

NEIGHBORHOOD ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Following a nomination and application process, seven 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 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.

If your city neighborhood organization wishes to learn more about “how they did it,” the contact information for these groups can be found in the Knoxville Neighborhood Directory located on the Office of Neighborhoods website at www.knoxvilletn.gov/neighborhoods. The leaders of these groups would be glad to talk to you.

Historic Fourth and Gill Neighborhood Organization

Neighborhood Center “Birdhouse” Porch Restoration Campaign

The Birdhouse has long been in need of a porch renovation. It is the home to numerous community organizations with specific emphasis on empowering underserved populations. In the 1970’s a group of passionate volunteers maintained the building with lots of hard work, but despite the support of the group over the years, the center’s front porch eventually deteriorated to the point where it had to be torn down. In 2018, the neighborhood organization decided it was time to rebuild the porch. They felt that the historic building that gave Fourth and Gill its name should receive the façade it deserved.

A committee of four formed in August of 2018 to spearhead the project. They needed to create the project timeline, work with a contractor to finalize the plan, raise money, and apply for a City of Knoxville’s preservation grant, to make the porch a reality. Each took their jobs seriously. Other members of the board coordinated clean-up days, a bathroom renovation, and additional social events in order to generate excitement and interest.

By November 2018, the committee raised nearly \$40,000 between grants and individual donors and it finalized plans for the porch. Not only will this porch be a source of beauty, it will connect community members with each other and equip the building with an even more beautiful space to serve marginalized communities.

Residents of Eastport

No Crime on Our Time

Eastport is a lovely gated community of 85 units where residents in their golden years live. For this group, safety is extremely important. The residents show love and compassion for each other and are known for sharing what they have with each other. Folks with disabilities are also taken care of. Recently a police report was put together and it showed that Eastport only two 2 incidents of crime during 2018. The group attributes this to residents' vigilance and willingness to look out for one another.

This doesn't claim that there are zero issues amongst residents, but it does mean that the Knoxville Police Department hasn't had to make any arrests, found any drugs, answered any stabbing calls, shooting calls, or any break-ins, robberies or murders. The Residents of Eastport are very proud that because of their vigilance and care they have kept themselves and their community safe. This is especially relevant when right down the road this is not the same story.

RiverHill Gateway Neighborhood

Environmental Beautification Project

Folks from RiverHill Gateway collaborated with the Knoxville History Project to install two art wraps on traffic control boxes; one at the corner of East Hill and Volunteer Landing and the other is across the street near the sculpture they had installed several years ago.

The group also created a Monarch Butterfly and Wildflower Garden, which they got certified as a Wildlife Habitat with the National Wildlife Federation. The plot is adjacent to the trolley stop so it is enjoyed by trolley riders, tourists, and residents of the community. Perennials were planted to attract pollinators. Stepping stones were placed using reclaimed green bricks from the old KUB building on Gay Street. Drawings of insects done by children were imprinted on small metal signs and placed in the garden. And a birdbath with a solar fountain was donated and installed.

Volunteers planted trees to help with reforestation; partnered with Billy Lush to host *clean sweeps* of the riverbank; and neighbors cleaned up after large events like football games to ensure that the area looked great.

Most recently they have been hosting gatherings at local businesses to not only help the business, but to meet and get to know neighbors. Last December, the group encouraged residents to come share an evening at James White Fort after the Tour de Lights and many did, helping to bring folks together for a night of fun.

South Woodlawn Neighborhood Association

Community Wildlife Habitat Information and Community Announcement Kiosk

South Woodlawn Neighborhood Association became the first Community Wildlife Habitat in the state of Tennessee in 2013. They are very proud of this accomplishment and work annually to meet the requirements to keep their certification. In 2018, the neighborhood organization decided to display a kiosk celebrating their designation as Tennessee's first community wildlife habitat and providing a place for community posts and information, which also earned points toward their re-certification. One of their members designed the kiosk to put at Sam Duff Park. After working with the City's Parks and Rec Dept., Public Works Dept., Elected Officials, an Eagle Scout, Tyler Chan, Stanley's Greenhouse, and members of the Wildlife Habitats of South Woodlawn (WHoSW), they were able to make this happen.

In May of 2018 they had a Ribbon Cutting for the new kiosk, and the Mayor spoke. In the subsequent months, the kiosk has become a point of pride for the neighborhood in that it is both a beautiful structure and it provides information to others who may be interested in certifying their property or community as a Wildlife Habitat. It also provides a place for neighbors to post community announcements.

They have also shared their design with other neighborhood organizations who are planning to do similar kiosks in their parks.

The Highlands HOA

Highlands Community Revitalization

In late 2018, the board of The Highlands was drastically altered. Many members resigned or retired and many new members joined the ranks. The new board of seven soon realized that there was a culture of distrust permeating the community. Accusations of misconduct and ineffective decision making had left the new board with a difficult relationship with the owners. Action was needed to try to change the perception of the neighborhood leadership.

The board decided to increase accessibility to information, modernize the process, and increase communication with members. They added a Google email box and phone number to give homeowners a few ways to reach the leaders. They digitized their historic information and made it accessible to all members. They also have kept in mind that not all members are keen on computers and have provided paper copies to those wanting them.

The volume of communication has grown. Members are becoming more engaged and communicative. The openness has brought out many unfortunate issues; however it is allowing people to feel heard by their leaders. New relationships are forming ever day as the new options are being utilized.

Timbercrest Neighborhood Association

Healthier Tennessee Community Program

Timbercrest was excited to join, as a pilot project, the Healthier Tennessee Community Program run by the Governors Foundation for Health and Wellness. In order to be deemed a Healthier Tennessee Community, a neighborhood or group must aim to increase activity, increase healthy food consumption, and educate people on smoking cessation programs. Timbercrest dove right in and worked HARD!

They planned fitness activities which included playing wiffleball, walking, and lap swimming at the Timbercrest pool with the goal to swim their way to Nashville by way of laps. 32 participants joined in. They also planned activities that would help neighbors eat healthier by sharing recipes monthly. To address smoking cessation, they made a Smoke Free Park Policy as well as published tips about quitting tobacco on their website.

In February 2019, they were honored as a Healthier Tennessee Community; Silver Level. They hope to continue working on the program again this year.

Wesley Neighbors / West Hills Community Association

Connecting Neighbors Campaign

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.

Some of the physical activities that have activated new neighbors are: encouraging exercise groups at the YMCA; having a slow-roll bike ride; practicing and participating in the Neighborhood Wiffleball Tournament; walking down Wesley Road for the Annual Dog Walk; coordinating weekly walking groups during the summer months; and all the activities it took for West Hills to become a Designated Healthier Community. They were honored with a Bronze Level with the Governors Foundation for Health and Wellness in February of 2019.

Other activities that the two groups join together are: several trash pick-ups, a free smoke alarm installation event with the Red Cross; a community Easter Egg Hunt; a School's Out Movie Night for families; a pool party; a stocked little free library; and so much more.

The group addressed zoning issues with Recode, looked into a traffic study, and are preparing for new sidewalks. Because of all this, more neighbors are becoming involved and both groups are stronger for it.