

Waco Community Development

"Helping to inspire and cultivate healthy neighborhoods."

October 2013



Little Free Libraries: Miniature in Size, Enormous in Fun

By: Alexis Christensen

An international movement is coming to Waco! Little Free Libraries (LFL) is a "global movement to promote literacy, and in many U.S. cities neighbors put these big bird-houses-type libraries in their front yards and stock them with books for anyone to take and return" (Little Free Libraries.org). The idea is that people "take a book and leave a book" from a Little Free Library.



Staff member, Gabriela Gatlin and local Boy Scout Sam Stone with a prototype LFL.

Seven North Waco homeowners are joining the movement to bring LFL to Waco. Matt and Michelle Porter, 15th Street residents, got involved because of an announcement made at church. "Reading is very important to our family and something that we enjoy doing together and with other people. The thought of our neighbors being involved with reading great books and being able to have an easy way to get a hold of books was really intriguing to me," Michelle said.

Glinda McGaha, church representative for Living Witness Missionary Baptist Church, agrees reading is important as well. "I really think this will benefit the kids in our community. It will be wonderful for them to be able to go somewhere in their community to have access to books."

Literacy is where LFL begins, but community is where it ends. "We also hope that it will provide opportunities for us to get to know our neighbors better. We love living here and the neighborhood, and we desire to get to know the people living near us more, so this will hopefully help fuel that," Michelle said. Building community can feel big and overwhelming, but it often springs from small things like neighbors coming together to make little free treasures for their neighbors to enjoy.

*Please consider donating gently used books for all ages or a monetary donation to help keep our Little Free Libraries running. Please contact Alexis Christensen at alexis@wacocdc.org or Gabriela Gatlin at gabriela@wacocdc.org or call our office at 254-235-7358.

Special thanks to local Boy Scout, Sam Stone, who is building the LFL for his Eagle Scout Project.

CALENDAR

Classes

2013 Financial Literacy

6-8 PM for 6 weeks

Next class series begins November 7th

Homebuyer Education II

Next class will begin

November 16th

1-6 PM

Board of Directors:

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WELCOME TO THE
NEIGHBORHOOD!

Left: Ryan & Ashleigh!

Right: Diamante!





Issue 48 - 2013

The newsletter of Waco Community Development whose mission is to help inspire and cultivate healthy neighborhoods throughout Waco.



You're invited to a
Holiday Celebration

Waco Community Development 2nd Annual Christmas Party

Come one and come all on December 13th to our annual Waco Community Development Christmas Party. We will open our office from 3pm to 6pm for a come-and-go party to celebrate the upcoming holidays.

Come enjoy some goodies and share memories from the year. You might even catch a glimpse of Santa Claus!

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Light at the End of the Tunnel

By: Darrell Abercrombie

Susan had been in her house about 12 years and things were going well. She was married and raising children. She went back to school to attain a new career in a field in which she had always wanted to work. Then out of no where, her husband wanted a divorce. She was in school and had only limited income from a part-time job.

Susan and her husband eventually divorced and she received the house. That was good but it also meant that she had to come up with the monthly mortgage payment, plus the amount that was behind. Her son who was spending the summer at home from college contributed to the household income from his summer job.. Finances were tight and some of their utilities got turned off in the process of trying to come up with enough money to get the mortgage current.



Susan tried to work with her mortgage company but felt that she was not getting anywhere because she did not understand the process. She contacted Waco Community Development and we set up an appointment to go over her budget and sign some disclosures so that we could contact her mortgage company on her behalf.

After several months of phone calls, signing documents, faxes and other supporting papers, Susan received great news before her home was foreclosed on, **MODIFICATION!** Her interest rate on her loan was lowered and her monthly payment decreased to an amount that she could afford. She will need to make three trial payments and then her payments will be permanently changed for the duration of her loan.

New Beginnings

By: Ryn Farmer



Meet Jeanette Bell! She is the new President of the Northeast Riverside Neighborhood Association. In a recent conversation, I sat down with Ms. Bell and spoke with her about her new role in the community and her hopes for East Waco.

How long have you lived in the community?

...“I have lived here over 20 years.”

What is your favorite thing about East Waco?

...“We have such good neighbors. There are very strong connections and people look out for each other. For example, we exchange food with each other, we mow each other’s lawns, and we will put out our neighbor’s garbage cans for trash pick up too.”

What inspired you to become the new president of Northeast Riverside Neighborhood Association?

... “I have always been a caring and compassionate people-person. Every since I was young, I wanted to be involved in community. My background in youth counseling, substance abuse counseling, education, among many other things, has helped me recognize what people need. I remember when things were vibrant and I want that for East Waco. I don’t want to just live here. I want to do something and make a difference in the lives of others. I want to leave a legacy.”

Why is it important to be engaged in community life?

...“If no one shows interest, our community will deteriorate. If you don’t get engaged in the community, there can be social problems that develop which could have been preventable in the first place. Strong leadership in a community can make a difference in others’ lives.”

What specific project are you most looking forward to working on as you enter as the new president?

...“We are focusing on the structure of the Northeast Riverside Neighborhood Association right now. I am excited about starting fresh with good officers. We are working on building up our Association and building a positive image in our community. We want active participation so we are trying to find out the issues and concerns of our neighbors and get their input. We want to be a community resource. We don’t want to just meet once a month. We want to be active.”

What are your hopes and dreams for our East Waco community?

...“I want my neighbors to enjoy the prosperity and pleasures that other neighborhoods enjoy. I want our neighborhood to be sustainable, thriving and safe. I want a senior citizen center, quality housing, a multi-purpose art district building, a transportation system with safe shelter for people who are waiting on the bus, and opportunities for quality education. I want streetlights in areas where there aren’t any. I want sidewalks to be put in (*there are very few sidewalks in the neighborhood) that connect to other walkable communities. I want protection of our existing local small businesses, and more job creation and retention. I want a place that is fit enough for dignitaries to walk through. I want people to feel a sense of pride when they talk about their neighborhood.”

Waco Community Development is privileged to continue in our partnership alongside the Northeast Riverside Neighborhood Association as we help to inspire and cultivate neighborhoods that are safe, clean and diverse. In the coming months, we will be working with them to develop a Plan of Action. We look forward to seeing how the community comes together for positive change.



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Waco Community Development helps to inspire and cultivate healthy neighborhoods.



<https://www.facebook.com/WacoCommunityDevelopment>

The Birds and the Bees of Waco Community Development

By: Gabriela Gatlin

These days birds flock to the back patio of our office and bees busily hum in our front office Texas garden. Earlier this year our neighbor, Rick Allen, inspired us to plan a xeric Texas flower garden in front of our office. Westview Nursery, Edible Lawns and Xscape Texas generously donated to the project, and this hardy flower garden has survived a very hot summer!

Now we've transformed the abandoned back patio of our office into a peaceful garden where we hope to host small meetings and community gathering. Thanks to the donations of Home Depot, Bonnie's Greenhouse and Hope Fellowship, we have planted native ground cover plants and purchased a patio table and chairs.

Thank you, friends, for helping us model native landscaping and develop peaceful outdoor places for conversation!



BY THE NUMBERS

Housing:

Homeowners: 217
New Homes: 50
Renovated: 16

Opportunities:

Counseled: 1554
Active: 93

Maintenance:

Volunteers: 6,635
Vol. Hours: 60,687
Lots Mowed: 2,745