

Partners Building Community The Crosstown Project



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Summer Grantmaking Supports Transformation

Inside this issue:

Mural Unveiled at La Mexicana...	2
Goodbye and Good Luck...	2
Familiar Photographer...	2
Worldwide Day of Play...	3
Free Live Homework Help...	3
New Hays Park Public Safety...	4
Public Meeting Opportunity...	4
Warehouse Sale that Never...	4
Best Practices Translate...	5
Annual "Fast" Built House...	5
Calendar of Events & Activities	6

As September arrives, many people start looking toward not only the end of warm temperatures, but toward the end of another year as well. With just a few months left in 2004, autumn is a good time to revisit to-do and wish lists that were made when 2004 was still a "new" year.

For many neighbors in The Crosstown Project area, late-summer and early-autumn have been a time for tackling a few last warm-weather projects before the opportunity slipped away. In fact, several neighbors wanted to squeeze in some gardening before it got to be too late in the year. With limited time and resources available, The Partners Crosstown Fund has been helpful to three property owners with a vision for transforming a few Vine neighborhood parcels into attractive gardens for the whole community to enjoy. From a small front yard to a pair of lots, these garden projects are just one aspect of the transformations happening with help from the Fund.

All three projects are in progress yet this month. Given the gardening nature of each of them, we'll probably have to wait until next spring and summer to start seeing the full effect of the projects. In fact, it will probably

be several years before the full measure of these investments will be seen. In the meantime, with the beginning stages underway, you'll want to stop by and check out these three special sites:

- 714 Dutton Place (between Dutton and Vine Streets)
- 309 Burr Oak Street (between S. Park and Rose Streets)
- 816 VanVranken Court (off Vine Street between S. Park and Rose Streets)

In fact, these three sites span just a three-block area in the Vine neighborhood, so it might make for a nice, late-summer stroll. You could even walk over to the corner of Rose and Wall Streets to check out the progress on the six new homes that are being built by Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity. (See *related article on page 5.*) The Habitat homes also received support from The Partners Crosstown Fund. This project will transform both the land and the lives of six new homeowner families.

Each of these projects relate to the priority that has been given to Housing Improvement in The Crosstown Project area. For more information, call 337-8339.

Fountains Add Flair to Crosstown Ponds

If you've passed by the intersection of S. Park Street and Crosstown Parkway recently, you've probably noticed a few new features at the ponds. Fountains were installed late July, adding new interest to this unique water feature in the Vine neighborhood. The fountains run from approximately dawn until dusk, and will be removed in the fall for maintenance and cold weather storage. They will reappear in May.

Smaller fountains were used at the south pond due to the shallow depth of that water body. The north and east ponds are deeper, so accommodated larger fountains. Not only do

these fountains add to the visual appeal of the ponds, but they also help with aeration and water quality.

The Fountain project was made possible through the collaborative efforts of organizations and individuals involved with Partners Building Community (PBC). The original idea came from Vine Ventures, Inc. and the Vine Neighborhood Association. With assistance from the City's Public Services Department, the idea became reality this summer. The new fountains are just one of the many "great things happening in Edison and Vine." For more information call 337-8339.



The north pond features a single new fountain.



The Edison Mainstreet Program and Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity would like to thank the following businesses for their generous donations, without which the mural project could not have occurred:

- Home Depot**
- Lowe's**
- Big C Lumber**
- Siding World**
- Adobe Building Materials**
- District 211**
- Bimbo's Pizza**
- Coney Island**
- Monaco Bay**
- Pizza Hut**
- BW3's**
- Fazoli's**
- Sweetwater's Donut Mill**
- The Ground Round**

Mural Unveiled at La Mexicana Market

On Saturday, July 31, community members joined together to celebrate the new mural at La Mexicana Market and the success of the 2004 Painting Bright Futures project!

Painting Bright Futures is a collaborative program coordinated by the Edison Mainstreet Program and Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity.

During the dedication ceremony, the youth volunteers who created the mural were recognized for the volunteer time they dedicated to the project. Over the course of two months, these volunteers participated in a design studio during which they generated and realized their mural design plans. The beautiful finished project includes several

scenes from Kalamazoo, kids playing sports, and flags from Mexico, USA, and around the globe.



Youth work on the now complete mural project at 1956 Portage Street.

The Volunteer Recognition Fiesta provided an opportunity for Rafael Vargas, the owner of La Mexicana Market, to personally thank the volunteers. Additionally, City Commissioners Bobby Hopewell and David Juarez congratulated the youth on their positive contribution to the Edison neighborhood.

The Painting Bright Futures project was funded by Partners Building Community, the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo, the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Youth United Way, and the Edison Mainstreet Program.

Goodbye, and Good Luck to Mainstreet Staff

As the long days of summer fade to autumn evenings, the members of the Edison Mainstreet business district say goodbye to our own "sunshine"—and wish best of luck to departing LISC AmeriCorps member Julianne Manske. In September, Julianne completes a year of service within the Portage Street business district.

Some projects that benefited from Julianne's expertise in community relations, media relations, and special events planning included 2003's thank-you event for Edison Mainstreet volunteers, the "2004 Warm-up" held in Tradewinds Lounge's newly-remodeled bar; keeping Edison Mainstreet businesses informed of progress on the

streetscape master plan; and assisting with the planning and implementation of Spring Fiesta—showcasing Edison's large and vibrant Hispanic population through food, music, and dance.

In addition, Julianne—along with Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity's AmeriCorps member, Lori Rach—spearheaded the second Painting Bright Futures project. Painting Bright Futures 2004 transformed the north wall of La Mexicana Market through a colorful mural design and painted by Edison youth.

Please join us in congratulating Julianne on her accomplishments, and wishing her the best of luck in future endeavors!

Familiar Photographer to be Featured at 9/16 'Hop

Local photographer Mary Whalen has taken on some key roles with The Crosstown Project over the past couple of years. In 2003, she worked with Boys & Girls Club members to teach her craft to local youth. In fact, one of her young students earned a national award for a picture he took under her mentorship.

In 2004, Whalen worked on the "Neighbors in the Square" documentary project to capture with film-making process through still, photographic images. On September 16, these and other parts of Whalen's

portfolio will be on display at the Kalamazoo Color Lab (1326 Portage Street) as a part of the Portage Street Art Hop.

You can catch this and other exhibits between 5:00 and 9:00pm at a series of Portage Street venues. Details are available by calling the Edison Mainstreet Program at 344-0795.



Worldwide Day of Play Comes to Upjohn Park

On Saturday October 2, 2004, Partners Building Community will celebrate its youth development activities in the Edison and Vine neighborhoods by holding a "Day of Play" at Upjohn Park.

Here are some of the exciting youth activities that have been going on in the Edison and Vine neighborhoods:

- ✎ For over two years, the Youth Development Center has offered exciting educational and recreational activities to area youth and their families.
- ✎ Under the leadership of the Junior League of Kalamazoo, the Greater Kalamazoo Able to Play Group has begun to develop plans and raise funds for a boundless playground in Upjohn Park. This playground will allow children with and without disabilities to play together and learn from each other.
- ✎ The Edison Neighborhood Association has sponsored popular movie nights and a very successful "Work for Wheels or Wears" program.

- ✎ Working with a large variety of neighborhood partners, Edison Weed and Seed has hosted "*Edison Reads* with Edison Weed and Seed," and a Friday Night Youth Basketball Program.
- ✎ The Vine Neighborhood Association, Edison Mainstreet, Weed and Seed and the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo have sponsored a variety of murals painted by kids throughout the target area.
- ✎ The Washington Square Library featured a variety of summer programming including a karate demonstration and a "dance revolution." Fall programs will include live homework help at tutor.com and several holiday events.
- ✎ And, Upjohn Park itself is the focus of a major redevelopment plan. Renovations will include a trailway, a t-ball field, picnic facilities and other family-friendly amenities.

To celebrate these highlights, the community is invited to a "Day of Play" in Upjohn Park on October 2. More details will be forthcoming, but for now, save the date and COME OUT AND PLAY!

Free Live Homework Help for Edison & Vine Youth

Kalamazoo Public Library has contracted with tutor.com to provide a free online tutoring service for students in grades 4-12. Students can log on from the computer lab at Washington Square Library, or through computers at home or at school. Live homework help is available in math, science, English and social studies. Tutors are college professors, graduate school students, certified teachers and professionals who are experts in their field. They are trained and evaluated weekly by tutor.com staff. Tutors are available from 3:00 to 10:00 P.M. every day of the week, 365 days a year.

Spanish speaking help is offered in math and science Sunday through Thursday. Tutors can also help students with introductory college courses. There are also sessions for adults earning their GED!



Getting started is easy:

- Go to www.kpl.gov homepage and click on Live Homework Help
- Create your login name and password
- Enter your grade level and homework subject.



Then connect to a tutor in the online classroom where you can:

- Chat with your tutor
- Draw and solve problems on a whiteboard
- Browse the world wide web together
- Use special tools – calculator, graphing, periodic charts, and more
- Print out your session
- Log in and check past sessions

For more information or a live demonstration, visit or call the Washington Square Branch Library, 1244 Portage, 345-4279.



*The Worldwide
Day of Play
is held in
conjunction
with the
Nickelodeon
Network.*

*On October 2,
the network
turns off its
programming
for three hours
to encourage
children around
the world to
COME OUT
AND PLAY!*

New Hays Park Public Safety Station Holds Open House

Come celebrate community policing at work! Please join us in welcoming Kalamazoo Public Safety Officers to their new operating location in the Edison neighborhood during an open house and ribbon cutting celebration on **Wednesday October 6, 7:00–8:00pm at 1427 Hays Park** (just four blocks east of Portage Street).

In addition to seeing the new station, you can also welcome Edison’s new Community Policing Officer (CPO) Gretchen Mayo. Gretchen began her new CPO job in late August, and joins fellow CPO Jeff Mack on

assignment in the Edison neighborhood.



The new station at 1427 Hays Park awaits its new Public Safety occupants.

Several key partners joined the Department of Public Safety in creating the Hays Park Station, including Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services (KNHS), the Edison Weed & Seed Program (EWSP) and the Edison Neighborhood Association. Many thanks are due to the staff and volunteers who were a part of making this project possible. For more information about the station or this special event, please contact Roger with KNHS at 385-2916 or Emilie with EWSP at 382-0916.

Happy Anniversary to Washington Square Apartments!

This summer, the 14-story building at 710 Collins Street turned 20 years old.

At this special time, residents and neighbors alike can look back at the past two decades and reflect on the many lives that have been touched by WSA.

Seniors and disabled adults have had affordable rental housing at WSA since 1984. If you would like more information about apartment rentals, call 344-1681.



Public Meeting Opportunity for Recreational Trailway

Preliminary plans are in the works for development of the Portage Creek Trailway, which will pass right through The Crosstown Project area. The trail is expected to follow the Portage Creek from the intersection of Kilgore Road and Lovers Lane to the intersection of King Highway and Michigan Avenue. In addition, the trail will eventually continue west and connect with the Kal-Haven Trail State Park.

The City of Kalamazoo has hired the firm of O’Boyle, Cowell, Blalock & Associates (OCBA) to complete a study for the trailway project. OCBA will follow up the study by completing final plans and specifications. One of the most exciting parts of the trail will no doubt

be the expanse that stretches through Upjohn Park. Since OCBA created the park’s Master Plan just two years ago, their familiarity with this part of the trailway will be very helpful.

If you are interested in providing input during the Portage Creek Trailway planning process, you can attend the **Thursday September 9 public meeting at Mayors’ Riverfront Park from 7:00-9:00pm**. A presentation on the trailway concept will be presented, followed by an opportunity for questions and input. Outside of this meeting opportunity, inquiries and ideas can be shared with Richard Skalski, Senior Construction Engineer, by calling 337-8617.

Warehouse Sale that Never Ends

Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity (KVHH) and The Pentecostal Movement Church of God in Christ announce a new partnership that’s sure to please residents in Edison, Vine and beyond - the Church’s Resale Store at 1157 Bank Street now serves as an outlet for KVHH’s like-new and slightly-

used building materials, supplies, fixtures, appliances, paint, decorative home items and more!

You can visit the Resale Store Monday through Saturday from 9:00am–4:00pm. It’s located at the corner of Bank and Collins Streets, right across from the Kalamazoo Farmers’ Market—so don’t forget to stop there too! Terms are cash and carry (at the store and Market alike).

If you would like more information about this new and exciting partnership, or would like to donate items to the store, call KVHH at 344-2443.



NEED A HAND?



Lend-a-Hand Workdays

happen on the second Saturday of the month, twelve months a year. If you could use a hand with a project at your home or business, call 349-4954 or visit www.s-heights.org

Lend-a-Hand Workdays are run by Southern Heights Church.

And speaking of churches...



Welcome to The River,

now located at 1030 Portage Street (www.theriver.info)

...and...

Farewell to Threads Church,

which recently relocated from Portage Street to Milham Road (www.threadschurch.org)

Best Practices Translate from Edison to Vine and Beyond

Improving the quality of life in The Crosstown Project area involves diligent work on the part of many organizations and individuals. When particular programs work in one part of Edison or Vine, chances are they'll work elsewhere too. So sharing good ideas, or "best practices", is important among all partner organizations. There are many fine examples of this happening in The Crosstown Project area. One of them is the use of "Hot Spot Sheets" for reporting, tracking and resolving quality of life concerns in Edison and Vine.

Hot Spot Sheets were developed through the Edison Weed & Seed Program (EWSP) and have been in use in the Edison neighborhood for the past two years. The Sheets have helped neighbors take initiative in addressing quality of life issues such as loud noise, loitering, trash, graffiti, junk autos and more. When quality of life issues add up in an area, they can spell trouble. Until the Hot Spot Sheets were available, neighbors were often reluctant to report these types of crimes. Traditionally, a call could be placed to the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety's non-emergency phone number (337-8004). But with a Hot Spot Sheet, a short report could be made and handed directly to a staff person or volunteer at the Edison Neighborhood Association office.

The concept was a simple one, but has been very effective - so effective, in fact, that the

Vine neighborhood started using the Sheets earlier this year. Even beyond The Crosstown Project target area, other neighborhoods have begun using Hot Spot Sheets too. Neighbors fill out the Sheet, which includes just a few questions about location of an activity, the parties involved, a description of the incident, etc. Neighbors can choose whether or not to remain anonymous. By leaving a name and contact information, neighborhood staff can follow up on the issue. Otherwise, an anonymous Sheet can be accepted as well.

Once submitted, neighborhood association staff or volunteers forward the Sheet to the appropriate contact person, most often with the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety. Neighborhood association representatives help to expedite the follow-up process by working directly with the proper authorities to ensure that issues are addressed.

Thanks to the hard work of neighborhood association staff and volunteers, this tool has become an effective supplement to traditional methods of crime reporting in Edison, Vine and other Kalamazoo neighborhoods. The process was designed to be easy and accessible for anyone who witnesses a crime, no matter how minor it may seem. Hot Spot Sheets are available at the Edison and Vine neighborhood associations, as well as at the Edison Weed & Seed Program website, www.ewsp.org.

Annual "Fast Built" House to be Constructed in Vine

Each year more than 200 volunteers from the Home Builders Association of Greater Kalamazoo (HBAGK) team up with Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity (KVHH) to build a house in less than two days. That's fast! This year's "Fast Built" house will be constructed on **Thursday and Friday, September 16 and 17** at the corner of Rose and Wall Streets. This is the thirteenth Fast Built House constructed by HBAGK volunteers since 1992. The two-story house will be purchased by a Habitat homebuyer and their family, who will contribute a minimum of 300 volunteer hours between this and other KVHH projects. The house will be one of six new homes that are being built at this Vine neighborhood location.

Many significant contributors have helped bring this six-home development, the largest in KVHH's history, from vision to reality.

Among them are the City of Kalamazoo, Habitat for Humanity of Michigan, Habitat for Humanity International, Michigan State Housing Development Authority, Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Irving S. Gilmore Foundation, Vine Neighborhood Association, Eaton Corporation, and the 3 Cares Team. The land was donated by the Alida Spitters family, and KVHH homebuyers and homeowners have also supported this development through their volunteer efforts.

For more information about how you can help build or buy a Habitat home, contact the KVHH office at 344-2443 or visit www.habitat.kalamazoo.org.



A collaboration of private, nonprofit and public partners.



Partners Building Community: The Crosstown Project

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Calendar of Events and Activities September - November 2004

Please call 337-8339 for details.

September

01 Edison Neighborhood Watch
06 Labor Day
07 Vine Neighborhood Watch
14 Vine Welcome Back Celebration
15 Vine Board of Directors
15 Edison Housing Committee
15 Mini Grants Due
18 Downtown Kalamazoo Historic Homes Tour
18 Centennial Art Fair at South Westnedge Park
21 Edison Garden Club
23 Edison Board of Trustees
28 Vine Housing Committee

October

05 Vine Town Hall Meeting
06 Edison Neighborhood Watch
15 Mini Grants Due

19 Edison Garden Club
20 Vine Board of Directors
20 Edison Housing Committee
20 Edison Candidates Forum
26 Vine Housing Committee
28 Edison Board of Trustees

November

01 Regular Grants Due
02 Election Day
02 Vine Neighborhood Watch
03 Edison Neighborhood Watch
15 Mini Grants Due
16 Edison Garden Club
17 Vine Board of Directors
17 Edison Housing Committee
18 Edison Board of Trustees
25 Happy Thanksgiving



Consolidated Plan Public Input Opportunity

Every five years, the City of Kalamazoo submits a Consolidated Plan to the federal government that outlines how our community intends to use federal funds. There are three chances to be a part of the 2004 planning process in Edison and Vine:

- ✍ Friday September 3, 8:00am at Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services (802 S. Westnedge Avenue)
- ✍ Tuesday September 7, 7:00pm at Edison Neighborhood Association (1356 Portage Street)
- ✍ Thursday September 9, 1:00pm at Washington Square Apartments (710 Collins Street)

Edison and Vine stakeholders are welcome to attend other Public Input sessions in other areas of the community.