

Waco Community Development

“Revitalizing neighborhoods street by street, block by block.”



June 2011

“Neighborhood Confidence”

By: Walker Moore

Our mission statement states, “Waco Community Development revitalizes neighborhoods by promoting housing, community and economic development throughout Waco.” That sounds good, but what does “revitalization” mean? I used to think revitalization meant physical improvements like new and renovated housing, fresh coats of paint, and new sidewalks. Today, I know that while physical improvements are important, “confidence” in the neighborhood is even more important.

People are confident in a neighborhood when it makes emotional and economic sense to invest their time, energy, and money into the neighborhood. If people lack confidence, then the neighborhood starts to deteriorate. If people have confidence, people work diligently to strengthen the neighborhood. Confidence is the key to neighborhood revitalization. The next two examples demonstrate the increased confidence in North Waco.

Eight years ago, Jerrod Clark bought a Waco Community Development house on 15th street. He often walked the three blocks between his house and job at Mission Waco on 15th and Colcord. Every time he walked, he filled a kitchen-sized garbage bag with trash. Neighborhood confidence was so low that people failed to put their litter in the trashcan. Today, Jerrod no longer has to fill up a trash bag. Every week or two, he might find only a few pieces of trash in his front yard. What is the difference? People feel confident in the neighborhood, and they want to do their part to make it look nice.

The second is a personal example. Tasha, my wife, and I recently replaced our existing Bermuda grass with St. Augustine grass. Two factors influenced our decision. The shade trees killed most of the Bermuda grass, and we were tired of our daughters playing on dirt. More importantly, we are confident in the neighborhood’s future. Our block sits in the middle of Waco Community Development’s North Waco focus area. Over the last four years, the block has dramatically changed. Homes were fully renovated. Others are brand new, and the rest have been improved. These improvements increased our confidence in the neighborhood. It makes economic sense to invest in St. Augustine grass because everyone else is investing in their home.

These are just two of many stories of how renewed confidence in North Waco is shaping people’s investment behaviors. People are confident and invest their time, energy, and money back into the neighborhood. Because of this confidence, North Waco is a much better place to live than it was five years ago. Crime is down 50%, schools are thriving, and it is becoming a great place to live. This is neighborhood revitalization, and Waco Community Development looks forward to continuing this work in North Waco and beginning in East Waco.

CALENDAR

Classes

2011 Financial Literacy

6-8 PM for 6 weeks

Next Series of Class

Begins August 4th

Homebuyer Education II

Next class will begin

September 10th

1-6 PM

Classes are free!

To register call:
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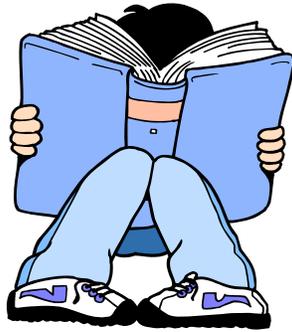
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***Murph Little**

Volunteer Coordinator

School's Out, but Learning's Not!

By: Dinah Bolton



Summer is here for the children in North Waco! With field days and award ceremonies closing the 2010-2011 school year, parents have been eager about how to keep the learning from being idle during the summer season. The teachers and staff at Brook Avenue Elementary were a HUGE help in putting together resource packets for each grade level about various topics they covered during the school year. These "refresher" packets help the parents prepare their children to enter a new grade level in the fall. Teachers from each grade level walked the parents through each of the activities and topics in the packets. "I love this! I didn't even want to get up and go to the next station because I was learning a lot," one Brook Ave. parent stated. Thank you Brook Avenue Elementary staff and teachers for your hard work and dedication to see our children succeed!

Welcome Murph!

By: Murph Little

Hello, my name is Murph Little, the new Volunteer Coordinator for Waco Community Development. I am originally from the small town of Citronelle, Alabama, where I graduated high school. I then later moved to Hattiesburg, Mississippi and received my Bachelors' of Arts in English and Biblical Studies. I am now in my second year in Waco working towards a Master of Divinity at Truett Seminary. I am glad to be here at Waco Community Development, because I love working for an organization that cares so much for its community. I want to be a reflection of this organization when I am out in the field working or in the office organizing persons and groups to help more beautify this already beautiful community.



Motivated

By: Mike Stone

"I really want to buy a lawn-mower," said the lady that we were talking to about buying a home. She continued, "I grew up in public housing, but my mom always landscaped her lawn. She wouldn't allow the maintenance guys to touch her lawn. She kept it perfect. She taught me the value of hard work and how creative you can be with landscaping. She inspired me to own a home of my own, and I need a lawnmower to care of my yard." I turned to her and said "Now you have a goal, let's see what you need to do to achieve your dream." With her goal in mind, she began work towards buying her home. Everyone has a unique motivation for becoming a homeowner. Our housing counselors have the great privilege of walking families through their motivations and helping them achieve their goal.

Rita's \$45 Electric Bill

Do you remember the energy saving tips we shared in our December 2010 and February 2011 issues? We want to congratulate one of our homeowners from 2010 on her spectacularly low electric bills! After buying an energy-efficient Waco Community Development home last year, Rita put those energy-saving tips into action. She enjoys an average monthly electric bill of just \$45!



To save energy, Rita turns off lights when she is not using them and unplugs appliances that are not in use except for clocks and her computer. Rita also saves on heating and cooling expenses by keeping cabinet and closet doors closed, turning blinds up during the day and down during the night and setting her thermostat at 81 during the day and 80 at night.

Rita enjoys explaining all of her energy saving habits that help bring in those low electric bills, but she also insists that it is not just about the money. It is thinking about her grandchildren and the quality of life that they will inherit one day that motivates Rita to reduce the energy she consumes in her home today.

A \$45 electric bill might be an ambitious goal for the rest of us, but it's worth a thought. What new energy saving habit can you start this next month?

Find us on **facebook**

www.facebook.com/WacoCommunityDevelopment

THANK YOU to The Home Depot, Grande Communication and our generous donors who help to make this possible.

“What is a neighbor?”

By: Darrell Abercrombie

In 1968, my family moved from East Waco to a new home in North Waco. We were the second African-American family on the block. No one knew us, and we did not know them. My family knew that reaching out to our new neighbors was vital to the life of that community. We reached out and before long we were no longer “strangers.” We were “neighbors.”

In the last forty-years, many things about my block have changed, but we are still a close-knit group. We look after each other's concerns. When there is a problem, we address the concern privately. If the matter is not taken care of, we have a neighborhood meeting to address the concerns of our entire block. We try to be good neighbors who look after the welfare of our neighborhood.

Juan is another member of our community who has learned the valuable lesson of reaching out. Originally from Waco, he retired from the Marine Corp. and lived in California for a period of time. A few years ago, he decided it was time to return to his roots and move back to Waco. When he moved back, he brought his extended family with him.

Juan has become an example of a wonderful neighbor. He went from not knowing anyone on his block to becoming a well-known member of the community. He is an ambassador for our neighborhood, always highlighting the best of North Waco.

Thank you Juan for reminding me of what it takes to be a good neighbor.



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Waco Community Development revitalizes neighborhoods by promoting housing, community and economic development throughout Waco. To build strong neighborhoods, WCD partners with key stakeholders to execute five key programs. Together, we work to RENEW Waco.

- Renovate historic and construct new single-family homes.
- Equip families to become homeowners through homebuyer education and financial literacy classes.
- Neighborhood service projects through community collaboration.
- Encourage and support economic development in the neighborhood.
- Work with community leaders to strengthen their neighborhood.



**Welcome to the
Neighborhood!**

We welcomed two wonderful families into our North Waco neighborhood.

One bought a beautifully remodeled home. The other moved into a custom-built home. We are grateful these

families chose to raise their family and invest in this neighborhood. We look forward to adding more great families.



BY THE NUMBERS	
Housing:	
Homeowners:	159
New Homes:	42
Renovated:	15
Opportunities:	
Counseled:	1320
Active:	112
Maintenance:	
Volunteers:	5,040
Vol. Hours:	32,113
Lots Mowed:	1,815