Sears Crosstown Building

Recent news of the Sears Crosstown Building development has many positive and long-term implications for VECA. The Commercial Appeal article detailing the project is available on the VECA website (veca.org). The article on the proposed development of the Sears building suggests it will affect VECA and especially the west end of the V&E Greenline.

The extensive and informative article was written by VECA resident Tom Bailey. It has photos and comments from Chris Miner, a VECA resident and co-director of Crosstown Arts, William Troutt, President of Rhodes, and Russ Wigginton, Vice President for External Programs, Rhodes.

Nine partners are committed to the project: The Church Health Center, Crosstown Arts, Gestalt Community Schools, West Clinic, Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare, Memphis Teacher Residency, St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, ALSAC, and Rhodes.

A note from Scott Morris, founder and executive director of the Church Health Center expresses a common sentiment:

If you are half as elated as I am about the Sears Crosstown development project, then I’m confident we’ll discover a lot of joy around Memphis over the next several years. This is an ambitious project. It will take time and money to accomplish, but, even more, it will take relationships. The nine founding partners know the Vollintine Evergreen community will be essential to the success of our vision.

The Church Health Center will be able to serve more people more efficiently once we bring all the parts of our work together in one place. I’m confident that we’ll also discover a greater sense of community among our employees and volunteers. As we get to know our new neighbors, we’ll be enriched by the sense of community that already exists among people who live in the Vollintine Evergreen area.

Let me thank you now, right at the start, for a sense of partnership in making Memphis a city that cares about the quality of people’s lives. As the Sears Crosstown project unfolds, you will contribute to the social, service, and creative connections that help people stay vibrant and energized. I anticipate great things ahead as we get to know each other.

Scott Morris

Sears building as seen from the west end of the V&E Greenline. Photo by Justin Fox Burks.

Fall Fest 2012

Sunday, October 14, 3 p.m.

What is Fall Fest? Fall Fest is a time for Vollintine Evergreen residents to gather simultaneously on their streets to meet neighbors and enjoy each other’s company. The first Fall Fest was held in 2011 and over 300 people participated on various streets in the neighborhood.

How do neighbors coordinate the event? An email to neighbors on your street is a great place to start. Follow up with a simple flyer on your neighbors’ doors for those who may not receive email.

Alert the neighbors of the date/time, where on the street to meet, and what food treats to bring. Let them know who to talk to if they have questions.

What should we do at our Fall Fest gathering? Since most folks are busy, they don’t spend a lot of time with their neighbors; simply having casual conversation and a bite to eat will be enough for the time to fly by. Having activities handy for the children is helpful (Frisbee, sidewalk chalk, bean bag toss, etc.).

Should we gather information from our neighbors who attend? This is a great time to start a neighborhood directory or update the current one.

Do we need to let VECA know we are participating? VECA would love to connect with you about your block’s activity. Please call the VECA Welcome Center 901.276.1782 or register via the website link below:

www.surveymonkey.com/s/VECAFallFest

Funding for Fall Fest is made possible by a Rhodes-Plough Grant.
VECA Clean-Up Committee

By Elise Hastings

In the past year, the VECA Clean-Up Committee has actively taken on preservation of green spaces and general upkeep of buildings. Dr. Michael Kirby, who was instrumental in the startup of this committee, first noticed the severe problems on Watkins Street. He comments, “There were several open and vacant houses with high weeds on gateway streets. This would allow people to break in and start destroying the property.” As a result, Kirby began to collaborate with area community service workers and volunteers. They have been diligently working to board houses, clear out debris from lots, and maintain a clean and attractive standard for the neighborhood. Volunteers come from all over. To help with the effort, the committee has welcomed youth groups hosted by Memphis City Beautiful, neighborhood church groups, and community service workers from Cleanup Memphis.

Once Watkins was under control, the Clean-Up Committee started to focus on other problem areas in the neighborhood with vacant lots and houses that needed boarding. The effort has also been fueled by many hours put in by the recent AmeriCorps team. They have mowed lots and cleaned about 30 properties since they have started work in VECA.

The AmeriCorps team can work for only a certain amount of time, and VECA needs neighbors to help maintain the improvements to these regenerated areas. Neighborhood block clubs have also collaborated with the Clean-Up Committee and have received help to maintain the attractiveness of their streets. The Lyndale block club got a lawnmower from the Rhodes Plough Grant to help mow several vacant lots.

Neighbors can contact VECA if they have an area that needs to be restored. The Clean-Up Committee may be able to provide labor and resources to start cleaning up. Members of the committee hope to motivate neighborhood leaders and groups to maintain the improvements and join the effort.

Kudos to VECA neighbor Café Eclectic for being presented Project Green Fork’s restaurant of the month this July. Café Eclectic helps reduce its impact on the environment by supporting local food vendors and by composting and recycling. The restaurant was highlighted on Andy Wise Restaurant Scorecard. The clip can be viewed at: http://projectgreenfork.org/cafe-eclectic.

By Sam Powers
Neighborland.com is a website where you can share ideas about your neighborhood and/or city, and collaborate with others to make those ideas happen. The way it works is very simple. Fill in the blank: I want ____ in Vollintine Evergreen. After that, your idea is out in the open and available for other users to support and comment on. Neighborland started in New Orleans and has had success in helping some projects get up and running there. Users collaborated to come up with a plan for adding DIY signage to bike paths. They also helped organize food trucks and developed a new website that makes it easier to locate food trucks in New Orleans.

Neighborland is new in Memphis, but users have already shared a lot of thoughts. Ideas range from abstract — “I want steep fines for building owners who let their buildings deteriorate and block sidewalks and streets in Memphis” — to specific — “I want to see the fountains going in front of City Hall in Memphis.” There are already a few ideas posted specific to VECA. Go find them, join the conversation, and submit your own.

http://www.neighborland.com

Wilson McCloy, Affiliate Broker
Crye-Leike Commercial
6525 Quail Hollow, Suite 401
Memphis, TN 38120
901-758-5670 wk.
901-758-5655 fax
901-481-5045 mb.

VECA neighbor Yohannes Dunlap gets into the swing of things

Spaces now available for sale or for lease on the edge of Evergreen Historic District!

Midtown Eye Care

Comprehensive Eye Health Exams
General and Speciality Contact Lens Fittings
Medical Management of Eye Disease
Large Selection of Designer Frames
Accepts Most Insurances

16 N. Mclean at Madison (Across from Finos) 901-725-EYES
VECA Summer Events

Two annual summer events were organized this year for neighbors by neighbors.

Held on August 7, National Night Out was fun and festive and many folks pitched in to make it successful. Thanks to the team at Mercy Hill Church for their help. They provided a large grill and the sound system; Peter Braswell and Matt Pruitt played music and helped with karaoke; Jared Stigler and Justin Smith grilled hotdogs; Jessica Smith served the food; Kaitlyn Stigler got folks signed in; and Ben Cox, Brad Dunlap, Rob Turnage and John Ernest helped with set-up and tear-down.

Thank you also to Marsha Bradley and her group from the Health Department’s KinderCare Program; Memphis Police Department; Memphis Fire Department for bringing the hook and ladder and letting children explore the truck; Sam Powers and the VECA Business Committee for the watermelons; and door prize contributors including Betty Faulkner, Gaston Library. Thank you, neighbors, volunteers and organizers for helping to make NNO a great event for the neighborhood!

Earlier in the summer, on June 24, was the VECA ice cream social. Many thanks to Baskin-Robbins. The event was held at McLean Baptist Church so VECA could share the strategic plan with the community; the location allowed an indoor space for conversation, and relief from the heat. As always, Glenn Hales and Charlene CaPece at McLean Baptist were gracious hosts.

Many thanks to so many neighbors for pitching in, including Melanie McAnally and Cynthia Stovall who co-chaired the event. Joey Goforth, Doug Barnes and Terri Barnes from Living Hope Church helped set up. The AmeriCorps team came and helped set up as well as scooped ice cream.

Garnette Stephens, Rick Maxwell, and Jill Williams were available to talk to residents as they came through to learn about the neighborhood. Natasha Strong made a Powerpoint presentation, which was shown inside. Neighbors came to listen, watch and ask questions.

Helping also with the event were Michael Castellarin, Ann George, Lottie Rich, Cathy Marcinko, Angie Powell, and Jackie Jones. Ellis Rich and Jarvis Sumlin played music; Beverly Marrero, Ellen Daniel and Betsy Kirby helped watch the pools.

Next year we are back to the V&E Greenline.
By Marci Hendrix

Adjusting to a new neighborhood can be a challenge for anyone. For VECA neighbor David Edwards, the ticket to a smooth transition was to get involved quickly. Edwards discovered Vollintine Evergreen in his search for a new home, having moved to Memphis in 2011 to become the director of food and nutrition at the Regional Medical Center. Finding the neighborhood pleasant and the houses a great value, he moved to VECA about a year ago.

Since he’s single and gregarious, Edwards was eager to meet people; his first neighborhood event was the annual VECA meeting in January 2012. “VECA is very well organized for a volunteer organization, with lots of people working to make the neighborhood and relations good,” he says. He also attended the V&E Art Walk – “It was awesome!” – and he looks forward to going back next year. Going to meetings of his neighborhood block club has helped him meet neighbors too. Edwards commends his neighbors for looking out for one another; sometimes just a simple hello is a great start.

An enthusiastic runner and cyclist, Edwards runs errands on his mountain bike and rides to work when his schedule permits. He enjoys riding his bike to Downtown and on the dirt trails at Shelby Farms. When he lived in El Paso, where he raised his three children, cycling on the desert trails offered much different scenery. When he gets a chance, he retreats to Asheville, North Carolina, to enjoy the mountains.

With his love of running, Edwards is hoping that VECA neighbors will be interested in starting a running group. If you would be interested in joining him, please contact the VECA Welcome Center at 901.276.1782 or veca@veca.org.

McLean Baptist Church
815 N. McLean Avenue
Memphis, TN 38107
901-274-3766
Pastor: Glenn Hales, Jr.
mcleanbaptistchurch.org

Long May You Run

By Marci Hendrix

Adjusting to a new neighborhood can be a challenge for anyone. For VECA neighbor David Edwards, the ticket to a smooth transition was to get involved quickly. Edwards discovered Vollintine Evergreen in his search for a new home, having moved to Memphis in 2011 to become the director of food and nutrition at the Regional Medical Center. Finding the neighborhood pleasant and the houses a great value, he moved to VECA about a year ago.

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Mail: P.O. Box 41463, Memphis, TN 38174-1463   |   Phn. 901.300.0664
Emi. info@mercyhillmemphis.org   |   www.facebook.com/mercyhillmemphis

Sunday Gathering, 5PM, Café Eclectic
603 N McLean Blvd
www.mercyhillmemphis.org

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).

The Church of the Good Shepherd
1971 Jackson Avenue
Memphis, Tennessee, 38107
901-725-9768

Father William N. Fry.III
Sunday Services - Holy Eucharist
7:30 & 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday - Holy Eucharist
10:30 A.M.

Rummage Sale, September 29, 8:30 am
By Angiline Powell

I arrived at Mrs. Thompson’s house late and embarrassed. I did not want to appear rude but I was lost; I had never been to this quiet part of VECA with its ranch-styles homes from the 1960s. I was there to learn about its history as well as more about the civil rights movement in Memphis from one of its leaders, Modeane Thompson.

Mrs. Thompson warmly received me as she invited me into her brightly lit sunroom. She offered me a beverage and introduced me to her eldest daughter, Andrea Thompson Adam. We shared our love of VECA and agreed it was the best-kept secret in Memphis. She smiled as she remembered her husband, Harry, to whom she was married for 55 years (Mr. Thompson passed away in 2006). She fondly says they had a “55-year honeymoon.”

In addition to Andrea, the couple had four other children, two girls and two boys, as well as seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. In 1971, when Andrea was in the fifth grade, the Thompsons moved back to Memphis from Birmingham, Alabama, having lived there for five years. It was a crucial time in the civil rights movement.

According to Mrs. Thompson, the Catholic school system decided it was time to desegregate. Little Flower Catholic School enrolled Andrea and the Thompsons joined the parish. Father Joseph E. Leppert, the second pastor of St. Thérèse Church and Little Flower School, and parishioner Margaret Dichtel actively supported the integration of the parish, the community, as well as the establishment of Vollintine Evergreen Community Association (VECA). Thompson and Dichtel were co-workers for Family Services as well as founding members of VECA.

Concerned with the practice of redlining, where banks would deny mortgages in certain areas (in this case where real estate agents were steering whites from moving to VECA) Dichtel saw the need for the community to come together to work toward integrating the neighborhood.

Thus VECA was started. Motivated by the goal of encouraging white neighbors to stay in the area, Mrs. Thompson approached Leppert and asked him to organize the churches in the neighborhood to stop the exodus and the devaluation of property. Dichtel, Thompson, Leppert, and VECA neighbor Velma Lois Jones, a civil rights leader, and others started VECA in 1971.

Mrs. Thompson retired from Family Services (a counseling agency) in 1992 after twenty years of service. She continues to serve her community and has been an advocate for change all of her life. She was a founding member of the Memphis chapter of the Panel of American Women (PAWS), a group of four women – one African-American, one Jewish, one Roman Catholic, one white Protestant – who sought to educate local groups about realities of racial and religious discrimination. Many times she filled two roles, since she is both African American and Roman Catholic. Her civic involvement is exhaustive and includes the NAACP, Y-Teens, Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, and of course VECA.

She received the 2007 Courage Award from Women of Achievement, Inc., and this past May she was named Diversity Memphis’ Humanitarian of the Year.

The rich history of our neighborhood is certainly revealed in the telling of Modeane Thompson’s story. To hear it in her own words, please visit the Crossroads to Freedom website. Type her name in the search field. The website is: http://www.crossroadstofreedom.org/
VECA Volunteer Liaison

VECA invites applicants for a Volunteer Liaison. This position is a 10-month, part-time position, 30 hours a month, and will be paid as an independent contractor.

The Liaison can work from home or at the VECA Welcome Center.

The VECA Liaison helps coordinate and connect new volunteers to the various VECA committees and projects.

For details on the job requirements and how to apply, please visit [http://veca.org](http://veca.org)

Funding for VECA Volunteer Liaison is made possible by a Rhodes-Plough Grant.

By Joel Parsons

It's time once again for the Metal Museum’s Repair Days, an annual fundraiser, auction, and blacksmith family reunion. Although they say “we can fix anything, but cars, cats and broken hearts,” Repair Days has been credited with mending a broken heart or two and they have straightened and polished a few automotive grills. Bring them your repairs, your bent silverware and dinged pots, your broken statuary and lawn furniture, your quirky commissions and your dull knives – they’ll fix them up for you in a jiffy, and sometimes even while you watch. All proceeds benefit the Metal Museum.

Please also take a moment to enjoy the museum. Saturday, October 6, is Family Fun Day with hands-on activities under the tent. You can make jewelry, cast pewter figures, watch a blacksmithing demonstration or make a scratch block for the iron pour. Repair Days is more than just repairs, so don’t miss out on all the fun.

Bring your repair items Thursday, Friday, or Saturday, which is the last day to bring new repairs. Sunday is devoted to completing repair work and having items available for pickup.

Check out their complete schedule of activities: [http://www.metalmuseum.org/repair_days.html](http://www.metalmuseum.org/repair_days.html)
One Neighbor’s Passion: Art and Fitness in Memphis

By Elise Hastings

As a young adult, lifelong Memphian Bob Rogers discovered both his hobbies of casting metal and cycling, and ever since he has actively embraced these passions in the dynamic Memphis scene. Rogers is a board member of the Metal Museum and an avid cyclist. He and his wife, Claude, have been VECA residents since 1985. Their two grown sons, Eric and Jonathan, attended Snowden.

Around the time of the Metal Museum’s opening, he became involved in casting metal through working for a local foundry, a factory where metal is melted and poured into molds. He helped bring casting to the Metal Museum by building the first foundry on the grounds. Since then he has taught classes such as introduction to green sand molding and the process of metal casting.

Rogers helps transform the artist’s idea of the sculpture into the physical world: “The artists come to me with the idea.” He has produced several of his own pieces; one of his molds of a cup, saucer, and spoon took first place during a molding competition at Sloss Furnaces in Birmingham. Rogers defines himself as an engineer, although he contends that “good engineering incorporates art, and good art incorporates engineering.”

Rogers, a long-time advocate for cycling in Memphis, gets lots of exercise by riding the local paths and streets. For years he has ridden with the Memphis Hightailers and other cycling groups.

One of his favorite nonprofits to work with is Livable Memphis, whose director, Sarah Newstok, he gives "high praise for starting a bike movement where almost none existed before. She is a masterful advocate of all things 'livable.'"

In 2010, Rogers was a major contributor to rewriting and updating Memphis bicycle ordinances.

Through his work at the Shelby County Health Department, Rogers is involved with National Bike to Work Day, an annual event coordinated through the Downtown Memphis Commission.

Rogers is manager of the Pollution Control Section. The office manages a grant from TDOT that is used to reduce emissions from transportation sources: "That usually means encouraging alternative transportation sources from the standard single occupancy vehicle trip, so bikes fit in well there." Shelby County was also the major funder of this year’s Bikesploitation II Film Festival, held at the Sears Crosstown building the day after National Bike to Work Day, and they helped with the Shelby Farms Greenline as well. “Our office provided the funds for the design of the Shelby Farms Greenline at a critical time to get it off the ground and have construction fully funded,” Rogers says.

Through federal grant dollars, Shelby County Pollution Control funded "Live From Memphis – the Bike Project," which includes bike safety PSA’s. Memphis was recently featured as the “Most Improved City” by Bicycling magazine in its annual Best Bike City in America rankings. Much of the credit rightfully goes to our neighbor Bob Rogers.

For Rogers, art and cycling go hand in hand: “Biking and casting are things I like doing as lifelong hobbies. Art and physical fitness are quality of life issues.”

Check out the VECA website for cycling resources including safety PSAs and bike ordinances:
http://veca.org/resources/biking-in-veca/
Trees for Neighbors Campaign

Not long after the windstorm of 2003, nearly 100 trees were planted in Vollintine Evergreen through a city-wide effort that VECA helped organize. With the help of a Rhodes-Plough grant, VECA is ready to organize another round of tree plantings in Vollintine Evergreen.

With this tree project, VECA neighbors will choose a free tree from a variety of 6-8 foot trees. Neighbors will work with professionals to select the right tree for the right place. Chosen trees will be ones that beautify and make streets more walkable and bikeable. All trees will be planted in locations visible from the street, so as to benefit the entire block.

Depending upon availability, possible trees will be Redbud, Crepe Myrtle, Sweetbay Magnolia, Willow Oak, and Red Maple.

A limited supply of trees is available, so please contact the VECA Welcome Center soon with your request for a tree. 901.276.1782.

Funding for Trees for Neighbors is made possible by a Rhodes-Plough Grant.

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: Marcia Hendrix
Chris Tague
Neighborhood Network: Gloria Singleton
Email: veca@veca.org

V&E Greenline: Megan Wilkins Reynolds
V&E 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

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/