

# NEIGHBORHOOD ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Following a nomination and application process, six neighborhood organizations 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 their community. Below is a brief summary of their achievements.

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

## **Mechanicsville Community Organization**

### *It's All About Our Kids*

The Mechanicsville Community Association focused their work and activities in 2021 around their younger residents. Some activities held included movie nights in the park, a community Easter egg hunt, and a banquet honoring the MCA Grizzly basketball and football teams to celebrate their efforts. The association's Halloween party made local news and featured neighbors giving treats from the trunks of their cars to the neighborhood children dressed in their costumes. The block party the MCA held included dancing, football, and snow cones designed just for the kids. Mechanicsville Community Association also gave hats and gloves not only to the children of Maynard Elementary but also to children of Emerald Youth Academy and Wesley House.

## **Norwood Neighborhood Watch**

### *Community Policing/National Night Out*

The Norwood Neighborhood Watch continually participates in the annual National Night Out, and they pulled out all the stops this year. Many elected officials attended their spaghetti dinner including Congressman Tim Burchett, Knox Co. District Attorney Charm Allen, Assistant Attorney General Judd Davis, Sheriff Tom Spangler and many other officials and neighbors in the community. Through this annual participation, the Norwood Neighborhood Watch has built quality relationships with these officials, creating an open line of communication and bolstering their community policing program.

## **South Woodlawn Neighborhood Association**

### *SWNA Welcome Signs*

This project was born to give the South Woodlawn Neighborhood Association an identity to those living there as well as those passing through. What started as a 5 person sign committee grew to include an assortment of residents, association members, business owners and politicians. A total of 28 participants and 400 hours were involved in the project.

The biggest challenge of the project was the impact of Covid-19 and everything related: lack of in-person meetings, supply chain issues and the tripling costs of materials during the height of the pandemic. Through a grant from the Office of Neighborhood Empowerment as well as Knoxville City Council 202 funds, four neighborhood welcome signs have been installed even with all the challenges.

## **Vestal Community Organization**

### *Vestal Gateway Park Improvement Projects*

In 2021, the Vestal Community Organization continued making improvements and brining visitors to the Vestal Gateway Park and Mary Vestal Park and Greenway. The organization partnered with the Sustainable Future Center and the Native Plant Rescue Squad to correct a significant soil deficiency located in the Vestal Gateway Park which was the previous site of an abandoned gas station.

The Vestal Community Organization also partnered with the Community Schools Partnership at Dogwood Elementary School and the Vestal Boys and Girls Club to have the children paint a mural at the Vestal Gateway Park Pavilion in September 2021 using the children's hand prints for the attractive colorful background.

The Vestal Community Organization led three clean-up crews at the Keep Knoxville Beautiful South Knox Clean Up, collecting more than forty (40) bags of trash and debris along the Mary Vestal Park Greenway, Goose Creek and the Vestal Gateway Park stretching an area of one mile in length and conducted several evasive plant removal project events with equipment provided by the Aslan Foundation.

They advocated for the extension of the Mary Vestal Greenway to connect an extension trail to Fort Dickerson, by introducing the property owner to the City Mayor. The trail extension was dedicated by the new City Mayor on September 2, 2021.

## **West Hills Community Association**

### *Holiday Lights at the Gazebo with the Tour de Lights*

The West Hills Community Association (WHCA) for many years has hosted the Holiday Lights at the Gazebo with decorations covering the exterior of the gazebo, a visit from Santa Claus, and hot cocoa and goodies for all to share. Many volunteers manned the areas to help with serving neighbors and leading the way to meet Santa. In 2021, the West Hills Elementary School sold red t-shirts to show support of this activity with the proceeds from the sale of the t-shirts to go to the elementary school for future fund-raising projects.

This year, in addition to the Holiday Lights at the Gazebo, the Healthy West Hills group added an extra activity. Participants rode decorated bikes, strollers, skateboards, wagons and even themselves to navigate the paved trail throughout the park for 0.8 miles. The City of Knoxville Parks and Recreation Department helped with lighting the trail by allowing the neighborhood access to the large lights at the West Hills tennis courts. They also had 10 volunteers holding flashlights to help light the path as we rode the route.

There were over 200 neighbors in attendance with 95 of those participating in the Tour de Lights ride through the park. This was an event that will no doubt be repeated because of the high interest in the activity. The neighborhood heard so many positive comments from those who participated. During a time of a global pandemic, this event allowed residents to meet safely outside and enjoy the company of neighbors whom they had missed seeing regularly. This was a great example of neighbors cooperating with neighbors to create a sense of community and holiday spirit!

## **Westmoreland Hills Homeowners Association**

### *Improved Communication Initiatives*

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, neighborhood interaction was significantly impacted. With the election of new officers and directors in May 2021, improved communication with the neighborhood became a primary focus for the Westmoreland Hills Homeowner's Association.

The association elected three additional directors for better representation and open communication. A private Facebook page was created for residents. Property improvements and traffic calming are some highlighted items. A dedicated association email was created for residents to use for suggestions, asking questions, voice complaints, etc. Resident contact information was updated in the neighborhood's

member handbooks. Several printed communications were dispersed throughout the year as well. These initiatives resulted in increased resident engagement.