

Community Participation Program 2013 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: **Victory Neighborhood Association**

Contact person: **Debbie Nelson**

Date of Board Approval: **March 5, 2014**

Stakeholder Involvement

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

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

Monthly meetings
Block Leader Chili Feed
Ice Cream Social
Welcome Bags
Tiny Fields
Farmers Market
Garden Tour
Gardening Workshop
Little Free Library Project
Footlights Program
Holiday Lights Contest
Music in the Heart of Victory
Active Facebook and Twitter feeds

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

Our efforts at outreach to our Asian residents were stalled in 2013 because of the Patrick Henry High School administration's reluctance to allow us to engage and work with the Asian students at the school. We hope to resurrect our efforts in 2014.

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

The strategy of employing the Asian students at PHHS to do outreach to our Asian residents had just begun to gain momentum when we were cut off from contact with the students at PHHS. The Asian youth were more fluent in the Hmong language and the elders were more trusting of the Hmong students than of us 'white guys'.

- What did not work so well? Why?

Non-Hmong residents knocking on the doors of the Hmong families, because they were not likely to open their doors to the non-Hmong.

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

Sixty-nine individuals attended one or more monthly meetings throughout the year, 8 block leaders attended the block leader Chili Feed and we had direct contact with another 101 individuals who either came into or phoned the office with questions or requests.

No count was taken but hundreds of people attended the Ice Cream Social and browsed the informational booths, including the ViNA table. Hennepin County and the City staffed a table to present the redesign of and get comments on the Penn/44th/Osseo Road intersection, a top priority for the neighborhood

- How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?

Eighty individuals volunteered with the organization either on the Board of Directors, or on committees, with programs such as the Youth Corps, Tiny Fields or Farmer's Market, on projects such as the Little Free Library Project, or Holiday Lights contest, at events such as the Ice Cream Social or Music in the Heart of Victory, and by delivering newsletters, participating in the garden club, hosting and managing the website, and helping in the office or at meetings.

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

Over 1000 people participated in our activities including 31 in the Youth Corps, 37 in the Footlights drama program at Loring School, 23 who built and stewarded Little Free Libraries, 16 who installed rain gardens, 5 planted Tiny fields, 50 at the Memorial Concert, 80+ in the Garage Sale, 32 at the Gardening Workshop, 300 at the Ice Cream Social, over 200 attending the Farmer's Market each week, 40 at the Music in the Heart of Victory, 125 in the Garden Tour, and 35 at the LFL Launch party. In addition, we distributed 43 Welcome bags to new residents and granted three home security rebates, two Business Façade Improvement grants, and three Home Improvement loans. We are unable to determine how many people shop at the annual garage sale but estimate it is in the hundreds.

- How many people receive your print publications?

We publish a quarterly newsletter, the Victory View that is delivered by volunteers to 1951 households three times a year. The winter issue is mailed

to each household. We publish a quarter page news column in the Camden News monthly. The circulation of the Camden News is 12,500.

- How many people receive your electronic communications?

259 receive our biweekly e-newsletter, the Victory View II, however many of those are forwarded on from block club leaders to block clubs and from neighbor to neighbor. There are more than 650 followers/fans on the Victory Neighborhood Facebook page.

1. 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?
In 2008, ViNA commissioned a Pedestrian Needs Analysis and Strategic Plan for the intersection of 44th, Penn and Osseo Road in an effort to find ways to slow traffic and make the intersection more pedestrian friendly. (This intersection is designated a Pedestrian Overlay District.) Since that time we have been trying to engage the city and the county in implementing some of the strategies in the report to encourage more pedestrian traffic and utilization of the many small businesses at this intersection. In 2013 Hennepin County informed ViNA of their intent to mill and overlay Osseo Road from 47th Ave N through the intersection of 44th Ave N. and their willingness to incorporate some of these traffic calming strategies into the project. The city also came to the table for discussions of what could be incorporated into the project.
- Who was impacted?
Those impacted were primarily small business owners at the business node as the project slowed traffic and added crosswalks to the intersection allowing patrons to cross the streets and access their businesses. Secondly, residents who live on or near Osseo Road were impacted by the traffic calming and/or change in traffic patterns and access to the road way. All residents were impacted by the ability to walk safely to the three restaurants and myriad of other businesses on the business node. Ultimately, everyone who drives on Osseo Road and/or through its intersection with 44th Avenue is impacted.
- What steps did you take to address the issue or opportunity?
After years of urging the city and county to make pedestrian friendly improvements at the intersection we were eager to work with both in implementing some of the improvements we had advocated for. We facilitated the county and city engagement efforts with residents and business owners. Several meetings were held with residents and planners to gather input on the changes that were being proposed. In addition, county traffic engineers/planners were invited and attended the annual ViNA Ice Cream Social to gather feedback from neighborhood residents about the proposed plans. A daytime meeting with

business owners was organized for the same purpose. When final plans were determined they were posted on the ViNA website.

- What was the outcome?

When the mill and overlay was finally done in October 2013, most residents were aware of what was going on and how they would be impacted. Because of the early and perpetual winter, the city's parts of the project will not be completed until this spring and so we continue to keep residents and business owners apprised of how the project is progressing and what and when they can expect additional changes.



2. 2013 Accomplishments

Please provide information about your other accomplishments in 2013:

- What were your organization's major accomplishments?
 - We held 3 community builds and helped residents build and install 23 Little Free Libraries, bringing to 33 the number of LFLs in the neighborhood. Our efforts were mentioned in the Star Tribune and we believe we have reached our goal of being the 'best read' neighborhood in North Minneapolis if not the whole city. (see attached map)



- We helped 16 residents in the Ryan Lake drainage area install rain gardens in their yards. These rain gardens will help to reduce the amount of stormwater that enters Ryan Lake and that floods the streets adjacent to the lake. We have now installed nearly 50 rain gardens in the neighborhood. (see attached map)



- We assisted 5 residents in learning how and growing vegetables on their boulevards in our Tiny Fields project. (See www.victorytinyfields.org.) This gave them access to fresh healthy foods and reduced grocery bills. We will be expanding the project this year and even into some other Northside neighborhoods. An article about the Victory Tiny Fields is included in the March – April issue of *Eating Well* magazine a national publication.



- We hosted several meetings with our County Commissioner, Linda Higgins, about the need for a new Hennepin County Library for our community. As a result the new library is back on track with the county.
- How were individuals in your community directly impacted by your work?

Many were impacted by the traffic calming on Osseo Road which carries over to Penn and 44th Avenues. There is a Little Free Library within two blocks of every front door in the Victory Neighborhood, which is especially important since our community library, Webber Park Library, was closed in July because of structural problems. Not just the 16 who installed rain gardens but everyone who lives in the Ryan Lake Drainage area was impacted by reduced flooding and the improved water quality of Ryan Lake. The whole Camden community will be affected by the efforts to resurrect the plans for a new Webber Park Library.

3. *Housing*

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

10.2 % of staff time was spent on direct housing related activities. Additional volunteer and committee time was spent on housing related issues.

4. *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?

We worked with the Public Works Departments of both the city and the county for the improvements of Osseo Road/44th /Penn. The PW staff of both seemed willing to listen to and work with us. They shared their e-mail addresses and phone numbers with us and were very responsive to questions and suggestions, the county more so than the city. While communications were greatly improved over the past, we are still awaiting results from the communication and action from the city.

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** County **4**

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

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

NO

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.

No, yes, no.

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?

- **Ask what the needs are in the neighborhood BEFORE they decide what will be done or needs to be done.**
- **Provide more than a few days notice of meetings.**

5. **City Assistance**

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

Provide some funding for food .We know that offering food gets people to meetings and events and that engaging in a communal meal builds a sense of community.

On a scale of 1 to5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate the assistance provided to your neighborhood by NCR? 1

6. **Other comments?**



Gardening Workshop



Footlights at Loring School



Garden Tour



ViNA Meeting



Memorial Concert



Holiday Lights Contest