

VOLLINTINE EVERGREEN

N E W S

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

MARCH / APRIL 2013

VECA.ORG

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Contribute to Your Neighborhood Greenline

By Megan Wilkins Reynolds and the V&E Greenline committee

Those of you not new to this wonderful neighborhood are probably aware of the history of the V&E Greenline. For those who are not, it's worth mentioning that our own Greenline, a natural walking, jogging and biking path that stretches from near Watkins Street to Springdale Street, was the first of its kind in the Memphis area. It was started by a group of motivated VECA neighbors and has since been maintained by many of these same neighbors.

Over the years, the Greenline has grown in beauty and scope. It has been recognized for excellence by Rails to Trails, the most prestigious organization in the field. In the last year alone, the Greenline committee, AmeriCorps, and volunteers renovated the Greenline gardens, maintained the Big Kids sculptures, hosted the first annual V&E Artwalk, and mowed, trimmed and cleared the VE Greenline throughout the year. These activities and many others were supported solely by volunteerism and financial contributions from Vollintine Evergreen neighbors just like you. What an amazing feat! Our V&E Greenline does not receive *any* city, county, or federal funding.

Upkeep costs money. In 2013, the Greenline will not have AmeriCorps support, so community contributions are even more important. Additionally, the Greenline committee plans to focus on three costly capital projects that are much needed: repairs to the Lick Creek bridge, foundation support and repair for the stationhouse, and repairing the center of the trail bed, eroded by regular joggers and walkers.

March is our annual month to solicit contributions for the V&E Greenline. Whether or not you are a regular user I urge you to consider supporting this wonderful community resource through a tax-deductible donation. Keep an eye out for more information about our March contribution campaign. Contributions can be made via mail (checks payable to V&E Greenline, sent to V&E Greenline, 1680 Jackson Ave., Memphis, TN 38107) or online through PayPal at VEGreenline.org. Those interested in volunteering time, labor, and materials, please contact the Greenline at VEGreenline@gmail.com.



**Saturday, April 20, 2013
11:30 am—6:00 pm
1625 Tutwiler Ave**

Rain Date: Sunday, April 21, Noon-6 pm

The second annual V&E Artwalk will raise money and awareness for the V&E Greenline community-owned trail that travels through the heart of Midtown in the Vollintine Evergreen neighborhood. The event will feature the work of artists from all over the Greater Memphis area as well as local academic institutions. Artists will be selling their creations at affordable prices. There will be a silent auction of items donated by the artists. Memphis area nonprofits will also be there to talk about their organizations.

This will be a large, fun-filled, family event that has become an annual occurrence.

There will be plenty for the children to enjoy, such as an inflated bouncy castle, and games and crafts for all ages. Terrific food and beverage vendors and musicians will keep you full and dancin'.

All proceeds go to the V&E Greenline to keep it green, clean, and inviting.

Mark your calendar now! Bring the family! Come stroll on the beautiful V&E Greenline!



Neighborhood artist, blacksmith foundry, Jeannie Tomlinson Saltmarsh

VECA Annual Meeting Recap

VECA kicked off the New Year with a celebration of 2012 neighborhood accomplishments. Held on Saturday, January 26, more than 100 neighbors attended the annual VECA membership meeting. Many thanks to neighbors for providing the delicious potluck breakfast and to volunteers for organizing the event. Many thanks also to our generous friends and neighbors for providing terrific door prizes for our guests, and to Evergreen Presbyterian for hosting the event. Special thanks to Dr. Todd M. Richardson and Dr. G. Scott Morris for giving an overview of the Sears Crosstown Project and Crosstown Arts.

Business conducted at the meeting included the election of board members; Dr. Paul Herron was re-elected for his fourth term as VECA president.

VECA has many devoted volunteers and some of them were especially recognized at the meeting with service awards. Given annually to VECA neighbors who embody the principles of neighboring and community action, Alex Smythe and Tony Steinberg each received the Margaret Dichtel award.

Alex Smythe received the Dichtel award for his founding of the 2012 V&E Greenline Artwalk, which brings together local artists and vendors to benefit the capital campaign of the V&E Greenline. Providing leadership for the event, Smythe worked with sponsors; he encouraged friends in the art community to participate; and he coordinated public relations for the event. Smythe is also coordinating the upcoming 2013 Artwalk on April 20. VECA is pleased to present the Dichtel award to Alex Smythe.

Also receiving the Dichtel award was Tony Steinberg. Steinberg has been involved in many areas of the neighborhood. He helps with the Lyndale community gardens effort, and he lends a hand with clean-ups on the V&E Greenline and Lick Creek. Steinberg also serves on the VECA Business Districts committee and the Neighborhood Preservation committee. VECA is pleased to present the Dichtel award to Tony Steinberg.

Bestowed to VECA volunteers who have rendered exceptional service to the board, the Martha Heinemann Award was presented to two VECA board members. For their outstanding work on behalf of the neighborhood association, Natasha Strong and Paul Herron received the Heinemann Award.

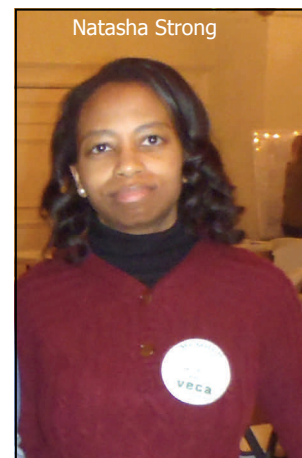
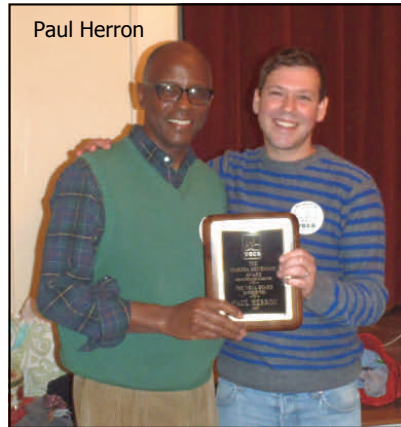
Natasha Strong contributes broadly to VECA activities in the neighborhood. She regularly helps with events at the VECA Welcome Center and she contributed a great deal of time to the year-long strategic planning initiative. Strong works with VECA's Business Districts committee and she acted as VECA's liaison throughout the Family Dollar

construction. We are pleased to present the Heinemann Award to Natasha Strong.

Paul Herron is a long-time member of VECA's Managing committee and has served on the VECA board practically since moving to the neighborhood in 1989. Herron has served the last three years as president of VECA and has graciously committed to a fourth term. In his role as president, Paul is the public face for the organization and has worked with the media and public officials these last three years. We are pleased to present the Heinemann Award to Paul Herron.

The last award presented was the Mary Wilder Award, which recognizes excellence in institutions that contribute to the Vollintine Evergreen community. On behalf of Mercy Hill Church, Pastor Brad Dunlap received the Wilder Award. As a new church meeting in the neighborhood, Mercy Hill Church has jumped in with enthusiasm to help out in the neighborhood. Mercy Hill Church has worked with VECA's Clean-up Committee on several occasions. At the 2012 Artwalk, the church hosted the children's play area with face painting and crafts. Members of the church worked with neighborhood children last summer at a kids' art camp, and they came out to help with the recent tree planting. National Night Out benefited greatly from Mercy Hill's help. Church members brought a grill; they cooked and served hot dogs for neighbors and they brought a sound system for the karaoke machine, which was a big hit. Most recently, folks from the church moved furniture at the Welcome Center after renovations there were finished. VECA is pleased to present the Mary Wilder Award to Mercy Hill Church.

The annual meeting is an opportunity to talk about ways for neighbors to get involved. To learn more about volunteer opportunities please stop by the VECA Welcome Center at 1680 Jackson Avenue or email our VECA volunteer liaison, Katie Dunlap, at kgdunlap@gmail.com.



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VECA Welcome Center Renovations

By Kaitlyn Stigler

The newly renovated VECA Welcome Center at 1680 Jackson Avenue is the primary destination for all things VECA. Routinely used for committee meetings, community projects through Rhodes, and office space for VECA volunteers, the Welcome Center fulfills many different roles but the goal remains the same: serving our community.

However, this building has not always been the hub for VECA. In the late sixties, it was sold by a private owner to Southland Corporation to become a 7-Eleven convenience store. After that store closed, it became a restaurant, then office space, and then a sports bar. In 1996 VECA bought the building for the association's office and in 2007 it was renamed the VECA Welcome Center.

Beginning late last fall, the Welcome Center underwent some much-needed renovations on both the inside and outside of the building. The renovations contribute to the overall revitalization of the business district on the Jackson Avenue / Evergreen Street corridor.

If you drive by the Welcome Center in the next few months, you'll notice new fencing, landscaping and a parking lot overlay. Take a look at the beautiful inside: new lights, new ceiling tiles, new paint and flooring.

The Welcome Center may even seem larger now since the center wall was removed. Previously wasted space is now used to full advantage.

VECA is very excited about the opportunities that lie ahead for the Welcome Center. The hope is that this will be a place to bring the community together for brainstorming, events, meetings, and so much more. If you get a chance, feel free to stop by and check out the new renovations; while you're there, find out how you can get involved. There are many volunteer opportunities available and the VECA Welcome Center is the perfect place to get started. Don't forget, YOU make this neighborhood a great place to live!



Thank you

Renovations to the VECA Welcome Center were coordinated and implemented by a team of VECA neighbors.

Help with packing, unpacking, and moving furniture came from Adam Alsamadisi, Travis Lux, Jan Kirby, Chuck Fox, Steve Gadbois, and members of Mercy Hill Church. John Langley and Jim Doyle helped with many handyman tasks throughout the project. Rich Beckwith, City of Memphis horticulturist, provided landscape consultation. Jeff Hendrix helped move furniture, installed a new kitchen faucet, and worked on closet trim in the kitchen. Peter Braswell helped move furniture and installed trim on the new wall in the meeting room. Garnette Stephens consulted on design and Mary Wilder brought refreshments on moving day. As chair of the Welcome Center committee, Wilder continues to work on the small projects still in process.

The following good people also helped with the project: Bo Higgins, Higgins Electric, LLC; Kelley Fencing; Stan and Sandy McCord, McCord Acoustics; Tyfoon Construction; Fossett Paving; Tony Denton, D&D Floors; Painting by Tim Bowers.

Special thanks to Andrée Glenn, Marci Hendrix and Mike Kirby for their project leadership and for many volunteer hours throughout November, December and January.

Rhodes provided funding for the renovations through the Transforming Neighborhoods grant.

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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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In Memoriam: VECA Neighbor Charles Scruggs



Charles A. "Mr. Chuck" Scruggs reads to local children at the Central Library. (Brittney Williford /Special to *The Commercial Appeal*)

Editorial reprinted from *The Commercial Appeal*: Charles "Mr. Chuck" Scruggs worked to make Greater Memphis a better place

Charles Scruggs, who died Friday January 18 at his Midtown home, was a man who cared deeply about the citizens of Memphis and the Mid-South.

He was best known in recent times as the affable "Mr. Chuck," the host of WKNO's "Hello Mr. Chuck" program for children. But his legacy extends well beyond that because of his advocacy for children, his efforts to combat illiteracy and the civic and social causes he supported personally or through his position as the first African-American general manager of WDIA radio station.

Scruggs had no qualms about taking the initiative to provide help where needed. It did not matter if it was coming to the aid of a woman who won a furnished house and car but couldn't pay the taxes due on her winnings, or launching a radio fundraising campaign to bail out financially strapped Mound Bayou, Miss., or digging into his pocket to help a group buy the Lorraine Motel, where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. He represented the best of Memphis.

VECA Neighbor Highlight

By John Paul Shaffer

Katherine Lambert-Pennington's work as an assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Memphis has taken her as far as Australia to study issues of identity and social inequality. However, it is among the beautiful green spaces and landscaped streets of VECA, "Midtown's best-kept secret," that she chooses to call home.

Dr. L-P, as she is known to many of her students, most recently traveled to the slopes of Mount Etna, Sicily, where she observed grassroots efforts to fight erosion and flooding. The movement focuses on the historic terraced farms along the Simeto River Valley, which have been largely abandoned with the rise of modern farming techniques. These efforts to preserve and attract new visitors to the region were born out of a decade-long fight against the construction of a Mafia-financed trash incinerator along the scenic river.


Back at home, Lambert-Pennington was

instrumental in organizing a community-driven planning effort known as the South Memphis Revitalization Action Plan. Since the completion of the plan, the community has seen the creation of the South Memphis Farmers Market and the expansion of an award-winning child care center and charter school housed at St. Andrew AME Church. The farmers market, heading into its fourth season, is set to receive a permanent home in a renovated former fish market at its current location of South Parkway and Mississippi Boulevard.

Lambert-Pennington has lived in VECA for nearly nine years with her husband, Stacy, who walks and bikes to his ITS job at Rhodes. They regularly use the V&E Greenline for walking with their dogs and have enjoyed seeing new businesses thrive in the neighborhood. Katherine loves the diversity in VECA, where she hopes to expand her home pottery studio should any additional free time arise this year.



The winner of the 2011 Ernest A. Lynton Award for the Scholarship of Engagement, Katherine is currently finishing her latest project, a book about her work with urban indigenous communities in Australia.



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VECA Open House

At the VECA open house on Feb. 20, Col. Russell Houston of the new Crump Station talked about crime in our neighborhood. As the police precinct boundaries were being changed early this year, VECA was hit by a massive crime wave; it quickly became clear to Colonel Houston that VECA was in a crisis. Patrol cars were added, as were plainclothes officers. The efforts paid off with over 22 arrests in January and February. Many of those arrested were juveniles or repeat offenders who enjoy the revolving door aspects of the system.

He also discussed ways that residents can decrease their chances of being crime victims and encouraged people to sign up for emails from CyberWatch and to join Neighborhood Watch groups. As summer approaches and kids are out of school and idle, vigilance could pay off. You can find information at www.memphispolice.org.

Next Safety and Security Meeting: Thursday, March 21, 6:30pm
VECA Welcome Center, 1680 Jackson Avenue



Colonel Houston and Rick Maxwell (VECA's Safety & Security committee)

Crosstown Collaborative

By April Simmons, Crosstown Development Team

Building on three of Memphis' strongest community assets – arts, education, and healthcare – the historic Sears Crosstown building is being preserved and redeveloped as a mixed-used vertical urban village – a purposeful collective of uses and partners. People will be living and working, learning and teaching, healing and growing well, creating and recreating, shopping and eating here – like a really great neighborhood.

When the Sears Crosstown building was constructed in the late 1920s, it was considered to be almost unreasonably distant from the city center; by the late 1970s, Memphis' population and purchasing power had migrated far past it into the suburbs of eastern Shelby County. Sears closed its retail operations at the Crosstown building in the early 1980s and abandoned the building entirely in 1993. Cleveland Street, the main corridor in Crosstown, went from a vibrant hub of activity that was the literal intersection of the city to a strip of boarded up and empty storefronts. A Memphis neighborhood at the nexus of Midtown, Downtown, and the Medical District became largely abandoned. The Sears Crosstown building itself was sadly transformed from a beloved symbol of commerce, interaction, and economic mobility into one the most prominent and pernicious examples of blight in the city.

We now have the opportunity to change that. Eight Founding Partners – local organizations from the healthcare, education, and arts sectors – have indicated their collective commitment to inhabit over 600,000 square feet of the historic building. ALSAC, Church Health Center, Crosstown Arts, Gestalt Community Schools, Methodist Healthcare, Memphis Teacher Residency, Rhodes College, and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital will anchor a landmark effort to redevelop the facility into one of the largest adaptive reuse projects in the state's history.

A dense, active, and peopled Sears will serve as an anchor and catalyst to revitalization and economic development in the surrounding Crosstown neighborhood. In turn, a newly vibrant Crosstown, located at the nexus of Midtown, Downtown and the Medical District, will provide cohesion for the center city region.

If you believe in the vision for a renovated Sears Crosstown building and a revived Crosstown neighborhood, please join the Crosstown Collaborative at CrosstownCollaborative.com and show your support. Let us know we can count on your help to bring this exciting new community concept to life.

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Cypress Middle School Connect Center After-School Program

By Sophie Osella

While most middle-school students can't wait to return home after a long day of classes, students participating in the Cypress Middle School Connect Center After-School Program are eager to spend their free time learning and interacting with their peers. The idea for the Connect Center was created by Chloe Bootstaylor, Roy Rainey, and Rosie Schleinig, three Rhodes students who led the Emerging Artists Summer Camp at Cypress Middle during the summer of 2012. After learning that the former after-school program (Red Zone) would no longer be continuing, the students adopted the room and set out to establish their own after-school program. The three wanted to provide a positive atmosphere where middle-school students could continue to learn through hands-on activities, establish relationships with mentors, and, of course, have fun at the same time.

The Connect Center allows any Cypress students to be a part of the program as long as they have a signed permission slip. So far, the program has attracted 25 male and female students who meet on different days for two hours. On Fridays, both the boys and girls come together to share what they've learned throughout the week. Cypress students use their time in the Connect Center to work on homework, make arts and crafts (which are proudly displayed on the walls), play competitive rounds of chess and other board games, or talk with mentors. Newly added to the after-school curriculum is skateboarding, which has rapidly become a popular activity.

Walking into the room during the height of the afternoon can be slightly overwhelming at first. The walls display colorful murals depicting various continents and their historical leaders. The Cypress students are quick to ask you your name and tell you what they've been up to. Soon you find yourself in a skateboard race or a heated chess match, all the while being cheered on by fellow students and mentors.

Isaiah, a sixth-grader at Cypress, has been coming to the Connect Center since the program was first offered. His favorite activities? Isaiah quickly replies, "Chess and skateboarding." The activities might not be considered conventional approaches to learning, but the founders of the Connect Center believe the students are learning valuable skills and lessons.

"The students aren't just working on homework," explains Dorothy Cox, the faculty adviser to the Rhodes mentors. "They're learning things like teamwork through soccer or skateboarding." During a skateboarding lesson on the girls' day, another mentor from Rhodes emphasized the importance of resilience.

"Resilience means not giving up," offers one of the girls. The students quickly get the hang of it and skate around the room with confidence. Those who fall pick themselves up, laugh, and continue skating.

The mentors regularly present the students to new activities and opportunities to learn. Recently, Chloe and Roy introduced acting and theater through various activities that encourage the students to be confident and think quickly.

"We're exposing them to things that aren't offered to them in their curriculum," says Chloe.

The relationships that have formed between the Rhodes and Cypress students have allowed the Connect Center to be a safe place. Often, mentors find themselves helping the students with both school and social problems.

"We want to be stable figures in the lives of these students," Chloe explains.

Devonte, a new member of the Connect Center, announces that "everything" about the program is his favorite, as he puts on skateboarding pads and a helmet.

"We get to do homework and a whole bunch of other stuff. You get advice too," he says.

The Connect Center has plans for more programs and lessons, but for now the staff is concentrating on maintaining the positive atmosphere that has been shaped by both the mentors and the Cypress students.

311 Support Center

By Elise Hasting

VECA neighbors, there is a simple, new method to give feedback to the City of Memphis. Mayor Wharton recently made it more convenient to contact city services with the new 311 support center at City Hall. This program will "help the city decide which divisions are doing their jobs well, and provide information to hold city managers accountable for performance," according to *The Commercial Appeal*. When VECA neighbors want to file code violations, now they can be reassured that there is a division focusing on how long it takes to answer complaints.

For instance, to report a house with high weeds or accumulation of debris, you can simply call 311. You can also submit service requests and track their progress using the Online Support Center on cityofmemphis.org. Keep in mind that the advantage of submitting service requests online is that you can track your service request and view your service history.

You can submit code violations on your computer by visiting the 311 online support center, logging in as a registered user, and submitting your request. The 311 support center service will help make Memphis services easily accessible to all city residents.

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Holy Thursday, March 28 – Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7:00pm
Good Friday, March 29 – Stations of the Cross at noon;
Veneration of Cross & Communion at 7:00pm
Saturday, March 30 – Easter Vigil at 8:00pm
Sunday, March 31 – Easter Sunday, Mass at 8:00am and 10:30am

Mass Schedule

Wed, Fri, 8:15am
Tues, Thurs, 5:30pm
Sat Vigil, 4:30pm
Sun, 8:00am, 10:30am
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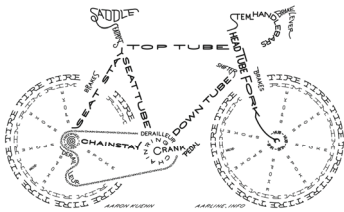
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Cycle into Spring



Last summer, a group of neighbors started meeting on Wednesdays for bike rides to downtown and back. You are invited to join the fun when the group starts back up in the spring. Rides are about 10-15 miles at a pace of about 12-14 mph average. Helmets are required. Front and back bike lights are strongly encouraged. Rides begin Wednesday, March 13, 6:30 p.m.; meet at Café Eclectic. Updates are posted on the VECA Facebook page and the VECA ENews.



Yard Sales, Events, and ENews

As a free service to VECA neighbors, you can advertise your upcoming yard sales or items for sale through the online VECA ENews. The VECA Enews is also the best way to stay current on upcoming events in the neighborhood. Sign up to receive the ENews via the VECA home page (veca.org).


VECA Annual Membership Form - Become a Member

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

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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
Safety and Security: Rick Maxwell
Communications: Jeff Hulett
Newsletter Co-Editors: Marci Hendrix
Chris Tague

Website/Calendar: veca.org
Email: veca@veca.org

V&E Greenline: Megan Wilkins Reynolds
VECA Businesses: Sarah Beth Larson
Neighborhood Preservation: Chris Floyd
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Newsletter Deadlines for the May/June Issue

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