



North End Connection

The Newsletter of the Creston Neighborhood Association

Winter 2016

In This Issue!

2016 Year in Review

Page 2

Change in Seasons, great neighbors needed

Page 3

CNA Connectors Corner

Page 4

Local History

What was Creston Brewery?

Page 7

Looking ahead—CNA's 40th Year of Community Organizing is around the corner—2019.

Continue our proud legacy with a year end gift at crestongr.com or send your gift to 205 Carrier St. N.E. 49505

Bikes, Brews, Breads – Creston's Main St. captures new investments with clear Vision

By: Deborah Eid

Change happens organically it is said. Businesses locate in neighborhood business districts for a host of different reasons. And, since 2006, CNA's vigorous organizing work done around our local Main St. has been a key of those organic ingredients making change happen!

Last July for the first time since the 2012 creation of the North Quarter Corridor Improvement District there was money in the bank and the tax increment financing dollars were made available to the group.

These monies allowed the group to contract with CNA and our executive director for a year of quarter time corridor management in 2015-16. Volunteers on the North Quarter committees stepped up and created a bike rack program with a logo to market the area this with installations spring of 2017.

The engagement of our business owners is tremendous as they have committed over these years to doing the heavy lifting involved with creating our 2015 North Quarter vision for "an engaged and dynamic community that honors heritage and innovation with a variety of services, entertainment and housing to welcome neighbors

and visitors."

This variety of services is here. New retailers include bike shops, massage therapy, hair salons, arts and crafts, an art gallery, brewery, coffee shop, architects, a bridal shop, a skate shop, a brewery and in 2017 two Cheshire area restaurant/cafes with exciting new menu offerings. Market rate housing developers also plan to break ground in the coming year.

The leadership of the North Quarter CID and the Creston Cheshire and Monroe North Business Districts is committed to this vision. We honor the contributions of former marketing director for CarStar Collision, Laurie Williams, for years of service given to planning and organizing the Creston Car Show, serving on the board of the Creston Business Association and North Quarter CID. Inspired by her example, we will offer a fresh new event highlighting our proximity to area parks and our new identity as a bicycle friendly "adventure district" on May 20 2017. The North Quarter plans a family friendly Tour de Quarter. Volunteer or join us in the activities including a bike parade and scavenger hunt.



Year in the neighborhood - 2016 with CNA

August Neighborhood Night Out was very well attended. Catered Creations provided hotdog suppers to over 600 people.

Activities:

Family Yoga with Minds on Mats, Kevin Kammeraad and Cooperfly Puppets, free haircuts, Native Butterfly Release, music by The Porters, free pools, GRPD canines, GR Fire Dept. water play, arts and crafts, face painting and bubbles.

Please join us in thanking these neighborhood business sponsors:

Friend of NNO—Kent County Credit Union

Puppet Pal—CarStar Collision

Butterfly Buddy—Switchback Gear Exchange

Music Maker—Dale Gould Insurance, **Community Connectors**—

Creston Christian Reformed Church, Kingma's, MPCU, Cheshire Grill, Edward Jones, New Life Christian Fellowship and over 25 volunteers through the evening.

CNA Annual Membership Meeting - October 27, 2016

Guest speaker David Marquardt, spoke on the North End and our 393 Acres of Green-space. The presentation was engaging and our City of GR Parks Director enjoyed the Q&A and

the opportunity to announce that starting in Spring 2017 the long awaited repairs to the Huff Park boardwalk through the wetlands will be restored with "floating walkways" that will provide a tech solution to the flooding that has plagued our hidden jewel of a neighborhood park asset for years.

Deborah Eid presented the 10 year history of our North Quarter organizing and plans for the future and highlights from the last year : Bicycle Safety training, City high students mini-murals on utility boxes, gardens, Living Green in Creston events, the formation of a citywide initiative to create a community owned grocery store, the GR Food Coop Initiative, North East Wellness Coalition focus on mental health and obesity and building partnerships between hospi-



Photo Courtesy: CNA

Neighbors run in the three legged race at the 2nd Annual Urban Orchard Celebration at Aberdeen park on Sunday, October 4 2015.

tals, churches, non-profits and community, senior citizen aging in place support for yardwork and snow removal. See page 4 for Volunteer Awards. 4 new board members were elected to 3 year terms. See page 11.

Building our Community - 2017-19

CNA's board and staff are finalizing a strategic plan to guide our valuable organizing time and money for the next 3 years. In 2019 we celebrate 40 years of strong connected community building and invite you to engage with us around upcoming oppor-

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Winter, Spring, Summer or Fall: All You Have To Do Is Call

By: Erik Jones and D. Eid

Throughout the seasons CNA gets calls from neighbors looking for help. A single mother needs help mowing her lawn, a man hurt his back and needs help shoveling his driveway, a retiree on a tight budget needs services she can't afford when going to a professional landscaping and snow removal company.

Whatever the reason, people are looking for help from their neighbors, and whether you are a teenager looking for some after-school income, or just someone with a little extra time and energy, you may be just the person they need!

Last year, CNA worked to pair residents in need with nearby neighbors willing to assist. To be ready for the snow-shoveling season already upon us, we would like to expand this resource list – as we currently have more neighbors looking for help than volunteers to fill those needs.

If you would like to help your neighbors in need, and have the time and energy to do so free of charge, contact CNA!

If you or your child or your brother or whoever you may

know is in need of a little supplemental income, we can pair them with a neighbor who is willing and able to pay for those services.

Conversely, if you or a family member or neighbor needs help raking, shoveling, or mowing – either because of short-term or long-term circumstances – sign up for our program, and let us know if you can afford to pay the teen around the corner for helping you out, or if you need help on a strictly volunteer basis.

If we can harness the power of volunteers throughout the span of our neighborhood, we are reaching our goal – saving money for our economically disadvantaged neighbors, keeping sidewalks and driveways clear for our children walking to school, and our yards looking nice and cared for.

To sign up for the Creston Village program, as helper or recipient, contact Sue Capps at 454-7900 ext. 23 or scapps@crestongr.com.



When It's More Than Just A Little Clutter -GR Area Hoarding Taskforce can help. Although reality shows can be entertaining, this mental wellness challenge is real and affects families and communities. 15 partner organizations now work with CNA's neighbors and concerned family members to raise public awareness and improve quality of safe interior living by coordinating resources. Call 456-3053.



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Volunteer Connectors Corner

CNA welcomes Heather Grit to the CNA Board of Directors!

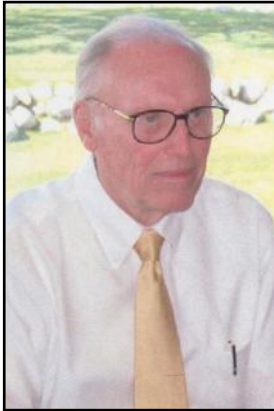
Heather Grit moved to the Creston Neighborhood in 2010 and with her a passion for community building. Originally contacting CNA over a blighted house on her street, CNA helped Heather connect with surrounding neighbors with similar concerns to address the issue together. Today Heather and her neighbors continue to come together for issues of Public Safety and community enrichment. Heather had also become an active volunteer with CNA too! Heather is a floral designer soon to have her own store front. She lives in the neighborhood with her husband Rob, a Creston neighbor of 17yrs and her two children Weston and Josie.



Heather Grit and Family
Photo: Heather Grit

CNA Remembers Hank Swart

CNA recognizes a great neighbor in the Cheshire area. On Oct. 27



Hank Swart
Photo: GR Press

Hank Swart Jr., lifetime musician and volunteer organizer of the Aberdeen Celebration in the Park and Calder City Band leader passed away at the age of 93. His musicianship led to co-founding

the River City Jazz Ensemble, performing for 4 presidents and first ladies and all around Western MI. He was active with 2nd Congregational Church and with other neighbors organized Aberdeen Celebration for many years. For 31 years the NENA and the CNA neighborhood associations created and hosted this free family event which sparked a chain of progress and reinvestment for this park that continues to grow. Hank owned Northtown Hardware, next door to longtime family owned business Kay Pharmacy. Mike Koelzer, owner and pharmacist offers these thoughts about his friend: "Hank knew me before I even knew him. Owning the hardware store next to our pharmacy, there was never a time when I did not know him. After the hardware closed years ago, Hank came to work part time at the pharmacy. He's been a daily part of my life. Through the years, Hank would tell me I was special to him and he loved me, and I would say the same to him. I miss him."

CNA Recognizes Great Volunteers

Miss K as she's affectionately called by her city art students earned the Mary Bueche Public Safety award for her big investment of time in the student designed public art mini-murals this year with Reb Roberts.



Anne Krenselewski, City High .
Photo Courtesy: CNA

Commissioner Ruth Kelly awarded the Tommy Allen Neighborhood Advocate for her steadfast service to our North



Ruth Kelly, Tommy Allen &
Deborah Eid
Photo Courtesy: CNA

End citizens and her work as a quiet heroine in the creation of the successful water quality islands and her constant policy and advocacy work on housing that is affordable for all.

"A Place of Peace"

By: Brienna Gerard and Mandi Michielsen, Creston Community Gardens Coordinators

A gardener sits in a lawn chair, the sun sets behind nearby buildings. She watches birds as they land on a long curved sunflower stem and twist their necks up to the open-faced flower.

Over the past three months, the gardener has cared for this flower along with many others. She watches as the birds peck apart the beautiful sunflower head, eating the seeds out of it.

The gardener could shoo the birds away but instead she is grateful to be able to watch the show. She understands the cycle of life and with that understanding comes the ability to practice letting go.

The community garden on Carrier Street is a place of peace for many local residents. We not only create a sanctuary for native bees, bugs, and birds but we support the health of our community.

Gardening promotes all kinds of healthy habits like reflective thinking, physical exercise, problem solving, and let's not forget nutritious diets. Mother nature takes care of us if we are open to her healing.

Creston Neighborhood Association ensures success of the garden every year. To maintain the space, the association relies heavily on the spirit of volunteerism that is alive and well in Grand Rapids.

Creston Community Garden has increasing community interest and support every year. This year we again were able to grow and donate over 150 lbs of produce to our local food

bank and host two groups of gardening classes that met regularly. Artists Creating Together expanded their programming to two classes, one 16 week adult "Art of Gardening" class and a 4 week youth Gardening class. Catherine's Health Center Continued it's Wise Women programming in the garden too.

The year ended with our second annual Stone



Photo Courtesy: CNA
Members of the Artists Creating Together class pose for a photo at the Creston Community Garden in 2015 where the classes meet.



Soup workday in which we cooked soup from salvaged garden vegetables and parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme from the shared herb garden, while putting the garden to rest.

If you would like to be involved in our Creston Community Garden next year, contact CNA! And we are seeking a part time (5 -10 hours weekly) coordinator for our 2017 season. Contact Sue Capps, CNA Executive Assistant

Photo Courtesy: CNA

and Carrier Crest Apartments Manager at 454-7900.

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Local History

In 1880, a 14-year old wood carver Boudewyn DeKorne, moved with his family from Netherlands to Zeeland.

According to a history of the company "He quickly established a reputation in the area for his intricate carvings and was soon working as a Master Carver, producing hand-made wood furniture for the prestigious Berkey & Gay Furniture factory in Grand Rapids."

Sometime in the early 1900s he went into business for himself producing hand-carvings and furniture for homes, churches and libraries, both locally and throughout the US.

1916, Boudewyn's son, Lewis, began to work in his father's Ottawa Avenue shop.

It was sometime around this time that they began using the name DeKorne Furniture Company. They eventually moved the business to 1504 Plainfield, and in 1929 built a new store there.



The DeKorne Furniture Building looks little different today than it did in 1934 when this photo was taken. The building is now home to the new Creston Brewery.

Photo Courtesy: Grand Rapids Public Library (125.c009134)


Photo Courtesy: CNA

This store stayed open for the next 66 years.

Lewis' son Jack joined in 1946 and in the same year added a relatively new, quality line of fur-

niture from Vermont called Ethan Allen, and this brand eventually became the company's exclusive product line.

Lewis retired in 1962. In 1965



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for Creston Neighborhood



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The DeKorne Furniture Company



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An Ad from 1931 advertising the DeKorne Furniture Company as the place to shop "for those who appreciate the finer things in life."

Photo Courtesy: Grand Rapids Public Library (337-3_March 1931)

the company added a second store at 3450 28th Street, and eventually opened additional stores in Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, Muskegon, Lansing and Traverse City.

Jack DeKorne retired in 1991, after which the company was owned and operated by his sons David and Dale.

David and Dale sold the retail portion of the business to Ethan Allen in 2005. The name DeKorne Furniture Company lives on today, but only as a legal entity.

This history was compiled from the DeKorne Furniture vertical file at the Grand Rapids Public Library. If you would like more information you can see this file for yourself in the Local History and Special Col-

lections department at the GRPL's Main branch.

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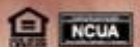
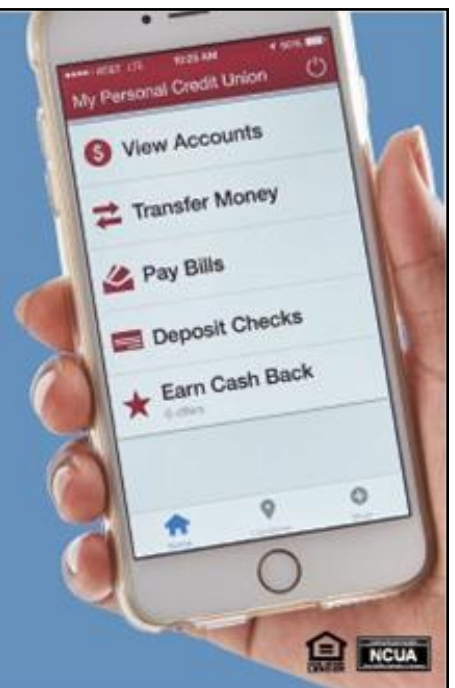
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North End Connection
2016 Issue 1 (Winter)

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.

Be a Volunteer Connector with 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:

- ☐ **Communications** : Promote the work of CNA through writing, social media, photography, graphic design, ad sales and event PR.
- ☐ **Volunteer Mgmt.** : Organize participation in CNA events and projects, assist with member/volunteer database .
- ☐ **Fundraising** : Plan & implement events to sustain CNA's mission
- ☐ **Block Organizer**: Connect neighbors with one another through block club organizer and communication, participate in trainings
- ☐ **Living Green in Creston: New leaders invited** - Promotes the environmental health of the Creston neighborhood
- ☐ **Other Skills/Interests** _____

Students interns are invited to get involved with all areas of our mission!

You may contact me at:

Name: _____ **Phone Number:** _____

Email Address: _____

☐ Yes, I want to support CNA

Name(s) _____

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- ☐ I wish to make a contribution of _____

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Community Calendar

CNA Calendar

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Jan. 10th 4:30pm, Show Me the Money

St. Al's Church, Education Event

CNA Board Mtgs.

Th. Jan. 26, Feb. 23rd, March 23 6:30pm

March 4th 3rd Annual Neighborhood Summit

March 11th CNA Townhall with Pancakes

May 2017 Art Battle For Community

May 2017 Tour De Quarter Bicycle Festival



Winter 2016

North End Connection