

The Northside Voice

December 2015 : Issue No. 3

Neighborhood Initiative Program Update

As mentioned in the last issue of the Northside Voice, the City of Spartanburg has received funding as part of the South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority Neighborhood Initiative Program (NIP). The aim of this program is to help prevent foreclosures in the Northside Neighborhood by eliminating blighted properties and stabilizing neighborhoods. The City is partnering with the Northside Development Group and area contractors to demolish identified homes and improve the remaining parcels. One demolition has already taken place, and several more are now in the process of being safely demolished.

The NDG will be distributing door hangers in areas where demolition will occur to inform residents of houses included in the program and detail the information about the Neighborhood Initiative Program (NIP). Any questions about the program may be directed to the NDG either by email or phone: info@spartanburgNDG.com, 864.598.0097.

Owner Occupied Home Repairs

In the last issue of the Northside Voice it was mentioned that NDG would be kicking off the Cleveland Heights Neighborhood Improvement Program (CNIP), which will provide opportunities for home repairs for homeowners, starting on Howard and Leonard Streets. NDG will partner with CommunityWorks for case management support, and the Butterfly Foundation to leverage additional emergency repair funding through the South Carolina Housing Trust Fund.

A workshop was held on November 19th at Cleveland Academy of Leadership for homeowners that had previously applied to the program as well as other Cleveland Heights residents that might be

interested in future opportunities. The purposes of the workshop were to educate residents on the new program and help them complete some of the paper work required to participate in the program. CNIP Field Coordinators will follow up with residents that attended the workshop and be a central point of contact to access information about the program. The Field Coordinators will help homeowners apply for home repairs and make sure they have all the necessary documentation to determine eligibility for funding.

If you have any questions about the program you can contact NDG or the Northside Voyagers.



Field Coordinators Debby Moore and Phoenix Miller

Early Childhood Development Center

In September, NDG contracted with the Institute for Child Success (ICS) to help facilitate a process that would ultimately create a plan for an Early Childhood Development Center on the Northside. Preliminary meetings and previous information collected from the community stated that residents want this center to become more than just a place for young children to get a great education. These conversations led the committee to focus on a “two generation Approach.” This approach focuses on the family as well as the young child.

Discussions will continue through the first of the year about what type of program and center should be built. ICS should provide a detailed plan and budget by February of 2016.

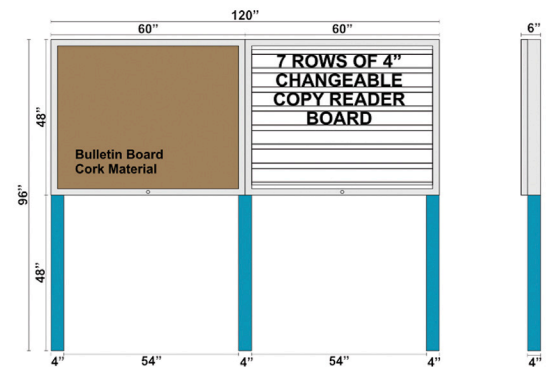
Our Partners



New Community Sign for the Northside

The Northside Develop Group has partnered with the City of Spartanburg and the Northside Voyagers to create a community sign for sharing news and events. The sign is expected to be placed on 516 Howard Street within the neighborhood, just next to Harvest Park, in front of the greenhouse and facing out onto Howard Street.

This sign has two main sections and will serve multiple purposes. On one half, the sign will feature a bulletin board where residents and stakeholders can post flyers about upcoming community events, news, job opportunities, educational programs, and volunteer and service opportunities. Residents and community members who may be walking by the sign will be able to utilize the bulletin board. The other half of the sign will share upcoming events and will feature the latest community event available in the neighborhood. This portion of the board will be more visible for those who may be driving: they will be able to see the updates and news at a glance.



The location of the sign has been strategically planned to place it in an area with a large amount of foot traffic to ensure that news spreads quickly and effectively within the neighborhood. The sign will also be clearly visible to those who visit the Monarch Café and the Hub City Farmer’s Market, which will hopefully draw more interest to happenings within the Northside neighborhood and encourage more and more people in the City and the County to visit and see all the wonderful things the Northside has to offer.

The proposal for the design of the sign is currently under development and the City has committed funds to be allocated for the project once the proposal has been approved. Every effort is being taken to ensure that the design of the sign is cohesive and fits well within the neighborhood. No exact dates have been agreed upon as yet, but the NDG hopes to have a more definite timeline for completion of the project within the next few months.

The rendering above represents a possible design for the sign, but is not finalized yet.

Cleveland Park Playground Construction October 20-25

Community members came together for an intensive week of service from October 20-25 to jumpstart the progress on the new playground at Cleveland Park. 2,332 volunteer spots were filled through the website, and many other walk-in volunteers came during the week for a total of over 10,000 community volunteer hours during a six-day period. All skill levels were welcome to join in, from beginner to professional, and the playground equipment was installed rapidly. Anyone who came to visit the site during that week would have seen a cheerful hubbub of progress as local groups and individuals worked together to build.

Spartanburg County Parks Department Development and Public Relations Manager Marcia Murff was responsible for recruiting and organizing volunteers. Once on site, volunteers were placed into jobs by Leathers and Associates employees, the oldest community build playground designing firm in the United States. Their concept is different than most in that many of the special features and design elements are created on site, which is why the volunteers were so vital to the construction process.

While the project is not yet complete and will likely be under construction for several weeks, community members who wanted to serve completed the bulk of the work in the first week. The volunteers worked in groups of 150 for 4-hour shifts and were provided with meals, courtesy of Guy Mallory of KBBQ. Volunteers under the age of 18 were allowed to participate, as long as they had adult supervision. For people who wished to volunteer but had young children, childcare was provided.

This project came just four years after the tragic death of a six-year-old boy, Benji Easler, who was killed when the old children’s train that used to occupy the space derailed. This rebuild was especially emotional for Benji’s father, Dwight Easler.

Jim Campbell, Interim Director for Spartanburg County Parks came up with the idea in July of 2011 after the old playground was removed in May 2011. County Council approved his proposal and then it was necessary to wait until pending litigation was complete before the site could be developed.

Groups of volunteers included the Spartanburg Housing Authority, Bonner Scholars from Wofford College, City Council members,

Converse College, USC Upstate, Spartanburg Community College, Spartanburg Methodist College, some of the school districts, several churches, the United Way, Partners for Active Living, the Mary Black Foundation, Spartanburg Regional, Spartanburg County Foundation, AFL, Milliken, Dennys, American Credit Acceptance, Carolina Title Loans, Performance Pipe, BMW, Northside Development Group, Carolina Pregnancy Center, Renfrow Brothers, High School JROTC groups, as well as many others.

“There are so many wonderful stories of healing, friendship, help and love that happened during the week, which made the project far more meaningful than the simple building of a playground. It was a powerful experience for so many,” Said Murff.

“It was a beautiful representation of community service because the entirety of Spartanburg was represented in the volunteers. It was really wonderful having the opportunity to join with this community to build the playground,” said Helen Davidson, a first-year student and Bonner Scholar at Wofford College.

“We all worked together toward a common goal: to build a safe and sustainable playground for the children in our community to use for years to come,” Said Northside Development Group Bonners Scholar, Emily Batista. “Overall, I really enjoyed the experience and I am grateful for the Spartanburg Parks Department and all of the community partners who helped put together a wonderful community event.”

Any questions about the project can be directed to Marcia Murff at: (864) 494-1801 or marcia.murff@spartanburgparks.org





Habitat For Humanity Houses

In our last issue 3 Habitat for Humanity houses were highlighted as under construction on North Forest Street. Two homes will be complete by the first of the year, and the third will be finished shortly after.

All Habitat Spartanburg homes are three bedrooms, two bathrooms with an open floor plan and are Energy Star 3.0 certified. They are constructed of HardiPlank and have architectural shingles. Homeowners must complete “sweat equity” hours working on their home construction or another Habitat home. Homeowners must make a down payment and have a 30-year, zero-percent interest loan.

Victoria Durham will close on her home at 541 North Forest St. on Monday, Nov. 23. A beautiful home with great landscaping and two dogwoods in the front yard, Durham is excited to be a part of the Northside neighborhood. Durham’s home is sponsored by the J.M. Smith Foundation, First Presbyterian Church, Wells Fargo, Bank of America and the Eldred and Sarah Wooten Prince Foundation.

Shonta Minor, and her three children, will move into their home at 525 North Forest St. in late December

or early January. “Having a home of my own is a dream come true – it’s a true blessing and I’m ready to be a part of the Northside, a place I’ve already heard great things about,” she said.

The center home in the three-home build is sponsored by Denny’s Corporation. Michael and Loretta Singleton and their child will move into the first story-and-a-half construction that Habitat Spartanburg has built. The top level will feature the master bedroom. The Denny’s Habitat Home will be complete in late January.

“Our partnership with the Northside Development Group has been phenomenal,” said Lynne Shackelford, director of development and marketing. “Families moving into the Northside will have the opportunity to be a part of a true, grassroots neighborhood revitalization effort that has received national attention. We’re so proud that our homeowners will have the chance to walk to Harvest Park, visit the future Dr. T.K. Gregg Community Center and participate in other active living opportunities.”

Upcoming Events

Monarch Café

Open Daily
498 Howard Street

Cleveland Park Northside Neighborhood Association Meeting

Every second Thursday at 6pm at the Cleveland Academy of Leadership.

Northside Advisory Committee Meeting

January 20 and March 16 at 8:30am. Meeting locations will be announced as the venues are confirmed.

V From The Voyagers



Voyager Spotlight

Maxine Kelly is a Northside Voyager who has served as an inspiration to many Northside Community members and Northside Voyagers. Maxine is an active mother and grandmother, and enjoys spiritual dance and caring for her family. In addition to this, she is also active in many groups throughout the Spartanburg and Northside community, including Piedmont Community Action, Divine Care, Cleveland Academy PTO, Victoria Gardens Resident Counsel, True Bread Women’s Ministry, and Intercession Prayer Team.

In addition to completing the Voyager training classes Maxine recently attended a Leadership Conference held July 28-August 2, 2015 by speaker Virgin Addams on discipleship and community outreach, and will soon continue this training in a longer term class. Maxine says that she “enjoys being a Voyager because it gives her opportunities to show [she] cares for and wants to support her community.” The Northside Development Group would like to recognize Maxine for her exceptional dedication and effort put toward the Northside Voyager Program.

Northside Voyagers: Awards and New Members

The Northside Voyagers are a critical partner in the Northside community. They serve as community organizers, activists, and as a support group for the Northside Development Group. This community commitment was recognized by Wofford College during their annual Distinguished Alumni Awards Ceremony during Homecoming Weekend, October 23-25, 2015. The Northside Voyagers were awarded the Distinguished Citizen Award for their continued community engagement.

The Voyagers are also welcoming five new members to the resident leadership group this December. These residents participated in a six month leadership course facilitated by Stan Davis, leadership development consultant. The training focused on building leadership abilities such as building a high performance leadership team, leading community meeting, and leverage individuals’ skills effectively.

Stan commented that “(t)he training program used real-time homework assignments so that the participants had several opportunities to use what they had learned from the training sessions. Each participant demonstrated a good grasp of the program materials and displayed a high degree of comfort in using the tools and techniques in a group setting. They are very excited about future opportunities to use their new knowledge after their graduation celebration in December.”

Linda Askari, one of the new members says that “(m)y training was awesome! I have been in several other training for leaders/communities in different capacities. This was directly focused from A-Z on community, people, change, how to conduct meetings, diversity, one brick at a time and still having a vision on what the long time goal might me. I live in the community where the original Voyagers were formed. I chose not to participate at the beginning, but I am ready to continue to help out in our community where needed.”



S Community Partners Spotlight

Butterfly Foundation Classes, Awards, and Now Accepting SNAP Benefits!

There are several pieces of good news from The Butterfly Foundation and Monarch Café: The first is that Class 12 of the Culinary Job Training Program begins January 26, 2016. Culinary Job Training program is a 15-week program designed to prepare individuals for a career in the food service industry.

They are now accepting referral forms until January 13, 2016. The first step in applying for the Culinary job Training Program is to be referred. Referral forms are at the Butterfly Foundations offices (498 Howard St) or on their website www.butterfly-sc.com/culinary-job-training-program.html. Individuals wanting to apply for the program must be referred. Referral can be filled out by anyone, i.e Counselor, Pastor, Family Member, Case Worker, Probation officer, etc. Once the referral form is received via in person or fax (864-707-2224), our Culinary program coordinator will contact the individual and set up a time for an interview. Classes will begin on January 25th, 2016.

In addition to this, the President/Founder and CEO of Butterfly, Liberty Canzater, will be recognized as the Minority/Woman-Owned Business Person of the Year! The Spartanburg Chamber recognizes the Minority/Woman-Owned Business Person of the Year, the Minority Business Advocate of the Year, and the Rising Star of the Year at the 2015 Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Awards Banquet. Liberty will be receiving this honor at a Banquet held December 1st at the Spartanburg Marriott.

The Monarch Café's food store is also now accepting SNAP benefits! Anyone that receives SNAP can now spend their benefits locally on fresh, healthy foods! So stop by the Monarch Café today to see their wonderful programs, have a snack in the café, and take home some fresh produce for dinner!



Save \$1,000 and Get \$3,000!

CommunityWorks' IDA Program provides a 3 to 1 match on savings! If you save \$1,000, we will match you with \$3,000 that can be used toward a purchase of a car, first-time home purchase, secondary education, or a small business purchase. All you have to do to qualify is be employed at least part-time and meet our income limits. You must save at least \$25 per month for 6 to 24 months. Once you meet your goal, you get your match! You can find more information on our website at CommunityWorksCarolina.org or by calling 864-235-6331.

