

**Community Participation Program
2013 Annual Report**

Neighborhood Organization: Ventura Village

Contact person: Thor Adam

Date of Board Approval: March 12, 2014

1. Stakeholder Involvement

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

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

VV reviewed and supported five new projects on Franklin Avenue including: The Rose housing project at Portland. The new Norway House between Elliot and 10th Avenues, the Franklin Business Center at 13th Avenue, the new AICDC Housing project at 16th Avenue, the NACDI open market at the LRT station on Franklin, and the Baraka Day Care Playground at Columbus.

The VV Community Engagement Committee continued traditional methods of reaching out to residents through mail, email and hosting monthly meetings. More importantly it developed and began to implement new strategies to reach out to those who live in our community who do not have email, or do not feel comfortable at large community-wide meetings. The Committee sponsored a daylong domestic abuse workshop was conducted specifically for women, and organized the first Ventura Village soccer tournament for 40 youth in Peavey Park.

The VV Wellness & Gardening Committee worked with the Women's Environmental Institute, Native Health Board, Indigenous Women's Task Force, and Waite House to support the Urban Farm at 13th Ave and E 24th St. A Farmer was hired to maintain the garden and to help educate those who participated and those who were interested. Food from the garden was given to volunteers and Waite House to use to help feed neighborhood residents.

In the spring this Committee partnered with the Hub Resource Group to distribute seeds and vegetable & herb plants to neighborhood gardens. This Committee successfully managed the Flowers on Franklin project. This Committee successfully managed the Graffiti Abatement project in conjunction with the Mount Olive Youth Jobs After School Program. This Committee successfully managed the Franklin Ave trash removal project in conjunction with the Mount Olive Youth Jobs After School Program.

VV supported and participated in the Annual Phillips Area Clean Sweep. VV provided educational classes through the Women's Environmental Institute. In the fall VV participated in the annual HUB Harvest Festival

Along with a number of community partners VV successfully hosted the third annual Peavey Park Festival in September. Over a thousand people of all ages attended. Members of the Parks Committee worked with the Park Board on the Peavey Park Community building renovations project which is now completed.

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

VV reached out to non-English speaking residents of public housing by hosting seminars on various topics including personal safety, the use of 911, how to file a police report, etc. VV also provided educational seminars on government and civic participation. VV provided translation services for neighborhood meetings. VV recruited leaders in under-represented communities to serve on the VV Board of Directors.

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

Recruiting leaders in under-represented communities to serve on the VV Board of Directors has been most successful, because it has encouraged them to get more members of their communities involved.

- What did not work so well? Why?
Direct mailings are not successful because our residents are primarily renters and move often.
- How many people did you reach through direct contact (door knocking, meetings, one-on-ones, etc.)? *approximately 300*
- How many individuals volunteered in organization activities? *approximately 150*
- How many individuals participated in your organization's activities?
approximately 2100
- How many people receive your print publications? *Approximately 250*
- How many people receive your electronic communications? *Approximately 300*

2. 2013 Highlights

*The VV Wellness & Gardening Committee Urban Farm Project was very successful because we partnered with a number of organizations to maintain the garden and to help educate those who participated and those who were interested. Food from the garden was given to volunteers and to Waite House to use to help feed neighborhood residents. Waite House feeds approximately 11,000 meals per year. A detailed informational document is included with this report. This project has received a 2014 Minneapolis Public Health Week **LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH HERO** Award, also included with this report.*

3. Accomplishments

VV had many accomplishments as listed in # 1 above. We are proud of all of them, because they were done by volunteers, so our greatest accomplishment is that we do everything without paid staff.

4. Housing

VV spent 16% of our time on housing-related activities. VV has two homeowner grant programs that are administered by GMHC.

5. Financial Reports

VV 2013 income and expense report is 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?

We spent a great deal of time with staff developing a financial policies manual and grievance procedure policy.

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? 2

2. ***City Communications - effectiveness***

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

The information we receive is not always up to date. The website is not totally operative (some links do not work). We have received misinformation due to lack of internal communication within NCR.

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

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 is a lack of information from Zoning & Planning, they only provide what is minimally required by City Ordinance.

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? 1

4. ***City Departments***

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

The Police Department has been great to work with. They are represented at monthly meetings and are very accessible and responsive. Other departments do not communicate well with the neighborhood or with each other. Public works is especially noncommunicative.

5. ***City Assistance***

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

NCR Staff does not always follow NCR policies which causes confusion at the neighborhood level. It would improve assistance if policies were followed.

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____

6. *Other comments?*

Insurance policies carried by CNR are not adequate, and are not explained, and internet links do not always work. NCR needs to develop and follow policies that address issues that arise when neighborhoods are faced with frivolous claims and accusations.

The Director of NCR should not request meetings with neighborhood Boards and then not show up for the meetings.

