

VOLLINTINE EVERGREEN NEWS

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MAY / JUNE 2013

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Artwalk 2013

One thing people will remember about the Artwalk this year was the glorious weather. With temperatures in the 60's and pretty blue skies, it was a beautiful day to be outside and on the V&E Greenline. Organizer Alex Smythe noted that "the 2nd V&E Artwalk was another big success. With beautiful weather and happy faces everywhere, it was a magical day for the community and those who helped put it all together."

Over 50 artists and nonprofit organizations set up shop east of the stationhouse under the shade of the sweetgum trees. Thanks to volunteers, including Jim Martin, Laura Luque de Johnson and Andrew Mitchell, for taking on the herculean chore of raking up the trees' spiky gumballs on the morning of the Artwalk and Sigma Nu fraternity from Rhodes raking a week earlier.

Richard Ryan of Rika Woodworks agrees that the event was a success: "My sister Kate and I have

been selling our woodworking at various arts and crafts shows for a year now. The V&E was definitely one of the best. We didn't get in last year, but everyone said it was much bigger this year. We enjoyed seeing what else people had to offer, and we're always very flattered by how much people love our own stuff. We're definitely looking forward to doing it again next year."

Musician Jeff Hulett agrees, "The weather was perfect and the vendors, food and entertainment were topnotch. I can't wait until next year!"

The Artwalk's great coordinating committee worked hard from November to April planning the event. Team members included Adam Alsamadisi, Katie Dunlap, Jan Kirby, Mike Kirby, Elise Hastings, Travis Lux, Alex Smythe and Andrew Tait.

Taking the lead this year was Jan Kirby. She began contacting the vendors in May of last year and

COVER STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday Night Cycling Group

Shake the dust off and join the VECA Wednesday night cycling group. Routes are approximately 10-15 miles long at an average speed of 12mph. Helmets are required. Front and back bike lights are strongly encouraged. Meet at Café Eclectic at 6:15 p.m. with a 6:30 p.m. departure. Updates are posted on the VECA Facebook page.

Safety and Security Monthly Meetings are held every third Thursday of the month, 6:30 pm at the VECA Welcome Center. Upcoming meetings are June 20, July 18, and September 15. Meeting topics are posted on the VECA Facebook page and VECA ENews.

Summer Saturday Hours at the VECA Welcome Center

During the months of June and July, the VECA Welcome Center will be open on Saturdays from 10-2. Please stop by, have a cup of coffee and connect with your community.

Ice Cream Sunday–June 23, 4:00-6:00 pm

The Summer Jubilee/Ice Cream social will return to the V&E Greenline gardens area this year between McLean and Auburndale. There will be splash pools and water games for the kids, a shampoo area for the dogs, and ice cream and fixings for \$1 a scoop. Come out and visit your neighbors in what has become a neighborhood favorite tradition.

Neighborhood Night Out–Tuesday, August 6, 6:00 pm at the Vollintine Strips. Celebrate National Night Out with neighbors on your street or at the Vollintine Strip (Vollintine and Avalon) from 6:00-7:30 pm. National Night Out is an annual event designed to strengthen our communities by encouraging neighborhoods to engage in stronger relationships with each other and with their local law enforcement partners. The goal is to heighten crime-prevention awareness, build support and participation in local anti-crime programs, and most importantly, send a message that our neighborhoods are organized and fighting back. It’s also the perfect opportunity to get to know your neighbors even better!

Vollintine Evergreen News gets a new look!

This larger newsprint version is designed to allow broader distribution at our local businesses, more space for advertisers who help cover production costs, and best of all, more space to provide neighborhood stories.

The VECA Communication team has been working hard the last few months on the transition, and now is a great time to join the team as a contributor or a distributor. Join the committee to help with the newsletter, Facebook, or the VECA website, or contribute simply

by writing a story. The Vollintine Evergreen Newsletter strives to share the diverse thoughts, ideas and stories of the neighborhood, whether through a distant memory or a current concern. Articles need to be 500 words or less. Email your stories to news@veca.org.

With a neighborhood of more than 4,000 houses, there will always be a need for volunteers to deliver newsletters. Send us a note at vecanewsletter@gmail.com and we will get you started.

Volunteers are needed to deliver newsletters on the following streets:

- 25 homes on Avalon between Jackson and Henry
- 30 homes on Belvedere, Edward, and Rosebud between Edward and Evergreen
- 8 homes on Brown between Evergreen and McLean
- 20 homes on Evergreen between Vollintine and Edward
- 27 homes on Garland between Henry and Vollintine
- 15 homes on Garland between Vollintine and Brown
- 14 homes on Garland between Brown and McNeil
- 50 homes on Jackson between Watkins and Willett
- 50 homes on Jackson between Willett and Evergreen
- 46 homes on Maury between Vollintine and Cypress Creek
- 20 homes on McNeil between Brown and Watkins
- 14 homes on McNeil between Vollintine and Brown

- 20 homes on North Parkway (north side) between Avalon and Evergreen
- 15 homes on North Parkway (north side) between Stonewall and Avalon
- 31 homes on Stonewall between Tutwiler and Jackson
- 8 homes on Vollintine (north side) between Maury and Evergreen
- 14 homes on Vollintine (north side) between Garland and Maury
- 52 homes on Watkins (both sides) between Jackson and Vollintine
- 24 homes on Watkins (both sides) between Vollintine and Cypress Creek
- 35 homes on Willett between Henry and Vollintine
- 35 homes on Willett between Jackson and Henry
- 40 homes on Willett between Tutwiler and Jackson

VOLLINTINE EVERGREEN NEWS

MAY / JUNE 2013

VOLUNTEER STAFF

CO-EDITORS
Marci Hendrix
Chris Tague

CONTRIBUTORS
Adam Alsamadisi
Rick Maxwell
Elise Hastings
Jeff Hulett
Marci Hendrix
Tiffany McClung
Sophie Oscella
Eric Reller
John Paul Shaffer
Kaitlyn Stigler
Jill Williams

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VECA is a neighborhood organization made up of volunteers and paying members. The newsletter, VECA mail, annual meeting, and comittee 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
1680 Jackson Avenue
901.276.1782
Website / Calendar: veca.org
Email: veca@veca.org

VECA Staple Dino's Grill Celebrates 40 Years

By Jeff Hulett



If you live in the Vollintine Evergreen neighborhood, you know where Dino's Grill is. If not, then you need to get out more. Dino's Grill is a perfect place for breakfast, lunch or dinner. It's also great for parties and gatherings. In fact, the communications committee of VECA has met there several times. The service is always good and the food is delicious. If you are still around after 40 years, you've got to be doing something right.

I recently dropped in after a Tigers game with my family and some friends and the place was packed. Everyone was happy because the Tigers had just completed a perfect 16-0 Conference-USA campaign, but I digress.

I was greeted by an old friend, Mario Grisanti, who has worked at Dino's practically since birth. There are pictures of him as a boy coloring in the back and running drinks for his grandmother, Mammy.

A fourth-generation member of the Grisanti family, Mario is now a family man and working as food and beverage director at the DoubleTree, but he still helps out when needed. His wife, Rachel, and boys, Luca and Enzo, were there as well.

When asked about his favorite memory, Mario says he remembers sitting on a stool in the kitchen watching his grandfather, Papa, make ravioli.

"I picked up the cutter myself and started cutting out ravioli," he said. "And I messed them all up. Papa just laughed and remade them."

Mario also fondly remembers his future wife visiting him at work when he was in college. Dino's has always been a part of his life. "One of the things I love most is customers telling me stories about when I was a kid. Stories from guests about Papa and Dad down at the State Cafe. I remember seeing customers get down on one knee and propose to their partners. I can't wait to tell my kids all the stories," Mario said.

What's the secret to Dino's success? Mario says it's having the same guests come time after time for so long. "People come back and spend birthdays, anniversaries, and other

special occasions with us," he said. "They also bring new guests with them. It makes us want to do our best to take care of them, the neighbor. We do what we love, what we know, and it speaks for itself."

As far as the neighborhood goes, Mario says there has always been a sense of community and pride here.

"I grew up partly on Faxon Avenue and partly on North Idlewild. All of our neighbors have always been great!"

When asked what to order, Mario says the ravioli, the shells, the lasagna, everything.

"Dad and Brandon make everything in-house every day or every other. It's all fresh, and always good."


Dino's Grill, 645 N. McLean, is open Tuesday through Friday, 10:30 a.m.-9 p.m.; Saturday, 7 a.m.-9 p.m.; and Sunday, 7 a.m.-8 p.m. Call 278-9127 for more information.

Photo: Pictured from left are Mario, Luca, Enzo, Rachel and Rudy (owner of Dino's). Rudy is Mario's dad.

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Transforming Neighborhoods

By Marci Hendrix and Adam Alsamadisi

The Rhodes Plough Transforming Neighborhoods grant has funded an eclectic mix of grant proposals over the past three years that have provided a vital boost to the Vollintine Evergreen community. Some of these neighborhood-driven initiatives include filling in VECA's tree canopy, purchasing lawn mowers for block clubs eager to clean up their streets, and funding for VECA's strategic planning initiative. The projects have developed closer links within the neighborhood and empowered leaders within the community.

Hands-on projects have improved the appearance and stability of the Vollintine Evergreen neighborhood. Boarding up some of the empty houses in the neighborhood has helped to maintain property values. Neighbors have cleaned up alleys, which helps with security. The Rhodes Plough grant has funded street and Lick Creek cleanups, and housing for AmeriCorps teams who have tackled massive projects in the neighborhood. The VECA Welcome Center has been renovated to an extent that the space is unrecognizable. Community gardens have become a part of who we are now, and new trash bins at our local businesses are attractive, sturdy, and plentiful. The Rhodes Plough grant has supported initiatives to sustain the V&E Greenline.

Strategic planning efforts help us prepare for the future, especially for the V&E Greenline committee. Last year, VECA completed a neighborhood-wide strategic plan. The VECA business committee has worked with businesses and has conducted a market study on the retail buying potential of the neighborhood.

We have improved in other areas as well. Neighbors moving to the area will receive an attractive welcome packet with helpful resources. The V&E Greenline station house is home to a new artistic bike rack, and the newsletter received a facelift with the help of a Rhodes Plough grant. Last summer, some neighbors helped children work on art projects. One neighbor group crafted a life-size board game in the northeast quadrant by Cypress Middle School.

The Rhodes Plough grant funded the National Night Out last August. Held for the first time at the Vollintine Shops at the corner of Vollintine and Avalon, the cookout and group dance numbers brought together the entire neighborhood. Another event made possible by the Rhodes Plough grant was the Fall Fest. The event was held in 2011 and 2012 and brought neighbors together to establish connections and promote safety.

Dedicated volunteers have been behind the scenes administering the Rhodes Plough grant. The VECA board and committees have worked hard to promote the grants and have helped neighbors apply for grants and make the most of the opportunity. Many of the proposals were initiatives of VECA committees, including buying supplies for the Lyndale Community Garden, Lick Creek cleanups, and events such as Fall Fest. Over the last three years the VECA board has worked closely with Rhodes staff members, most recently with Adam Alsamadisi, Travis Lux, Buffie Rice, Dr. Elizabeth Thomas, and Dr. Suzanne Bonefas.

As this particular three-year grant period comes to an end this spring, the VECA Board and members of the Rhodes community look forward to new projects and opportunities for collaboration, building on the many successes and the promising momentum of the Rhodes Plough grant.

March Clean-up Event

The Neighborhood Preservation and Clean-up Committees organized a clean-up near the northwest edge of the Vollintine Evergreen neighborhood. Eighteen dedicated volunteers braved the cold weather and snow on March 2 to beautify our neighborhood. Volunteers picked up trash and debris in vacant lots on Watkins, Garland and McNeil. Thanks to all the Vollintine Evergreen residents and board members who attended the event. Special thanks to Memphis City Beautiful for partnering with us and Tigers Getting Involved (University of Memphis) for joining the cleanup. Be on the lookout for volunteer opportunities as the weather gets warmer.



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May is National *(and Memphis)* Bike Month

By John Paul Shaffer



In getting folks to step out of their cars and hop on two wheels, a little encouragement can go a long way. More than half of the U.S. population lives within five miles of their workplace, and 40% of all trips are less than two miles. National Bike Month is the time when cities around the nation show people how healthy, green and fun getting around by bicycle can be by offering knowledge and incentives for pedaling to work, shop, or play.

Sponsored by the League of American Bicyclists, National Bike Month was first recognized in 1956 and has grown to include Bike to School Day (May 8), Bike to Work Week (May 13-17) and Bike to Work Day (May 17). Cities and companies all over the U.S. offer programs including energizer stations, commuter challenges, and giveaways to give people that extra push to get out on two wheels, and Memphis is doing the same.

Memphis Bikes to Work...

Memphis is currently gearing up for its fourth official Bike to Work Day, and the yearly program is rapidly expanding beyond its original confines of Downtown and Midtown. Bike to Work Memphis, which last year drew over 400 registered participants, is taking advantage of the growing network of bike lanes around the city. Organizers are hoping to draw an even larger crowd this year.

Dawn Vinson, of the Downtown Memphis Commission, is the principal organizer for Bike to Work Memphis activities. According to Vinson, "People have been requesting that we expand past the Downtown core into other neighborhoods since we began the event four years ago." Vinson is hoping that more organizations and employers will join the effort to get their employees onto two wheels. With the Peddler Bike Shop, Midtown Bike Shop (actually Downtown), and all three area locations of Outdoors, Inc. participating as pickup locations for gift bags this year, potential commuters all over the city can more easily participate.

...and VECA Bikes to Work!

Bike to Work Day rides from VECA will start at Café Eclectic and head both east and west the morning of May 17. Informative practice rides will be held leading up to the event – be sure to check the VECA Facebook page and ENews, or contact bikeveca@gmail.com for more information. Partnering with neighbors who work in the same area is highly encouraged.

For FAQs, general practice ride resources, and registration info for Bike to Work Memphis, please visit www.biketoworkmemphis.com.

Tennessee Bike Summit

This year, Bike Walk Tennessee, the state's leading advocacy group for active transportation, will be hosting the second annual Tennessee Bike

Summit right here in VECA at Rhodes. The event, which is sponsored in part by the Tennessee Department of Transportation, will offer three days of mobile tours, technical workshops, and networking events.

From May 22 to 24, the TN Bike Summit will offer workshops focusing on building bike-friendly communities, the role of active transportation in economic development, and navigating federal and state transportation laws and policies. Anthony Siracusa, current president of Bike Walk Tennessee says this year the summit will focus particularly on innovative solutions for making streets safer for cyclists and on highlighting business leaders who have seen revenues improve as bike lanes come to their neighborhoods.

As an added treat, the 2013 Summit will culminate in the Friday-night opening reception of the third annual Bikesploitation Film and Arts Festival, which will be held May 24-26 at Crosstown Arts. This free event will feature bicycle films from all over the world, bicycle art by local artists, music, food, drinks, and general family fun.

Information on the program and registration can be found at www.tnbikesummit.org.

Little did we know how challenging the transition to a new newsletter format would be. We're excited about the new look and hope you are too, but working out the kinks has us all agog. We apologize for getting the National Bike Month information to you late. Be kind – we're really, really trying!

Jared Powelson, O.D.

Mike Gerstner, O.D.

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Neighbor Highlight

By Sophie Oscella



VECA neighbor Dorian Spears knows hard work. Throughout her life, Spears, a native Memphian, has learned to combine her passions with rewarding opportunities, which in turn has helped a large number of people.

Spears “practically lived in a library” during her time growing up in South Memphis. She attended Christian Brothers University and earned a psychology degree, and then went on to work at Hope House (a non-profit organization that assists families infected or affected by HIV).

Since the age of ten, Spears has been engaged in various community service organizations, and she continues to pursue opportunities that allow her to help and engage with others. Not only does Spears give back to her community, but she also is able to “develop professionally and connect with people.”

Along with her community service, Spears was curious about social justice issues. At the age of 23, one of her brothers was killed which defined an ‘a-ha moment’ for her and prompted a move to Atlanta to “explore and gain a richer perspective of the world.” There she was exposed to inspiring people such as Vincent Harding, Constance Curry, and Coretta Scott King. During her time in the city, Spears experienced another tragedy involving the death of a young boy she was tutoring, which further inspired her efforts in social justice.

Combining her education with her interests, Spears learned how to put her skills to use. After returning home to Memphis, she became involved with the development of Shelby County’s Welfare to Work program with Seedco in 2007. She quickly learned that she enjoyed getting things started and facilitating customer service workshops. Initially the project known as Career Steps involved small businesses and the creation of internships for underemployed and low income workers. Her experience with the Welfare to Work program allowed her to help people in that program hone their skills in a professional setting. Later she focused more on providing training to people on public assistance by encouraging the ability and providing the knowledge to be a skilled participant in the workforce.

In the Winter of 2011, she was encouraged by a mentor to interview for a new team that was being formed with the City of Memphis through Bloomberg Philanthropies. She currently serves as a Junior Project Manager for the Mayor’s Innovation Delivery Team working with Neighborhood Economic Vitality. In this role, she is a part of a team that helps residents in their communities to discover their own power, take initiative, and realize their ability to transform their own spaces to address challenges and contributing to maintain successful neighborhoods. The Team recognizes that each neighborhood is an important piece of a larger puzzle that can enhance the quality of life for the entire city.

Throughout her life, Spears realized the importance of building and maintaining healthy relationships in any environment. She emphasizes the critical nature of these relationships and stresses the importance



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of collaboration when it comes to residents helping to build their communities into a place that they are proud to call home.

Spears had to learn to leave her desire to "change the world" behind. As a self-identified "connector," Spears has realized that, while she might not be able to directly change someone's life, she can introduce people to new possibilities or opportunities, which in turn could help people to change on their own time. Through her work experience, Spears has connected countless numbers of people to employers, mentors, and information. Spears says that her "reward is being able to connect people together who might not have met before, and in a way that might change their lives."

For people who want to start a business or an organization, Spears asks the simple question, Why? Then, how can they be most effective? She dissuades people from being swayed by factors that can move you away from who you are, and thus distract you from your original intentions. In order to counteract this, Spears advocates for true understanding of yourself, your passions, and your goals. She believes that interacting with other creative individuals and engaging in activities, such as blogs and business journals, and having good mentors can help you stand out in a niche market.

Spears believes that in order for a business or idea to stand out, it has to be unique, and this can happen only if the creator truly understands why exactly he or she is pursuing this goal. In her words: "Know who you are and why you're doing it."



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Top 10 Sports Cuts Barber Shop

By Elise Hastings



VECA's new business addition, Top 10 Sports Cuts Barber Shop, is proudly owned by Terrance Harris, who has been a barber for 26 years. Growing up in a family of beauticians, Terrance was always interested in the trade. He received his first clippers from an aunt for Christmas in 1987, and the gift propelled him into the trade. "I was brought up with the idea that barbers were cornerstones

of neighborhoods," he reflects. "Years ago barbers were respected in neighborhoods, and everyone knew you. I would like to bring this old world feel back into the VECA neighborhood."

Terrance has high aspirations for his shop to act as a venue to connect community members and build relationships. The barbershop is located at the Evergreen and Jackson intersection, which Terrance believes is "the epicenter, or main artery, for the VECA neighborhood." He also wants to give back to the community through service. His barbers donate free haircuts to a center for the homeless, and he offers his shop as a safe space for kids to be "productive rather than destructive." He hopes that this will help build the community. "Everyone has problems, and barbers always listen," he says. He hopes to "build relationships" and "make everyone feel comfortable." The Top 10 Sports Cuts Barber Shop is open, and ready for your business.



Interested in advertising in the Vollintine-Evergreen News?

The VE NEWS serves the Vollintine Evergreen area in Midtown—an eclectic and diverse neighborhood of over 4,000 houses, plus numerous businesses, churches, and schools. Call or email today to reserve your ad in our next issue!

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VOLLINTINE  **EVERGREEN**
NEWS

Art for Bikes



The V&E Greenline is now home to an artistic and colorful bike rack of stained glass and fabricated steel. Located just west of the stationhouse and designed by glass artist Suzy Hendrix, it has already delighted the neighborhood. Installed the week of the V&E Artwalk, it adds beauty to the neighborhood and is actually strong enough to serve as a bike rack.

Hendrix notes that the bike rack is part of an ongoing series that she calls "Architectural Reliquaries." She explains: "Most of these are based on different architectural styles. The shape of the V&E Greenline bike rack reflects the sloped roof of the stationhouse. I also incorporated leaves and flower shapes in the glass. I chose a bike rack frame to be art and functional at the same time."

Hendrix has four pieces from the Architectural Reliquaries series on loan to the city of Germantown, located in front of the Germantown Performing Arts Center. She also created a bike rack in Nashville in the design of sound waves flanked by air pumps.

Hendrix was pleased to receive funding from Rhodes through the Transforming Neighborhoods Plough grant. During the project, she worked closely with the V&E Greenline committee to make sure it was sustainable as well as appropriate. For her, the bike rack is a perfect fit, as the V&E Greenline "is an important part of my environment. I use it quite often." Hendrix did the design, the glass and the epoxy, and Jeannie Saltmarsh fabricated the steel portions in her home shop near the Greenline.

Hendrix, who lives just west of Vollintine Evergreen, moved to Memphis about 15 years ago to continue her music career as a saxophonist. The abundant nightclub and casino gigs were fine, but the desire to create art prompted her to change career paths and become a glass artist. As Hendrix notes, "Glass is versatile; you get light through it and bouncing off of it. I picked glass as what I wanted to do because it's such a great medium: it's versatile and you can actually make a living doing it. There's a lot of call for decorative arts."

Over the years, Hendrix has created many public art pieces in Memphis, including a glass mosaic mural at the Hollywood Branch library; a glass flag series at the Memphis Botanic Garden; and a fused glass skylight and enameled copper paintings at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, to name just a few. She is also involved in the Overton Square revitalization project, where her stained glass panels have been installed in the upstairs windows of the old Friday's restaurant on Madison.

was responsible for the large number of participating artists. She also took on the gargantuan task of coordinating the food for the stationhouse food booth.

A big shout-out to Christ City Church for staffing the food booth the entire day and to Mercy Hill Church for staffing and sponsoring the children's area for the second year.

A team of volunteers made the day relaxing and fun. Volunteers included:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------|
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| Zack Brown | Rosie McCoy |
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| Marci Hendrix | Natasha Strong |
| Bennie Howie | Stacy Sullivan |
| Jeff Hulett | Chris Tague |
| Kyle Johnson | Mary Washburn |
| Jackie Jones | Mary Wilder |
| Betsy Kirby | |

It will be time to start planning for next year before we know it. We need your help in two ways:

First, give us your suggestions and comments about the event. Please go to the following link and complete a short survey: www.surveymonkey.com/s/93NZGVP

Second, will you consider helping next year? For the V&E Artwalk to be sustainable and thrive, we need leaders to help tackle the organizational tasks listed below:

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Dealing with Invasive Plants

By Eric Reller, VECA Americorps NCCC Team Member


You may have been running or walking on the west end of the V&E Greenline and noticed that a large number of shrubs have been cut down alongside the trail. The shrubs are the invasive Chinese privet. Chinese privet is a thick, evergreen shrub that can grow to 20 feet high. The shrub was introduced into the United States in the 1850s as an ornamental; it thrived because of its ability to tolerate air pollution and other harsh environmental conditions. Many gardeners regarded it as a great landscape plant, so it was planted extensively. Due to its ability to rapidly reproduce and thrive in unfavorable conditions, Chinese privet has spread throughout Memphis and the rest of Tennessee.

An invasive plant, Chinese privet commonly forms dense thickets in fields or forests where shade allows it to out-compete many native species. Once established, privet it is tough to remove. The best way to get rid of it is to continually mow over small plants, dig out the entire plant down to the roots, or cut down the shrub and paint a weed killer on the newly exposed stump. Green groups who use these methods, include the Overton Park Conservancy, Shelby Farms, and Lichterman Nature Center. The AmeriCorps team helped the V&E Greenline with this monumental task in June and July 2012. The team pulled, cut, and used chain saws to remove hundreds of pounds of privet. This should now allow some of the native trees and shrubs to flourish.

This AmeriCorps NCCC group is based out of Vicksburg, Mississippi. AmeriCorps NCCC is a full-time, team-based, 10-month, residential national service program for men and women ages 18-24. Members are organized into small teams that serve in communities that need disaster service, environmental stewardship, energy conservation, urban and rural development, and infrastructure improvement. Members receive a \$5,550 education award, leadership training and valuable work skills. NCCC is accepting applications at www.americorps.gov/nccc.


Eric Reller was an AmeriCorps team member in Vollintine Evergreen in June-July 2012.





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The academy will kick off its year this coming September. For the fall semester we will be accepting applications for 9th grade students living in the VE area. Evening classes are once a week with an additional study day. Find out more about the academy and its enrollment process; Email: visualartsacademy@att.net or find us on Facebook/Visual Arts Academy Vollintine Evergreen. Scholarships are available.

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VECA Interactive Neighborhood Map

By the VECA Historic Committee

Have you ever wondered what year your home was built, or what the style of your favorite neighborhood house might be? Soon it will be possible for VECA residents to access this information through an on-line mapping tool.

With the help of a team, including AmeriCorps, and Rhodes College student and faculty volunteers, a project developed by the VECA historic committee, is coming to fruition. The committee, then chaired by neighbor Cathy Marcinko, wanted to take the vast inventory of neighborhood housing information VECA has in its four historic district National Register of Historic Places nominations, and create a way for neighbors to access that information via the VECA website. The idea was to make it possible for neighbors to go to the link, plug in their street address and find a short description of their home, including date of construction, the architectural style and other features.

Knowing they needed technical help to create the system, the historic committee turned to Rhodes for help, and there found the know-how they needed in student Becky Vandewalle (class of 2012). Vandewalle took on the project, and over the next year, while a senior at Rhodes, developed a Python script that would produce a KML code file needed to link the register information to the Google Earth interface with which many of us have become familiar. Vandewalle explains that “the Python script is transparent, accessible and user-friendly so that it may be updated and reused to take in account tweaks to the design, additional data, or new versions and features of the KML code.” According to Cathy Marcinko, “Becky’s knowledge, creativity and countless hours spent working on the project truly made it possible for this idea to become a reality.”

Another idea the historic committee had was to add photos of every house to the database, a dream made possible with the help of a group of neighborhood volunteers and an AmeriCorps team assigned to VECA in the fall of 2012. The volunteers and team members worked one Saturday to take photos of about 2000 houses or 90% of the neighborhood. One section still remains to be photographed, the Vollintine Hills Historic District. Plans are being made to complete this section during the summer or fall of 2013.

With Vandewalle headed to graduate school, the next team at Rhodes took on the detailed task of selecting and naming every photo file and loading them into the database. According to Adam Alsamadisi, who led this this final phase, the online map should be accessible to residents within the next few weeks. He and Alison Lang, who holds a similar position that Becky once held, have been working with the tech crews at Rhodes to have this dataset accessible.

VECA thanks Suzanne Bonefas, Becky Vandewalle and Adam Alsamadisi at Rhodes for providing support during the project, and to the many volunteers who participated in the effort, including the 11 members of AmeriCorps NCCC Team River 5, Ann George, Marci Hendrix, Cathy Marcinko, Richard Owen, Ellis Rich, Natasha Strong Adam Alsamadisi, and Alison Lang.

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Church Transitions



Two neighborhood church properties have undergone major transitions recently. Rhodes College purchased Evergreen Presbyterian Church, and Living Hope Church purchased McLean Baptist Church.

According to an April 1 Commercial Appeal story on the Evergreen Presbyterian Church, "Rhodes College has agreed to a two-year transition period in which Evergreen Presbyterian will continue using the facilities on 9.6 acres at 613 University." Additionally, "The church has started a 12-18-month planning process to keep the preschool and after-school programs alive

beyond the two-year transition period. The church is assembling a team of parents, neighbors, church members and other stakeholders to create a plan."

In a January 29, Commercial Appeal article, Rhodes president William Troutt is quoted as saying:

"As soon as we complete our arrangement (with Evergreen) we'll begin a campus master planning process" for both the main and Evergreen campuses. The school updates its master plan every 12-15 years, and now the timing is right to do so again.

"We feel privileged that Evergreen has not only a beautiful sanctuary but the other structures, too. We have no plans at this point other than to honor them and look forward to how we might optimize [the property]."

McLean Baptist Church, located at the corner of McLean and Jackson, voted to pass ownership of its property to Living Hope Church.

According to the official press release, the church has been very active in the Vollintine Evergreen community for decades, "playing a key role in the formation of the Vollintine Evergreen Community Association (VECA) and the site of other community activities. However, despite its community engagement, the congregation had experienced membership decline over the past several years." Living Hope Church, which is located in Piperton, TN, began volunteer involvement in the Vollintine Evergreen community four years ago, "becoming a Memphis City Schools Adopt-A-School Partner with Vollintine Elementary, serving with VECA and collaborating with McLean Baptist on a number of community building initiatives including youth after-school programs and a community choir. Living Hope also began a second church, Living Hope Vollintine Evergreen, which has been meeting in the McLean Baptist chapel."

Both property transitions promise to strengthen the VECA neighborhood and its relationships with community partners.



VECA Welcome Center Landscaping

Renovations to the exterior of the VECA Welcome Center were completed with the arrival of spring. During the winter months, the parking lot was paved, a fence and sidewalk were installed and a flower bed was built. Landscaping was the finishing touch that had to wait for the warmer weather, which arrived in mid-April.

Inspiration for the flower bed design at the Belvedere corner was the brainchild of Natasha Strong, who thought a "V" for VECA would be fun. City horticulturist Rich Bechwith, who does the seasonal "M" plants on East Parkway, was happy to design our V. Jim Doyle built the flower bed and Steve Gadbois installed the irrigation system. Rich Bechwith also designed the landscape plans along the east side of the Welcome Center.

Andrée Glenn coordinated the renovation project and Rhodes provided funding through the Transforming Neighborhoods Plough grant. Many thanks to the following good people for their help with the project: Kelley Fencing, Tyfoon Construction and Fossett Paving. Will Crutchfield and the team from Little Red Wagon Lawncare sponsored the planting installation labor.





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One Harvest Food Ministries

By Tiffany McClung

Neighborhood church Peace Lutheran (1548 Jackson Avenue) is happy to announce that it is now a partner site for One Harvest Food Ministries and wants you to know about this opportunity to lower your grocery bill. One Harvest is a nonprofit that began in Georgia in 2010 and has since expanded all over the South.

One Harvest Food Ministries offers affordable, pre-packaged, high-quality, fresh-frozen boxes with a variety of meats and vegetables. The boxes can be purchased for 30 to 50 percent less than grocery store prices. There are seven to eight options each month, ranging in price from \$20.00 to \$46.00. The family box assists in feeding a family of four for a week, while the “More than Enough” box lives up to its name by aiding any family to stretch limited resources in a tough economy.

There is no application process. People of all income levels are welcome to participate. The only requirement is that you prepay for your box of food when placing an order. The website lists products and prices from which to choose. Boxes will be distributed once a month at Peace Lutheran on a pre-determined Saturday between 1:00 and 1:30 (see dates below). There are no minimum or maximum requirements for orders.

Orders can be made by calling or emailing Pastor Tiffany McClung at 901-606-6604 or emailing tiffanymcclung@att.net. You can pay with cash, check or credit card. Checks should be payable to Peace Lutheran Church. Credit cards are accepted online at www.oneharvest.com. Follow the link at the top of the home page to “Place an Order.” While completing the order, be sure to choose Peace Lutheran as your “Partner Pickup Location.” If you wish to order and pay with an EBT (SNAP) card, you will need to schedule an appointment with Pastor McClung. Please contact her to schedule a time.

Peace Lutheran Church members have ordered food from One Harvest over the last two months and the reviews have been good. Grocery bills are lower and freezers are full! The only thing the church gets from this ministry is knowing that our neighborhood is being helped in very real and practical ways.

Menus and other information are available at <http://www.peacelutheranmemphis.org/outreachministries>.

Order Deadline	Distribution Dates 1:00-1:30 p.m. at Peace
June 7	June 15
July 12	July 20
August 9	August 17
September 13	September 21
October 11	October 19
November 15	November 23
December 13	December 21

An example of the Family Box (\$35) (Perfect for a family of 4)

- 1.5lb Country Fried Beef Steak
- 3lb Avg Split Chicken Breast
- 1.5lb Fish Filet Sticks
- 1lb Ground Beef
- 1lb Lee Breakfast Sausage
- (2) 8” Deep Dish Pepperoni Pizza
- 26oz Chicken Fries, Heat & Serve
- 2lb Seasoned or Crinkle Cut French Fries
- 2lb Boil in Bag Broccoli & Cheese or Chicken Noodle Soup
- 1lb Fresh Frozen Green Beans
- 1lb Fresh Frozen Sliced Carrots
- 1lb Fresh Frozen Shoepeg Corn
- 14oz Sauté Sweet Mixed Vegetables
- 6.25oz or 7.25oz Macaroni & Cheese
- 7oz Blueberry Muffin Mix
- 1 Box (10 Count) Aunt Jamima Buttermilk Waffles
- 1 Dessert Item

An example of the “More than Enough” box (\$46)

- 1.5lb Beef Country Fried Steak
- 3lb Avg Split Chicken Breast
- 3lb Boneless Ham Slices or 2lb Cornish Hen
- 1.5lb Fish Filet Sticks
- (2) 8” Deep Dish Pepperoni Pizza
- 1lb Premium Ground Beef
- 1lb Lee Pork Breakfast Sausage
- 1lb Bratwursts Sausage
- (2) 5.3oz Hillshire BBQ Sandwiches
- 12oz Butterball Ground Turkey
- 26oz Chicken Fries, Heat & Serve
- 2lb Seasoned or Crinkle Cut French Fries
- 2lb Boil in Bag Broccoli & Cheese or Chicken Noodle Soup
- 1lb Fresh Frozen Green Beans
- 1lb Fresh Frozen Shoe Peg Corn
- 1lb Fresh Frozen Sliced Carrots
- 1lb Fresh Frozen Stir Fry Veggies
- 1lb Fresh Frozen Baby Lima Beans
- 1lb Fresh Frozen Strawberries
- 1 Box (10 Count) Aunt Jamima Buttermilk Waffles
- 6.25oz or 7.25oz Macaroni & Cheese
- 1 Dessert Item

Other box options include:

- Golden Cuisine Meals 10 Meals for \$29.50
- Fresh Frozen Veggie Box \$25.50
- Chicken Special \$20
- Premium Grilling Special \$41.50
- Super Saver Grilling Special \$36.50
- Seafood Box \$45.00

Neighborhood Watch

By Rick Maxwell, Safety and Security Committee

On April 18 VECA's Safety and Security meeting hosted Officer Rachel Wilkins of the Memphis Police Department, who came to talk about the MPD Neighborhood Watch program.

Why consider the Neighborhood Watch program? A Neighborhood Watch is one of the most effective and least costly ways to prevent crime and reduce fear. Neighborhood Watch fights the isolation that crime both creates and feeds upon. It forges bonds among area residents, helps reduce burglaries and robberies, and improves relations between police and the communities they serve.

Neighbors who know each another are less likely to be a target of crime because a Neighborhood Watch is neighbors helping neighbors, lending an extra set of eyes and ears for reporting crime and potential issues.

When neighbors band together to look out for each other, criminal activities tend to decrease. Neighborhood Watch also helps to build pride within the neighborhood and serves as a springboard for efforts that address other community concerns.

How does a Neighborhood watch start? To become an official Neighborhood Watch, three meetings must take place coordinated through the Memphis Police Neighborhood Watch. A motivated individual or a few concerned neighbors can spearhead the efforts to establish a Neighborhood Watch. First, contact the Neighborhood Watch coordinators, Officer Wilkins or Melanie Dorsey, and arrange for them to attend an initial meeting with your neighbors. Arrange two more meetings with neighbors; after the third meeting, the group is designated an official Neighborhood Watch group. The group stays active by meeting monthly or quarterly.

What resources are available for Neighborhood Watch groups? The VECA Safety and Security committee meets on the third Thursday of every month and is a great resource for any Neighborhood Watch group. The VECA Welcome Center is available at other times and is a great place for neighbors to hold their Neighborhood Watch meetings. Another regular meeting resource is the Crump Station Neighborhood Watch monthly meeting.

Is my street a Neighborhood Watch group already? There are about 70 Neighborhood Watch groups in the VECA area but more than half of them are inactive. To reactivate the group, please contact Officer Wilkins. With the new precinct lines, it is important to contact her and establish a connection; she will be a valuable resource.

What is the contact Information? For more information about the program, please contact the Neighborhood Watch coordinators, Officer Wilkins (636-4625) or Melanie Dorsey (636-4630), Monday through Friday between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m.

A Neighborhood watch is a great way to be proactive rather than reactive. Call and get started today!

Email VECA at veca@veca.org and our Safety and Security committee will be glad to offer advice or assistance.

Neighborhood Watch Mission

The mission of the Memphis Police Neighborhood Watch Association is to serve as an important crime prevention initiative. The goal is to reduce crime and improve the quality of life in neighborhoods.

Through the use of citizens in cooperation with local police, the Neighborhood Watch Association brings together law enforcement teams and private citizens in a cooperative effort in the fight against crime.

Neighborhood Watch represents a long-held faith in local neighborhoods as the cradle of community and safety among its citizens.

The Memphis Police Department's mission is to protect the public safety of all citizens of Memphis, but officers cannot do it without the eyes and ears of the community.

Anyone can join a neighborhood watch group. Don't wait until you or someone you know becomes a victim.

You can also be instrumental in this mission by participating in or starting a watch group in your own neighborhood.

For information on how to be a part of the neighborhood watch program contact officer r. wilkins or M. Dorsey at crump station 636-4627

Excerpts from the National Crime Prevention Council

Launched in 1972, Neighborhood Watch counts on citizens to organize themselves and work with law enforcement to keep a trained eye and ear on their communities, while demonstrating their presence at all times of day and night. (The program took off quickly: in just ten years, NSA data showed that 12 percent of the population was involved in a Neighborhood Watch.) Neighborhood Watch works because it reduces opportunities for crime to occur; it doesn't rely on altering or changing the criminal's behavior or motivation.

Tips

- Work with the police or sheriff's office. These agencies are critical to a Watch group's credibility and are the source of necessary information and training.
- Hold regular meetings to help residents get to know each other and to decide upon program strategies and activities.
- Canvass door-to-door to recruit members.
- Ask people who seldom leave their homes to be "window watchers," looking out for children and reporting any unusual activities in the neighborhood.
- Physical conditions like abandoned cars or overgrown vacant lots contribute to crime. Sponsor cleanups, encourage residents to beautify the area, and ask them to turn on outdoor lights at night.
- Work with small businesses to repair rundown storefronts, clean up littered streets, and create jobs for young people.
- Emphasize that Watch groups are not vigilantes and should not assume the role of the police. Their duty is to ask neighbors to be alert, observant, and caring—and to report suspicious activity or crimes immediately to the police.

Reading Club

By Kaitlyn Stigler



On Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, 15 eager 4th and 5th grade students walk from Snowden Elementary to the VECA Welcome Center to participate in Read Your Heart Out (RYHO). RYHO is a reading club that is designed to help students grow academically as well as help them find a community of friends that will encourage them to work hard and do their best. Katie Dunlap, a resident of VECA and member of Mercy Hill Church, had the idea to start the reading club. Through friendships she formed with kids in the neighborhood, she noticed that many kids struggled with reading. "The kids are at a huge disadvantage if they do not learn how to read at a young age. It not only affects their grades in school, but it also affects the doors that will be open for them in the future. It is very hard for someone to get a job or go to college if they do not know how to read," she said. Katie wanted to come alongside the teachers at Snowden and work with the students to improve their reading abilities.



After gathering four former teachers and a few other volunteers from Mercy Hill, Katie and the team quickly began planning the curriculum. The team decided to take a small-group approach so that each student would receive tutoring that fit his or her needs. In addition to teaching reading skills, the volunteers are concentrating on teaching character traits that are outlined in the Bible. Robin Mefford, a volunteer with RYHO, explained it by saying, "Yes, we want the students to know how to read; however, we also want them to learn qualities that will last past elementary school and influence their adult lives."



RYHO will conclude for this school year towards the end of May. However, the volunteers still plan to meet and work with the students throughout the summer. Katie concluded by saying, "We want this to be a place that the students look forward to coming to. We want them to learn and grow while having fun!"



If you are interested in volunteering with RYHO or donating to RYHO, please email Katie Dunlap at kgdunlap@gmail.com.

VECA Annual Membership Form – Become a Member

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