidence that there is a growl towel hanging under a poster of Martin Luther King Jr. These two things, in my eyes, powerfully capture the spirit of the neighborhood and the values that the community association represents. Whether you're a fan or not, there is no denying the

Werner Viser and Michael Castellarin are Rhodes staff members working for Midtown North and VECA through the Plough Grant. As VECA wishes them both well in their graduate degree education, VECA welcomes Adam Alsamadisi and Phylicia Douglas, who will be the support team for this last year of the Plough Grant.

Don't Miss out:

Apply for Plough Funding for Your Street

The Plough Grant began in 2010 and will conclude in May 2013. Plough Grants usually range from \$250-\$1000. Proposal forms can be found on the VECA website (veca.org). For information, call 901.276.1782 (VECA) or 901.843.3226 (Rhodes).

power of the "Believe Memphis" slogan and the solidarity it can instill in the city. This, along with MLK's legacy and its dramatic relevance to our city and neighborhood, combine to form a powerful reminder of the community VECA represents and all that the neighborhood association has accomplished since 1971.

When I attend a VECA board meeting or sit down with a neighborhood committee, I feel a tremendous sense of pride in being associated with the people sitting around the table. The diversity of the group and the sense that everyone feels empowered to offer an opinion or work toward a change is proof of how far we have come and how successful the neighborhood association is at creating

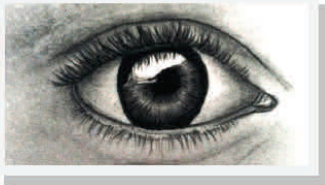
community and promoting the interests of residents.

Over the past months, I've been fortunate enough to play a role in projects such as our first annual V&E Art Walk, an event that highlighted the assets of our neighborhood and raised funds to promote the sustainability of our V&E Greenline. Through the Plough grant, we've worked to strengthen the relationship between Rhodes and the surrounding area while providing funding for a wide variety of projects. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to be a part of this organization and will take away many valuable lessons as I move ahead. I'm thankful to have had the chance to get to know everyone over the past year and hope that I have served VECA well. I will forever be inspired by those that I've met and the experiences I've had along the way.

Jared Powelson, O.D.

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VECA Resident Helps Local Businesses 'Get Green'

By John Paul Shaffer

When Madeleine Edwards read an article four years ago about the local sustainable restaurant initiative Project Green Fork, she was inspired to start Get Green Recycleworks to provide what had been unavailable until then in Memphis: recycling services for businesses. This Midtown native with lifelong ties to VECA (she attended Snowden and is a graduate of Rhodes) began collecting recyclables, later adding compost, from restaurants and businesses around the community. What started as a one-woman operation now employs two additional recycling collectors and offers businesses a flexible, affordable way to achieve their green goals.

Many of Edwards's first clients were restaurants seeking certification from Project Green Fork, many of which didn't have the staff or time to haul pounds and pounds of recyclable waste to collection sites every week.



Edwards works with each business to come up with a customized collection schedule, and she provides bins for recyclables and compostable waste. Glass, plastics, metals, and cardboard are sold directly to recycling centers, and compostables are delivered to local community gardens and urban farms. Edwards says that diverting recyclables and other waste from dumpsters often saves businesses money on garbage collection fees.

Get Green Recycleworks has grown as a bare-bones operation, without advertising other than the website and word of mouth. Edwards says most businesses seek out her services on their own because they are dedicated to recycling, and because being green is simply good PR.

Edwards, who has a background in newspaper journalism, has lived on Snowden with her family for the past 14 years, and she loves the cohesion of the VECA neighborhood. When she isn't busy recycling, she enjoys playing racquetball, hanging out in the neighborhood, and just relaxing.

Get Green Recycleworks is Madeleine Edwards, Billy Simpson, and Taylor Bernard. For more information on how they can help your business get greener, visit them on the web at www.getgreenrecyclesworks.com or 901-355-0646.

Volunteer Highlight

By Elise Hastings

Kent Overturf has been a VECA community member for the last 10 years, and he's been a valuable asset to the neighborhood and the preservation of its green spaces. There's a good chance you've seen him around the V&E Greenline, working in gardens or planting trees. He has taken care of the plants on the Greenline where it crosses North Auburndale Street,

and he has also worked on the gardens near Idlewild.

Kent had heard about the Vollintine Evergreen Community Association before he moved into the neighborhood and knew he wanted to get involved. Concerned about lessening the carbon footprint and assisting with the planting of trees, he attended Greenline meetings and started working.

In addition to his green thumb, Kent also has a musical flair. He holds a master's degree in music from the University of Memphis and has played the viola part time with the Memphis Symphony Orchestra for 23 years. The VECA community greatly benefits from the help of volunteers such as Kent who help keep our neighborhood clean and green.



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MEMPHIS CITY BEAUTIFUL Memphis City Beautiful recently recognized VECA and Dr. Michael Kirby with the Clean City Hero designation in appreciation for outstanding environmental and beautification efforts which have contributed to the enhancement of the City of Memphis.




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Join us each month as we partner with VECA to serve our neighborhood and make it a cleaner, nicer place to call home (all tools and resources supplied – just show up at the VECA Welcome Center 2nd Sat each month @ 9:30am).

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How It's Made: AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC)

By Lacey Kerfoot, AmeriCorps NCCC Corps Members — Delta 5

Some may be familiar with the television show *How It's Made*, a documentary program that shows from start to end how common, everyday items are manufactured. Some may also be familiar with AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), a federally funded program through the Corporation for National and Community Service. Two AmeriCorps teams have worked with VECA since the end of March 2012.



While residents have seen us at work in their communities, can recognize our khaki and gray uniforms, and can probably place our accents as from *somewhere not around here*, they may not know what AmeriCorps NCCC really is or what we do.

What is AmeriCorps NCCC? What happens between the time an applicant hits "Submit" on the application and when an AmeriCorps NCCC team arrives ready and eager to work in your community? What type of work do AmeriCorps NCCC teams do? What benefits do the members receive?

What is AmeriCorps NCCC? AmeriCorps NCCC is a 10-month full-time, residential program for men and women ages 18-24 who are organized into teams of 10-12 members. AmeriCorps NCCC teams serve in five regions of the United States, based out of five regional campuses located in Sacramento, CA; Denver, CO; Perry Point, MD; Vinton, IO; and Vicksburg, MS.

What is the application process like? AmeriCorps NCCC hopefuls complete an application in many ways similar to an employment application. After it has been sent, applicants must submit fingerprints and pass both a medical and legal clearance process. If everything goes without a hiccup, the applicants go through in a clearance screening, where they respond to questions about their willingness to serve. Once cleared to serve, the applications enter a pool from which members are chosen for a term of service. Applicants are finally notified of their acceptance and are assigned to a

(continued on page 5)

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Continued From Page 4: How It's Made: AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC)

regional campus, sometimes months in advance, but occasionally just days before the program starts.

What type of training do members receive? After new Corps members arrive at their regional campus (in Delta 5's case, in Vicksburg, MS) and settle into their rooms, they begin the month-long process known as the Corps Training Institute (CTI). During CTI, Corps members receive CPR/First Aid and Shelter Management training through the local branch of the American Red Cross. They also receive extensive diversity training

that introduces and discusses issues like race, sex, gender, socioeconomic differences, physical and mental disabilities, and language barriers. All Corps members receive basic tool training and some are given the opportunity to be certified as sawyers (certified to work with chainsaws).

Every time members return to campus between their service rounds, they participate in transitional training, which allows them to reflect on the skills they have learned and apply them to their life after AmeriCorps. Corps members receive training in résumé writing, applying to jobs and colleges, and if needed, assistance in acquiring their GEDs.

All you ever wanted to know about AmeriCorps projects. The Southern Region Campus in Vicksburg assigns teams to service projects lasting 3-8 weeks, to help communities meet their most compelling needs. AmeriCorps NCCC teams work in communities on disaster services, environmental stewardship, energy conservation, urban and rural development, and infrastructure improvement. NCCC members respond to disasters, build and repair homes, develop trails in state and national parks, mentor children and youth, oversee emergency shelters, organize donations of food, clothing and other materials, lead volunteers and meet many other needs identified by communities.

Teams are available to serve national, community, and faith-based non-profit organizations; municipal and state governments; federal agencies and programs; city, state, and national parks; Native American communities; and schools throughout the United States.

What benefits do AmeriCorps NCCC members receive? While in the program, AmeriCorps NCCC members receive limited health insurance, room and board, meals, and transportation. While Corps members do not receive a paycheck, they do receive a living stipend to help cover the cost of toiletries and incidentals. During their service, AmeriCorps members are also eligible to receive student loan forbearance or deferment.


After their term, if Corps members meet all service requirements, they receive the Segal Education Award (equal to the federal Pell grant) that can be used towards school expenses or to pay off student loans. For the winter 2012 term, the Segal Education Award was \$5,550.



Hello from Delta 5, your current AmeriCorps NCCC team – Delta 5 is serving in Memphis; we are working with a number of sponsor organizations in the area. Mainly we work with the Vollintine Evergreen Community Association (VECA) on the V&E Greenline, as well as in various community gardens and completing upkeep on VECA properties. We also work with First Congregational Church, helping with various maintenance tasks and working on their green parking lot. The project includes removing a section of parking lot asphalt along the sanctuary. First Congo plans to plant trees to help shade the sanctuary and parking lot. Delta 5 has also collaborated with the Memphis Center for Independent Living, helping them with their Italian Festival fundraiser. The team is also set to assist the Memphis Heritage Center with their Adopt-a-Door fundraiser.

Interested? If you are interested in learning more about AmeriCorps NCCC or any other AmeriCorps programs, please check out the AmeriCorps website – www.americorps.gov. If you have questions concerning Memphis's Delta 5 team, please contact me at LKerfoot@yahoo.com. If you are interested in learning more about how to sponsor an AmeriCorps NCCC team (ie, VECA is a team sponsor), please contact April Bazzi at abazzi@cns.gov or by phone at 601-630-4045. If you see us in your community, come over and say hello!

The housing for the AmeriCorps team must be provided by the local sponsor. VECA is very grateful to the Plough Foundation, which through Rhodes is funding housing for the teams at First Congregational Church's Pilgrim House.



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JOEY HAGAN, AIA

Rainbow Connection

By Marci Hendrix

Calls to action come in different forms. For VECA neighbor Susan Fagan, the call to rally the neighborhood troops came in 2007 following a skirmish with a petty thief. Enough was enough; it was time for the neighbors to reconnect.

Fagan had been here before and knew what to do. It was the late 1970s when Fagan, her husband, Tom, and 9-month old son moved to VECA from Illinois. In those early days of raising their growing family of three (Shannon, Lance and Colleen), they dealt with a stolen air conditioner, a stolen car and gasoline being siphoned from their car. The kicker was in 1989 when their home was burglarized and ransacked. Looking for direction, she attended a VECA meeting at Little Flower Church and met a Neighborhood Watch coordinator who invited her to get involved in the program. Fagan assembled and distributed a neighborhood directory for the purpose of connecting with neighbors; the effort went strong for about two years before it began to fizzle after their last directory update around 1992.

Over the years Fagan's devotion to the neighborhood has never wavered. She wants her neighborhood to flourish and can't see herself living anywhere else. This determination helped her get back out in 2007 and knock on her neighbors' doors to talk about reclaiming their space.

Fagan's primary tool of choice for fighting crime is a directory for Rainbow Drive, Monticello Drive and nearby areas on McLean Boulevard. The purpose of the directory is to connect and protect the neighbors. Neighbors alert each other when there is crime or suspicious activity. The neighbors guard the personal information in the directory, such as email and phone numbers, and they agree to keep the directory confidential. When new neighbors move in, Fagan visits them and asks their permission to include them in the next update. She finds she gets the best response when she actually knocks on doors and introduces herself.

Keeping connected and working together has helped the neighbors bond – and more. They now wave to each other; they recommend service providers; they show an interest in one another's lives. Trust is being built. They know how to contact neighbors in times of emergency, such as a recent fire.

Fagan credits all of the neighbors for watching out for the area. She especially credits neighbors William Hanley, who walks the neighborhood with his dogs, and Keith Perry, who keeps a watchful eye out.

Would you like your block to be as connected? It's very simple but requires some footwork. The simplest

way is to go door to door gathering email addresses and phone numbers, introducing yourself, and telling each resident what you are trying to achieve. Once you have gathered those addresses, you can email everyone and let them know all of you are now connected. If you need help in creating your block network, please email: Rick Maxwell, VECA Safety and Security Committee, at jmrxrayteck@gmail.com.



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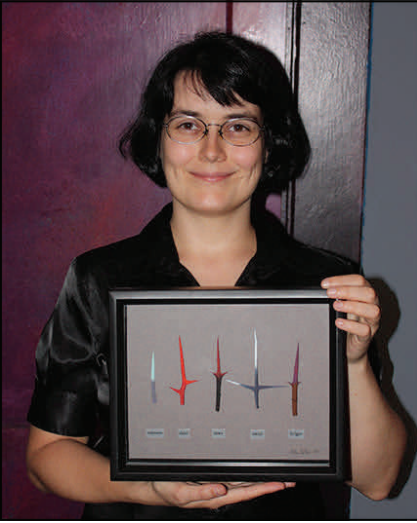
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Nikka Valken: A V&E Artist to Watch

By Elise Hastings

The V&E Art Walk was a landmark event for the entire Vollintine Evergreen community. It included emerging artists such as Nikka Valken, who were given the chance to commercialize their work. Nikka has been a VECA resident for 16 years. She attended Memphis College of Art, and she is getting her footing in the artist world. Having the opportunity to display and sell her pieces was great publicity and a means for her to connect with other Memphis-area artists.



The Art Walk, which was planned by the V&E Greenline committee, took place Saturday, April 21, along the Greenline, with art vendors, food, music, and over 1000 attendees. With our close proximity to the Memphis College of Art, the Brooks Museum, and various galleries,

VECA has a growing art scene. Nikka heard about this event from a neighbor, and decided it was the perfect occasion to highlight her work for the first time.

Nikka works in combined mixed media and sculpture. She likes to keep her materials a mystery but says she wishes to "convey a lot through complexity of the color." The end result is a fascinating combination of organic form and complementary colors. As a result of her participation in the V&E Art Walk, Nikka learned how to publicize her work and was encouraged to get involved in future art fairs, like the upcoming Cooper Young festival in September.

The exciting opportunity to gain immediate feedback was beneficial to Nikka and all of the artists. "I thought the Art Walk was very successful, and I hope it happens yearly," she says.

Pedestrian safety on the V&E Greenline

By John Paul Shaffer

Now that the warm months are here, the 1.7 miles of the V&E Greenline are bustling with activity. This neighborhood asset offers the perfect location for exercising, dog walking, and many other outdoor activities. For the many users of the V&E Greenline, it is important to keep safety in mind, especially when crossing any of the numerous roadways that intersect the Greenline.

At mid-block crosswalks and intersections with or without stop signs, pedestrians do have the right of way, provided no cars are imminently approaching. However, not all drivers are aware of this rule of the road. Pedestrians should always stop and look both ways for approaching vehicles before proceeding across any roadway. Cyclists using the Greenline should stop at intersections as well, and must yield to automobiles on cross streets.

Wearing bright colors and carrying or wearing lights can help increase a pedestrian's visibility to motorists. Clip-on lights for pedestrians, runners, and cyclists are available from most local outdoor stores and bicycle shops, as well as numerous online retailers.

For more information on walking or bicycling in Memphis, or to contact the city's Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, you can visit www.bikepedmemphis.com.



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VECA Strategic Plan and the Ice Cream Social

The neighborhood came together on Sunday, June 24 to enjoy ice cream, wading pools for the children, and to hear about the VECA Strategic Plan. After a year-long planning initiative, here are the overall themes of the plan:

- ♦ Connecting neighbors to neighbors
- ♦ Welcoming new people to the neighborhood
- ♦ Developing activities for our youth
- ♦ Developing and marketing a consistent VECA identity
- ♦ Partnering with other organizations

VECA wants to connect with neighbors in hopes of making our neighborhood a better place to call home. And we believe that connections are made when people support block clubs and have the opportunity for their voices and ideas to be heard.

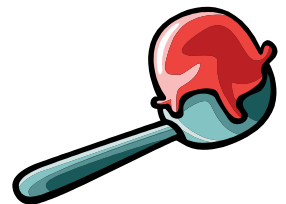
We also believe it's important to engage young people, for they are the future of what will become of our historic district. They can help with clean-ups, newsletter distribution and more. They can also encourage others to take pride in their neighborhood by becoming vibrant leaders.

It's time to encourage our youth and area schools by offering field trips to the V&E Greenline and providing opportunities for students to fulfill their service credit requirements.

VECA wants to work with neighbors, the city and the county to improve and maintain properties in the neighborhood and help our businesses thrive.

This is just the beginning and we look forward to working with you! No idea is too crazy, so dream big and help us make our neighborhood even better!

**We are VECA!
You are VECA!
VECA is us together!**



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

VECA is a neighborhood organization made up of volunteers and paying members. The newsletter, VECA email, annual meeting, and committee activities are 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.

VECA Housing: Chuck Fox
Lick Creek: Mary Wilder
Historic: Cathy Marcinko
Communications: Jeff Hulett

Newsletter Co-Editors: Marci Hendrix
Chris Tague
Neighborhood Network: Gloria Singleton
Email: veca@veca.org

V&E Greenline: Megan Wilkins Reynolds
VECA Businesses: Sarah Beth Larson
Safety and Security: Jill Williams and
Rick Maxwell

Neighborhood Preservation: Chris Floyd
VECA Board and Fundraising: Paul Herron
Website/Calendar: veca.org
1680 Jackson Ave, 901.276.1782

Newsletter Deadlines for the Sept/Oct Issue

The V&E News is printed bimonthly
Article submissions needed by August 1
Advertising copy needed by August 1
Advertising: \$150 annually; \$50 one-time ads
Please send submissions and questions to news@veca.org

CyberWatch, provides useful information about public safety and additional ways for the public to communicate with police. CyberWatch allows users to select a reporting radius based on either an address or an intersection, and receive a CyberWatch report via daily email.
<https://kiosk.memphispolice.org/cyberwatch/>

