

Community Participation Program 2013 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: Nokomis East Neighborhood Association

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1. Stakeholder Involvement

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

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

Maintained and regularly updated an extensive website with neighborhood information, designed to promote the neighborhood, local businesses, encourage involvement in NENA, neighborhood and city affairs. The website had 40,360 visitors in 2013. We have a facebook page which is updated as time permits, and a twitter account that automatically sends out facebook news.

Kept 920 members of an email list up-to-date on neighborhood issues, meetings, events and opportunities to comment on City issues with 21 "NENA Updates" electronic newsletters. Published 12 columns in the Longfellow Nokomis Messenger, with information on neighborhood events and meetings, volunteer opportunities and other ways to be involved in neighborhood and city affairs. Published 12 ads in the Messenger to promote events, meetings, and volunteerism. Ads were also published in Southside Pride to promote specific events and the annual meeting. A NENA Review Newsletter was published before the annual meeting to encourage attendance, which brought in over 100 people. Material on the annual meeting and an article on preventing foreclosure were printed in English and Spanish.

Produced, in partnership with the Nokomis Community Center, the annual "Night Before New Year's Eve Party," a family oriented event on December 30, 2013 attended by 800 children and adults. The party provides people of all income levels an evening of games, art activities, hayrides, food, music, and socializing. The entire event, including food, is free. To encourage people to attend, we flyered in the Bossen area (100% rental) in English and Spanish, and had a shuttle bus for a second year, courtesy of Trinity Lutheran Church, to make the event accessible to more people. We also flyered in the Bossen area (100% rental) in English and Spanish.

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

We continued our Latino outreach in the Bossen area, working more closely with individuals and families to discuss their concerns. Our Latino Outreach Specialist attended the National Night Out party at Bossen Park Apartments (90+ units) to meet families and establish connections with them. Many people living in the Bossen area are new to Minneapolis, often "without papers," and are fairly isolated from the neighborhood. We tailored activities to make them feel that they 'belong' and are welcome at neighborhood events.

We organized a Halloween costume drive and then distributed 40 costumes to children so that they could participate in area Halloween activities. As part of the same effort, MPRB provided scholarships for a number of families to attend the Halloween event at Minnehaha

Falls. We also provided a Mariachi Band at the annual Trunk or Treat night at Crosstown Covenant Church, which is located within walking distance from Bossen. Each of these efforts resulted in meeting more families and provided the groundwork for developing relationships that has led to more in depth Latino involvement in 2014.

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

The Minneapolis Monarch Festival brings people together over something they have in common – a love of the Monarch butterfly that connects people from Canada to central Mexico. Rather than focusing on differences, we find that the interest and concern that people have for this butterfly far outweighs any differences they may have.

Building trust and relationships are essential for effectively working with groups of people who aren't regularly involved (because of cultural differences, language barriers, etc). This is really no different than working with anyone, but does require resources to deal with language barriers. It also requires a perceptive and culturally sensitive outreach worker who can understand the situation that people are in and work with them on issues they identify.

- What did not work so well? Why?

We know that flyering isn't very effective unless there are people from within a community who are already knowledgeable about the meeting/event/issue who will help spread the word to other folks. Involving people requires building trust in various ways – following through after meetings, taking time to listen to people (even if it becomes a three hour meeting), and a willingness to meet them where they are comfortable.

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

Not tracked.

- How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?

Approximately 120

- How many individuals participated in your organization's activities?

9,000 +

- How many people receive your print publications?

Newsletter: 6,600 addresses

Longfellow Nokomis Messenger: circulation 22,000

- How many people receive your electronic communications?

920 currently receive "NENA Updates" list plus an additional 290 on a Monarch Festival list.

2. 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?

Co-sponsored, with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, the fifth annual Minneapolis Monarch Festival. The festival celebrates the annual migration of the Monarch Butterfly from Minnesota to Mexico with music, art activities, games, food and education. Children and their families learned about the monarch butterfly's lifecycle and critical habitat needs. The event creates connections between Minnesotans and Latinos based on their common interest in saving the endangered Monarch Migration. An estimated 8,000+ people attended, with approximately 45% of the participants Hispanic/Latino.

The Festival builds on work that has created numerous connections with Hispanic/Latino organizations. We have developed partnerships with Spanish media outlets (Latino Communications Network, Univision Minnesota, La Matraca Magazine), as well as schools and other organizations that serve Latino communities. The Festival is a fully bilingual event, which creates a welcoming atmosphere for all participants. Everyone has a chance to participate in quality art activities, learn about monarchs, tag and release a monarch, talk with experts about habitat needs, and become informed about the issues and how to actively support habitat restoration.

In 2013 we focused more on Latinos in Nokomis East, and used the Festival to draw families into neighborhood activities. A monarch wing-making workshop for children was organized to give families an 'introduction' to the Nokomis Community Center and the programs it offers, as well as the Monarch Festival. Taught and assisted by three bilingual teachers, it was designed to provide a lot of personal attention to people with limited English and those who are new residents.

3. 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?

Served in an advisory capacity for the multi-neighborhood South Minneapolis Housing Fair, which was attended by 1,000 people. Acted as fiscal agent for the Fair, led the process of evaluating what would draw more people to the event, restructured the event to attract younger homeowners, and initiated a vigorous vetting process for all vendors. The results were a much more successful, well-attended and well-rated event in 2013.

Carried out another successful partnership with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board in producing the Minneapolis Monarch Festival. The event has raised the neighborhood's profile, and has drawn more people to the newly formed business association's major event – a block party the day after the Festival.

Continued to maintain three native plant gardens at Lake Nokomis collectively designated as a Monarch Waystation, which provide habitat for monarch butterflies and other wildlife. Many people (local and visitors) notice and appreciate the gardens, often stopping to thank the volunteers working on it. Conducted a workshop on Growing Monarch Habitat, complete with a garden kit for participants to take home and plant. Also continued to maintain the "Gateway Gardens," a community Monarch Butterfly garden located across from the 50th Street LRT station.

4. *Housing*

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

Approximately 15-20 percent.

5. *Financial Reports*

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

Attached.

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?

Most interactions are fairly routine, simple and cordial, and do not occupy a significant amount of time. The exception is Council Member Quincy's "Benefitting Bossen" group, in which NENA actively participates. The meetings are productive when reminders are provided in advance and group members have time to give input on the agenda.

Public Works has been very responsive to our requests for water hook ups for the gardens we maintain. Interactions with Planning and some divisions of CPED are limited but friendly. Interactions with NENA's Neighborhood Specialist at NCR are very good.

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? 4

2. *City Communications - effectiveness*

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

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate overall communications from the City? 4

In general, yes. We would still like to see a web address referenced in notices for proposed ordinance changes so that they can be easily researched and reviewed. The notices sent out give only the general topic of the change, but do not contain enough specifics to know if or how it will impact our constituents. Waiting for staff reports to come out the day or two before a hearing leaves no time to respond on behalf of residents.

We often receive the same notice several times, from different offices, which shows that people are trying to disseminate information as widely as possible. The announcement on the recent winter parking restrictions is an example. We received the notice from NCR, Ward 11, MPD, and possibly others.

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.

There hasn't been a lot of City activity in Nokomis East, but notices are generally given in a timely fashion.

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? 4

4. ***City Departments***

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

CPED, in particular, needs to be more communicative and more willing to work with neighborhood organizations. We have not had a response to comments we sent last year regarding a draft process for dealing with blighted residential structures. Our letter said that the process was an oversimplified flowchart/diagram which didn't address the heart of the question – why not communicate with neighborhoods before a structure becomes blighted so the problem can be addressed before it gets that bad?

5. ***City Assistance***

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

Our neighborhood specialist is very good, and the turnaround time for reimbursements is also good. The turnaround time for contracting, however, continues to be slow. The turn-around time on short/simple translations could also be faster.

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? 4

6. ***Other comments?***