



North End Connection

The Newsletter of the Creston Neighborhood Association

Summer 2015

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Neighbors support quality housing for all

By: Deborah Eid

The City of Grand Rapids convened two big meetings this spring with ongoing work to create solutions for a fair and equitable housing market in a time of brisk change.

In March a first time neighborhood summit brought several hundred participants to hear from speakers on equity and race in the housing market.

Three themes emerged; affordable housing, support for neighborhood associations and open communication between local government and the citizens.

From Seattle, Washington came keynote speaker Jim Diers, a national neighborhood visionary and advocate. Jim was touting the success of his Departments of Neighborhoods and their Neighborhood Matching Fund for locally grown volunteer driven original programming, like dragons on light posts, troll sculptures under bridges, painted pallet parks and expanded urban gardens.

Grand Rapids' city leader-

ship are looking at this model and considering the possibility of similar programs here.

For more on Jim's work read Neighbor Power: Building Community the Seattle Way (University of Washington Press) or go to neighbor-power.org.

Quality Housing for All:

As a follow-up to the citywide discussions we've been having with developers and other neighborhood associations concerned about supporting a diversity of incomes in our neighborhood, we had four people from Creston at the April "Great Housing Strategies" meeting convened by the City.

One of the presenters is our local statistics guru, Gustavo Rotondaro, who shared graphs about regional trends in where people are living and what our ages, races and incomes thus shedding light on the importance of affordability for all.

To be able to "afford" your rent or mortgage, an individual or family should pay no more

See Housing: , pg. 6



Welcome Aboard: Erik Jones!

By: Erik Jones

"The new Mac" is a title I have happily adopted as I've begun this journey to becoming the Creston Neighborhood Association's new community organizer.

In just a few short months I have had the pleasure of meeting our neighborhood block contacts, working with the police department, planners, commissioners and managers from the city, as well as partnering with Palmer, City High and countless other community groups.

Everywhere I go I am made aware of the shoes I must now fill, and I have gladly accepted the challenge.

Mac Brown spent 6+ years in the organization – laying the solid foundation that I will inevitably use as a launching pad for the work I hope to do here in Creston.

He helped build the community watch groups that I am now working with. He turned annual events such as Neighborhood Night Out and the Public Safety Appreciation Dinner into regular traditions that neighbors could feel ownership over.

My plan is to continue with these traditions, with empowering our neighbors, and with connecting everyone in Creston to the services they need.

At this point, it is only a matter of learning all our community has to offer, and how I can best facilitate these offerings to those who need them. I

dreams of growing our group of "hands-on" volunteers for neighbors ; when age or physical challenges make yard work and shoveling impossible, and even for childcare.

Because I come from a cooperative-minded background, I like to emphasize self-help, cooperation among groups (avoiding isolated silos working independently from one-another), and transparency in everything I do.

Please get in touch if you would like to get involved and help me realize CNA's vision of "A beautiful and diverse community where neighbors feel safe and proud, and business, housing, schools, and parks thrive". I look forward to working with you very soon!



Photo Courtesy: Erik Jones

Erik Jones recently joined the CNA staff, as our new community organizer. He hopes to continue the great work begun by organizer Mac Brown .

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New Living Green Leadership - Iantha Fyolek!

*Introducing Living Green's
New Co-Chair By Caroline (the
other co-chair)*

I would like to introduce Iantha Fyolek, the new co-chair for the Living Green in Creston environmental committee. Meeting Iantha, one immediately senses an intelligent, bright, and generous spirit, but I'll let Iantha speak for herself:

Can you tell us anything in particular that enticed you about volunteering in the neighborhood?

My family is very passionate about local resources, local communities, and building communities from the bottom up, not the top down. When my daughter needed some volunteer hours for school, it just made sense to work with an organization that was local to both home and school and has a focus on the environment.

What drew you to volunteering with Living Green in Creston, in particular?

We wanted a local organization that had an emphasis on environmental issues, so LGC was perfect for us! I have been involved with LGC since May of 2014, so just over a year. It was the 2014 Briggs Park Cleanup, actually!

How long have you lived in Creston?



Photo by Caroline:

The Briggs Park Butterfly Garden cleanup in the spring is one of many events hosted by the Living Green Committee

My family has lived in Creston since May of 2008.

When you think of "living green," what sorts of events or initiatives make your heart beat?

Sustainable, usable green spaces make me excited. I think there is this perception that, if a space is set up to be beneficial to the environment, it can't be used by kids and families. LGC has done a great job of showing that this is not the case. I was so impressed with their family and kid-friendly butterfly garden as well as the urban orchards. These spaces in our parks are green spaces that have a won-

derful positive environmental impact as well as being easily usable by children and families.

Thanks, Iantha, for the efforts and energy you have already contributed to our neighborhood!

Living Green in Creston is CNA's environmental committee; it is an open committee that welcomes all who would like to be involved. Please contact the CNA office for more information.

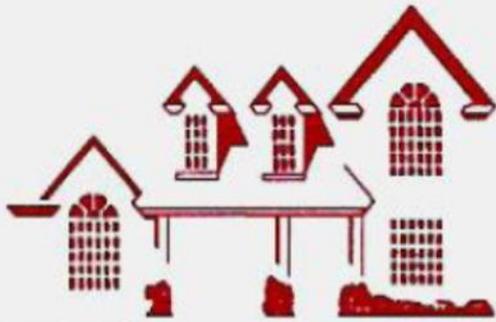
Streetcars: a glimpse into Creston's history

Street cars first began running in Grand Rapids in 1875, and were the primary source of public transportation until they were discontinued in 1935.

The main line into Creston ran up Taylor Street, and until recently the tracks were still visible. Now a few sections of brick sidewalk are all that remain to remind us of Creston's streetcars.

An upcoming book by retired GVSU professor Carl Bajema, will tell the history of Grand Rapids' streetcars, including detailed maps of streetcar routes.

Photo Courtesy: Grand Rapids Public Library (54-44-21)



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Frosty Boy, old friend, back in the neighborhood

By: Elizabeth Westra

A local couple, Kyle and Alyssa Naumann, leased the building at 1757 Plainfield that was recently vacated by Dizzy Dog and opened the new Frosty Boy on March 12 where there was one 30 years ago.

When they noticed the building empty, they figured it was a great location for another Frosty Boy. Families could walk and kids could bike over in the summer. City High students flock there for a snack before boarding their buses, and seniors often lunch there. The pool at Briggs Park will bring customers looking for refreshments.

When the weather is pleasant the parking lot fills up. Neighbors meet neighbors, and

old friends meet and become reacquainted.

The Naumanns goal is to create a neighborly feeling at their business. They even consider sponsoring a little league team next year. Kyle and Alyssa want to become involved in the neighborhood. They also wish to make visiting their Frosty Boy a tradition.

Alyssa, who operates the business, obtained experience working in ice cream shops during high school and college.



See Frosty Boy: pg. 7

Alyssa Naumann living her dream of owning and operating a neighborhood ice cream shop!
Photo Courtesy: Pete Tabberer

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Housing, cont. from pg. 1

than 30% of income for housing. For the average renter in Kent County that means paying no more than \$587.00 a month for housing.

Minimum wage earners can afford only \$384.00 a month. Another statistic relevant to all neighborhoods is that 22% of our residents citywide are paying more than the recommended 30% for their housing.

This is important because people paying too much cannot afford the other basics of life: food, transportation, clothing and health care. Fewer dollars for spending in our local businesses affects our recently recovering local economy and comes full circle back to neighborhoods.

Rotondaro concluded that

housing strategies “should be designed to attract new *and retain* existing residents,” and affordable housing is a tool for promoting and maintaining mixed income neighborhoods.

Density (more people moving back into the city and living in more populated neighborhoods) is important and stable communities with good quality affordable housing can support our schools. Regional trends, including our suburbs, show that big income disparities are real and poverty is moving into the suburbs. This impacts West Michigan as a whole.

Beginning in June and moving

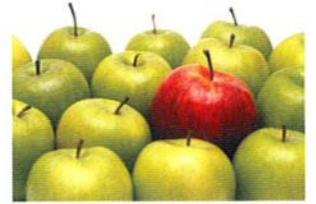
forward, four committees have formed as workgroups on the issues of land use and zoning, housing finance, economic workforce development and low-income and vulnerable populations. We appreciate Abram Bos, Glenn Disosway and Laurie Williams for attending the April meeting and being engaged with this conversation. CNA’s Deborah Eid

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Frosty Boy, cont. from pg. 5

Owning this business is the fulfillment of her dream to run an ice cream parlor. This is Alyssa's full time job for the summer, as she will be there seven days a week. Kyle, who is a local realtor, comes at night to help clean and close up. The shop is open 12 to 10 PM Monday through Sunday. They plan to stay open through September or mid-October, depending on the weather.

Frosty Boy offers not only ice cream treats such as flurries, cones and sundaes, but also fried foods like hot dogs, chili dogs, onion rings and fries. They serve some gluten free items as well as dairy-free, vegan and sugar free treats. They can make almost any creation that you dream up.

I enjoyed their signature lemon-twist soft serve which tasted creamy and refreshing including the touch of lemon.

Flavor bursts are another favorite, with vanilla centers and a ribbon of your favorite flavor around the outside. They offer all types of toppings like nuts, M&Ms, sprinkles and many others.

Their prices range from \$1.50 for a kiddy cone to any elaborate concoction you could make up.

Alyssa and Kyle are excited about this opportunity and welcome new ideas or suggestions.

They also seek classic, vintage photos of the old Frosty Boy, and what it used to look

like. So, if any customers have old photos to share, the pictures would add a special touch to their place. Maybe then someone will say, "It's just as I remembered."



Alyssa and Kyle Naumann, Creston homeowners and business partners in their new vintage establishment, Frosty Boy.

Photo Courtesy: Pete Tabberer

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Briggs' Night Out: Planes, Puppets and Things with Wings

By: Erik Jones

On the first Tuesday of every August, 38 Million neighbors across the country get together to celebrate a national event: Neighborhood Night Out.

CNA brought the event to Briggs Park in 2014 after many years of growing and transitioning from a simple campaign to keep porch lights on. Today, the annual celebration serves as a community-building event that brings neighbors and families together with the city's public safety services, all under the auspices of outdoor family fun that is open to everyone.

This year, the event will take place on August 4 at Briggs Park, from 4-7pm.

Activities and attractions will include a Kevin Kammeraad and the Cooperfly Puppet Troupe, butterfly release, a remote controlled plane dem-

onstration, painting and origami, as well as visits from the GRPD's Special Response Team, K-9 unit, Creston's community police officer and captain, and a fire engine from the GRFD. The Briggs Park pool will be open until 6pm, and is free to all Grand Rapids residents.

All activities are family friendly and FREE – including the food! If you or a family member would like a *hands on* role in the butterfly release event, \$1 tickets will be available at Briggs Park the day of the event – one ticket will allow you or a loved one to personally release one monarch butterfly!



Photo courtesy: Erik Jones

Kids play in a fire engine at last year's National Night Out.

We hope to see you at this year's Creston Neighborhood Night Out.

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 5:00pm Puppets
 6:00pm Butterflies

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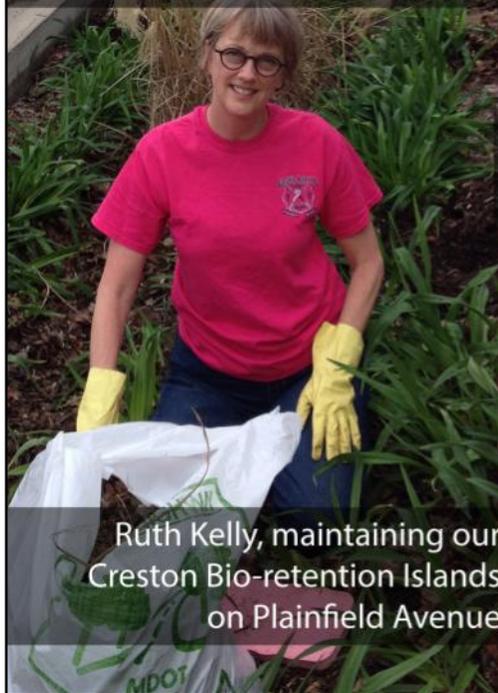
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North End Connection
2015 Issue 2 (Summer)

Creston Neighborhood Association

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Board meets the 4th Thursday of most months. 6:30 pm @ CNA offices.

The North End Connection is a community newsletter published 4 times a year with a circulation of 1000 and is distributed in various local businesses. Advertising space is available. Contact our office for rate information.

The North End Connection is produced by volunteers and published by the Creston Neighborhood Association. The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the staff, Board of Directors or membership of the association.

CNA is partially funded by the City of Grand Rapids Community Development Block Grant and Justice Assistance Grant Funded Programs.

Photo on Page 12 Courtesy of GRPD
Captain Mike Maycroft

Volunteer Opportunities at CNA

Volunteers are important to the Creston Neighborhood Association! If you would like to get involved, here are some areas where you can help.

YES! Count me in:

- Communication Committee:** Promote the work of CNA through writing, social media, photography, graphic design, ad sales and event PR.
 - Volunteer and Membership Committee:** Encourages participation in CNA projects and events.
 - Fundraising Committee:** Plans & implements events to sustain CNA services and programs
 - Public Safety Committee:** Connects neighbors with one another through public safety neighborhood block clubs and trainings
 - Living Green in Creston:** Promotes the environmental health of the Creston neighborhood
- Students interns are invited to get involved with all areas of our mission!**

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Neighborhood Night Out

Tues. August 4

4– 7pm @ Briggs Park

4:00pm Planes

5:00pm Puppets

6:00pm Butterflies

Creston Days Beer Tent and Car Show

Sat. September 12

11am– 9pm @ Creston Business District

CNA Dumpster Days

Sat. October 3rd

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NEW Members Only Hour 8-9am!

All neighbors 9am-12pm

TBA 2nd Annual Orchard Celebration

In October—Hosted by LGC

Aberdeen Park



Summer 2015

North End Connection