

NEIGHBORHOOD ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Following a nomination and application process, six neighborhood organizations (two are splitting an award) will receive Neighborhood Achievement Awards for outstanding service to their communities. Each group will receive a certificate and a check for \$75 to be used for the betterment of the community. Here is a brief summary of their achievements.

These awards demonstrate that, by working together, neighbors can accomplish great things for their communities.

Forest Heights Neighborhood Association

Healthier Tennessee Neighborhood Campaign

Forest Heights Neighborhood Association completed five initiatives to become a bronze level Healthier Tennessee neighborhood in 2019. The project began when Forest Heights residents volunteered to create a Wellness Council for the neighborhood. The overall goal was to build community among neighbors and promote healthy living habits to improve physical fitness, healthy eating habits, and eliminate tobacco use.

The Wellness Council met regularly, came up with several initiatives and began working. They participated in a walking school bus sponsored by Bike Walk Knoxville at Bearden Elementary School. They went from 24-33 students in one year. The children and adult volunteers all benefited from the added exercise. The group also initiated group walks/hikes. Over the course of the series, 59 neighbors participated. They also organized a fruit and vegetable challenge as a weekly BINGO game, marking the food off as they ate it during the week. Prizes went to the winners. Gatherings were also planned with health foods being provided to encourage healthier eating. All of their events were listed as tobacco free to encourage healthier lifestyles.

Forest Heights also became certified as a Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) in 2019 as well. It took them less than a year to complete. They organized clean-ups, installed an educational kiosk in their Pocket Park, installed bat houses, organized a build a birdhouse workshop, identified and removed invasive species, and had a garden tour.

Through these activities, FHNA connected many more neighbors, due to each neighbor's talents, than they had before. This was an added benefit for the group.

Historic Sutherland Heights Neighborhood

Noise Pollution Abatement

Members of Historic Sutherland Heights Neighborhood Association have long been bothered by the sounds coming from the AAA Cooper business across the street from the residents. The business ran 24 hours per day, 6 days per week. There was loud metal on metal clashing sounds, the roar of engines, and very loud high pitched reverse beeps. After some discussion, the representatives decided to go to the business and discuss the situation with them.

The group did their research and found several solutions of new alarms using white noise, which they presented to the owners of the company through email. They got a great response in return. The company representative said that they were so impressed with the type of reverse alarm that it would be adopted and ordered. They thanked the neighborhood for the great suggestion. Shortly thereafter, the neighborhood was invited over to hear about the changes the company made and to actually hear the difference.

Now the neighborhood has much more peaceful quality that it hasn't had in 25 years just by simply being willing to work together.

Oakwood Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association

Outdoor Classroom Project

The community noticed an unused green space by the Christenberry Elementary School. After discussing it further, they found out that they could get permission to transform the area into a useable space for the children. There were partnerships with Lowes Home Improvement; Keep America Beautiful; Sterling Co, a local construction company; as well as students from South Carolina came down for an alternative spring break to assist in some of the installation.

The goal was to increase community and environmental pride with the increase of outdoor opportunities for the youth. Research shows that if kids spend more time outside it helps improve grades, improves health, reduces stress, increase motivation, improves behavior, and aids in positive attitudes towards the environment.

The improvements are used by teachers, students and community members.

South Woodlawn Neighborhood Association

Bicycle Repair Station Project

South Woodlawn Neighborhood Association, partnered with the City of Knoxville, Parks and Recreation, the City of Knoxville, Public Works Department, and Kickstand, a local non-profit that takes donated bikes and restores them for low income youth, to install a bike repair station at Sam Duff Park. The group decided that this would be a great project because of all the increased bicycle activity in South Knoxville due to the Urban Wilderness. The hope was that this would be beneficial and possibly encourage more people to ride their bikes. The group wanted to install an added amenity to the park that people might need and use. There were hurdles to overcome with raising the money but ultimately after reaching out to different groups and investigating different funding sources, the group received money from several different sources to complete the project.

The neighborhood group has received positive comments from community members who have seen the repair station being used by visitors.

Wesley Neighbors / West Hills Community Association

Working Together Produces Change

West Hills Community Association is a large neighborhood and within it, there is also Wesley Neighbors, a smaller group of neighbors. Both are very active groups.

Both groups have been excited to see that Sheffield Drive will now have a side walk. The groups worked consistently over the years to ensure that elected officials knew that this area was a safety hazard. The sidewalk was finally put on the paving list.

The groups have also worked together to ensure that their roads are safe through the Office of Neighborhood's Traffic Safety Program. The neighborhoods applied, had meetings, got signatures, and are ready for traffic calming devices.

Lastly, the group has continued to work together with the Healthier Tennessee Program to be Healthy West Hills. Last year, they received a bronze marker. This year their efforts helped them earn a silver marker, which helped them obtain a \$2000 grant. Their plan is to give this money to the West Hills Elementary School to help with their new playground equipment.