

**Community Participation Program
Lyndale Neighborhood Association
2013 Annual Report**

Neighborhood Organization: Lyndale Neighborhood Association
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Stakeholder Involvement

Reviewing your CPP activities in 2013, Please provide information about:

What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2013?

LNA conducted a wide range of activities during 2013. At LNA our outreach and engagement activities start with a comprehensive communications program designed to make sure our community members have the information they need to be informed and engaged community members.

This includes publishing the award winning Lyndale Neighborhood News twelve times a year; having three electronic newsletters that include a general newsletter, one for volunteers, and one for neighborhood businesses that reach over 1,600 people on a monthly basis. LNA also has a website (www.Lyndale.org) that is designed to be a community news site that in 2013 had 12,368 visits and 50,713 page views. This past year LNA started a partnership with the Twin Cities Daily Planet to share content, this has meant that many of LNA's stories are being distributed across Minneapolis.

LNA uses a variety of outreach techniques including door knocking, phone calls, flyers, block clubs, mailings, community events, personal asks, etc. to build connections with community members. These activities are conducted on an ongoing basis around all of LNA's program activities. LNA conducted a doorknocking campaign this past fall to encourage community members to get out to vote, explained Ranked Choice Voting, and identified neighborhood issues. The canvass was focused on reaching traditionally underrepresented community members and included knocking on over 500 doors.

LNA also provides a wide range of opportunities for community members to be engaged in their neighborhood's work. This includes serving on one of LNA's six active committees (Board, Environment, Housing, Business, Crime & Drug, and Volunteer), being a block-club leader, volunteering with one of LNA's programs, helping with a community event, directly working on a community project, or participating in General Membership meetings.

How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2013?

A major part of LNA's work the past few years has been trying to build a working multi-cultural community where all Lyndale community members feel welcome and encouraged to be a part of LNA's work.

This work has included the Lyndale Women's Leadership Program, where LNA works with cohorts of Latina and Somali women over an eight month period to help them develop their community leadership skills. In 2013, the program graduated our third Latina cohort and our second Somali cohort.

A major part of the program is helping participants learn how to design and complete a community project of their choice. This year the women from the Somali cohort held a cultural exchange event where community members were able to learn about each other's cultures and start to build bridging connections. The Latina cohort formed an advisory group called Mujeres en Conexion, which works with local organizations to ensure programming is accessible and relevant to the Latino community. The group is continuing to work with community organizations in and around Lyndale.

LNA's ESL program continues to grow and reach more students. In September of 2013 the evening class was split into a multi-level class, giving students more specialized instruction, and class times were extended from two hours to two and a half hours. LNA's ESL program is designed to connect students and volunteers to LNA's other work. In 2013 LNA provided 8,289 hours of student contact time, which was a 165 percent increase from 2012.

In addition to this work, LNA organized several culturally oriented events, including our annual La Posada and Dia Del Nino events. In addition to our community events LNA also publishes a part of the Lyndale Neighborhood News in Spanish each month, published information on the Spanish and Somali pages of our website, and conducted outreach efforts targeted specifically towards each community.

Did you find any strategies to be particularly successful? Why?

Yes! Our strategy of using longer-term programs and activities, particularly the Women's Leadership Program and ESL Program to engage under-represented community members is paying off. This work is enabling us to build meaningful relationships in ways that we could not do with just community events or door knocking alone.

It takes a long time to build trust and engage people, especially within new immigrant communities where community members have reasons to be wary of governmental institutions and may not have had any experience with community-based organizations. The combination of structured programs, community events, projects, and direct advocacy work is helping us develop meaningful relationships. Having a long-term approach based on respect and trust is changing who is involved in the neighborhood, how they are involved, and what we work on as an organization. It is also getting us closer to our goal of having a working multi-cultural community.

What did not work so well? Why?

The strategies LNA is using work well. The hardest thing with our model is making sure we have the financial resources necessary to support staff who are culturally and linguistically competent to work with all of our communities. LNA would not be able to support these programs and this work with the City's current level of support through the CPP and NRP programs.

How many people did you reach through direct contact? (door-knocking, meetings, one-on-ones, etc...)

500 plus

How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?

195

How many individuals participated in your organization's activities?

8,000 plus

How many people receive your print publications?

Approximately 8,000 – LNA mails the Lyndale Neighborhood News to every residence and business in the neighborhood twelve times a year, the paper is also distributed to local businesses and through a series of paperboxes throughout the neighborhood. In addition to the Lyndale Neighborhood News, LNA mails invitations for our Open House, Annual Meeting/Fish Fest, and annual fund drive to the entire neighborhood. All of these publications are in English and Spanish.

How many people receive your electronic communications?

We have three electronic newsletters that reach 1,639 people. The newsletters are the

Lyndale E-News, which is our general information newsletter; Lyndale Gives Back, which is targeted towards volunteer opportunities in the neighborhood; and Lyndale Business Matters which is targeted towards neighborhood businesses. Each electronic newsletter is emailed on a monthly basis.

2013 Highlights

Please describe one or two major highlights, and if possible, please include digital photos or illustrations:

- *What was the issue or opportunity the neighborhood was facing?*
- *Who was impacted?*
- *What steps did you take to address the issue or opportunity?*
- *What was the outcome?*

One significant thing for LNA in 2013 is how our work is changing; due to our Inclusive Organizing Initiatives with traditionally underrepresented communities, LNA is seeing a change in who is coming to meetings, the number of people coming to the office for assistance, and who is volunteering. The Women's Leadership Program and the ESL Program have both helped significantly in connecting community members to LNA and other community resources. The Women's Leadership Program is now starting to move into systems change work with its graduates.

LNA's goal is to be a working multi-cultural community, which is happening through this work. Graduates from the Women's Leadership Program are taking on issues in the community and working with LNA to address those issues. Graduates were also instrumental in working with both Somali and Latino community members during our GOTV campaign.

Another highlight for the neighborhood was the successful completion of the Curiosities of Lyndale project. Graffiti has been a major problem in Lyndale for years, with a high proportion of tags occurring on traffic and utility boxes located throughout the neighborhood. Over the past two years LNA has been working with artist Carly Schmitt to engage community members in the project. The Curiosities of Lyndale were an innovative public art project designed to tell the neighborhood's story by focusing on the question *What are some unique objects in your home that best represent you, your story, and your community?*



Curiosity of Lyndale box located at 36th and Nicollet

The project involved having the artist photograph objects brought by community members through a series of community events and house parties. The project used approximately 500 objects from community members to wrap 25 utility boxes in the neighborhood. The project also includes a unique online component where people can see the stories behind the objects in each box. The project received considerable media attention, including a story by MPR that was picked up and ran in at least twelve major papers across the country.

2013 Accomplishments

Please provide information about your other accomplishments in 2013:

- *What were your organization's major accomplishments?*
- *How were individuals in your community directly impacted by your work?*



Women's Leadership Participants during the Shake Your Assets Activity

Leadership Program that graduated its third Latina cohort and second Somali cohort of community leaders. In addition to helping develop 21 new leaders, the program kept 60 percent of the women from previous years' cohorts involved in LNA's ongoing work.

The capstone for the program is the community project where participants conduct outreach to assess needs in the community and then develop a project that addresses that need. The Latina cohort formed an advisory group called *Mujeres en Conexión* which meets with local organizations to ensure that their programming is accessible to the Latino community. This group has become an ongoing part of LNA's work. The Somali cohorts community project focused creating a safe space for cultural exchanges in an effort to build bridging connections across culture lines.

The second accomplishment was continuing to build the Lyndale English as a Second Language (ESL) Program, which started in November of 2011 and expanded its classes from two hours to two and a half hours three nights a week and split the night class into a Beginning and Intermediate class. This allows teachers and volunteers to give more specialized attention to each student. The program provided over 8,000 hours of student contact time during 2013. Being able to get this program up and running was a major accomplishment for LNA and one that should benefit the community for years to come.

These programs and our other inclusive organizing work are helping LNA see significant growth in engagement from traditionally underrepresented communities. Both programs are unique in that they are intentionally designed to build community and give participants the tools they need to have a voice in helping to shape the community. From English language skills to leadership skills, these programs give participants the confidence, connections, and help to build relationships that enable them and their families to thrive – something we are very proud of as an organization.

2013 was a good year for LNA, we were able to continue making progress on achieving our vision of building a working multi-cultural community. This included our ongoing efforts to engage as many people as possible in their neighborhood's work, our inclusive organizing work to connect with our new immigrant community members, and large community events.

The two accomplishments that stood out the most from 2013 were related to our inclusive organizing work. The first accomplishment was completing the third year of the Women's

1. Housing

What percentage of time did your organization spend on housing-related activities?

Approximately 5 percent. It's important to note that LNA operates a number of programs and other activities that take a significant amount of staff time that are not related to housing related activities.

2. Financial Reports

Please provide an income and expense report for your organization for the year. (Please include all funding sources)

Please see separate document.

In addition to your annual report, please take time to describe your interactions with City departments and other jurisdictions.

1. Impact

What interactions with City departments occupied a major part of your time? What worked well? What could be improved?

During the past year, most of our interactions were with City Council Offices in Wards 8 and 10, with the 5th Precinct, and with the Access and Outreach staff from NCR. In general, we had quick, helpful responses. The areas where we work with the City on a regular basis are much more responsive than other departments, where responses tend to take longer and staff is less helpful.

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate your overall experience with your interactions with the City? 3

2. City Communications – effectiveness

Is the information that you receive from the City understandable and useful?

It depends on which department is sending out the information. We often find that most of the legal notices we get are nearly indecipherable for staff who work on these issues all the time, let alone community members.

We also would like the City to more regularly publish information in multiple languages, which means going beyond just saying if you would like this translated.

3. City Communications – timeliness

Do you receive adequate notice of City activities in your neighborhood? If not, did your organization inform somebody at the City of this? Did the City respond in a positive manner? Please explain.

This is one of our many areas of frustration with the City. So many of the notices and communication pieces we receive from the City are timed so late in the process that it is very difficult to engage community members around the issue at hand – and even when we do the information is often dismissed out of hand.

The timing of the notices also makes it clear the City is more interested in checking a box than authentic community engagement. An additional issue is that we often receive so many communications that is difficult to sort through them to identify which ones should be high priorities from the neighborhood's perspective. We have tried to relay this information through City staff and Council Members numerous times, but it doesn't seem to have any affect on the process.

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate the timeliness of communications from the City? 2

4. City Departments

How can City departments improve the way in which they function in your neighborhood?

As we said last year, one of the main ways City departments can improve how they function with neighborhoods is to start developing some respect for the work we do. It's very difficult to approach working with departments, when you so often hear City staff bad-mouthing neighborhoods in public meetings. This happens on a regular basis and includes staff from the NCR Department and seems to be a part of a culture that is dismissive of authentic community engagement and the work of neighborhood associations. As an organization we have not seen any change in this issue over the past year, nor any effort to engage in a discussion about the role of neighborhood associations and City departments.

City Assistance

How can the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department improve the assistance it provides to your organization as a community participation group?

The most important thing the NCR Department can do is to become an advocate for neighborhoods and increasing neighborhood funding. The work neighborhood organizations are trying to do cannot be done well with the current level of financial or organizational support from the City.

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate the assistance provided to your neighborhood by NCR? 2

5. Other Comments?

As we said last year, we would be happy to sit down to discuss the issues we have raised in the comments on working with the City and the NCR Department.