

## **Community Participation Program 2014 Annual Report**

Neighborhood Organization: Nokomis East Neighborhood Association

Contact person: Vanessa Haight

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### **1. Stakeholder Involvement**

Reviewing your CPP activities in 2014, Please provide information about:

What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2014?

- Hosted a Latino leadership group at Crosstown Covenant each month with 5-15 participants
- Co-hosted the successful Minneapolis Monarch Festival with Minneapolis Parks and Recreation
- Partnered with Crosstown Covenant church and Bossen residents to plan a National Night Out event for Latino, African American and Somali residents at the picnic area. The event included personal invitations, food, music, and activities for children
- Connected four new Bossen families to the soccer program at Keewaydin Park and worked with the park director to waive the fee
- Created a guide in Spanish for free or low cost programs in the neighborhood
- Maintained [www.nokomiseast.org](http://www.nokomiseast.org)
- Had 484 followers on Facebook and 346 on Twitter, both are updated regularly by our volunteer social media coordinator
- Kept 781 subscribers up-to-date on neighborhood issues, meetings, events and opportunities to comment on City issues through our electronic newsletter and published 12 columns in the Longfellow Nokomis Messenger
- Hosted an annual meeting attended by more than 100 people and printed all promotional materials 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 attended by hundreds of children and adults.
- Door-knocked the Bossen Field area to encourage leadership and participation in the Bossen Field Master Planning process and coordinated Spanish and Somali speaking leaders to help fill out surveys to inform the process
- Held a town hall meeting in December with over 100 attendees
- Participated in the Morris Park summer festival and shared information about NENA
- Participated in Nokomis Block Party and shared information about NENA, collected email addresses
- Supported National Night Out block parties by providing copies of block flyers, flyers about NENA events, and NENA branded prizes
- Organized neighborhood-wide garage sale with 110 participating households

- Hosted a neighborhood meeting to review two housing development proposals for a new single-family home at 5517 25th Ave S
- Helped coordinate Dia de Muertos celebration with 14 families latino residents
- Helped coordinate El Dia de la Madre celebration with 50-60 latino residents
- Coordinated an exercise program in Bossen Field for latino families

2. How did you reach out to and involve underrepresented communities in 2014?

In addition to the items listed above, NENA employs a Community Organizer who is a native Spanish speaker. Her primary responsibility is to foster relationships within underrepresented communities, especially with Latino neighbors, and to build leadership within the community. In preparation for the Minneapolis Parks master planning process for Bossen Field, Maria door knocked 111 apartments in Bossen and connected with a Somali outreach worker to begin making connections with Somali residents in the Bossen area. Her efforts resulted in representation of Bossen residents on the Community Advisory Committee and an increased understanding of what Bossen residents want to see in the redevelopment.

NENA has worked hard to recruit new board members and provides interpreting services to any board member who needs them. In addition, NENA has translated surveys and promotional materials into Spanish for events like the Minneapolis Monarch Festival, Night Before New Year's Eve, and other community meetings.

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

The most successful strategy that we used to connect with underrepresented groups was to hire a native Spanish speaking community organizer who connected one-on-one with neighborhood residents.

The Minneapolis Monarch Festival is another successful strategy to bridge cultures. It 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 and other barriers to participation. 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.

4. What did not work so well? Why?

We know that flyerling 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. We continue to struggle with overcoming cultural and language barriers with the Somali community around Bossen and have recently partnered with a Somali outreach worker from the City of Minneapolis to help break through some barriers and have connected with 10 families so far.

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

This was not tracked well but we do know that our community organizer has connected with people in 111 apartments in the Bossen area, primarily housing Latino and Somali immigrants and have noted meeting attendance numbers wherever possible in this report.

6. How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?

Approximately 200

7. How many individuals participated in your organization's activities?  
9000+, most at the Minneapolis Monarch Festival

8. How many people receive your print publications?

Newsletter and post cards: 6,600 addresses  
Longfellow Nokomis Messenger: circulation 22,000

9. How many people receive your electronic communications?

781 currently receive our electronic updates plus we have 484 Facebook followers and 346 Twitter followers.

NENA has also began to utilize Nextdoor.com, posting meeting and event notifications and other information to 1069 residents.

## ***10. 2014 Highlights***

### **Night Before New Year's Eve**

For 15 years, NENA has sponsored a free, safe, and family friendly event to ring in the New Year. This event brings together a diverse group of neighbors for a fun evening. With clarified restraints on the use of CPP funding for events and festivals, this year's event was a bit more challenging than past years. With only one part-time staff, we relied heavily on board members and volunteers to organize and staff this event.

Hundreds rang in the New Year a day early at the 15th Annual Night Before New Year's Eve (NBNYE) Party, held Dec. 30, 2014, at the Nokomis Community Center. The evening's activities

included free food and entertainment, with carnival games and prizes, KidsDance DJ and count-down, arts and crafts, live music, fortune teller, spectacular face painters, marshmallow roast, a new bowling lane, and a Monarch photo booth.

This year, we kept the fun but took steps toward a greener event, by incorporating compostable dinnerware, reusable tablecloths, and reusable aluminum hand-cranked noisemakers. More than 65 community volunteers assisted with planning, set-up, decorating, serving food, and entertainment. The event was made possible by partnering with the the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board. We also partnered with numerous other companies and individuals: Oxendale's Market, Crosstown Covenant Church, Fat Lorenzo's, Smartset, Inc., Digital Design and Print, Car2Go, Litin's Party Value, and Michael's Arts and Crafts, Councilman Andrew Johnson, Commissioner Steffanie Musich, Representative Jean Wagenius, and Stacy Sorenson.



## **December 2014 Town Hall Meeting**

2014 was a challenging year for NENA with a huge transition in staff and the board of directors. In October of 2014, the NENA Board of Directors was down to 7 board members, out of a total of 15 seats. The community was pressing for accountability, transparency, and better representation on the board. The 7 board members decided to hold a Town Hall meeting to fill the 8 vacant board positions with community input.

Approximately 100 residents attended the General Membership/ Town Hall Meeting. Laura Johansson, an independent, professional facilitator, led the group through a selection process. The meeting included time for the community to talk in small groups about the strengths and challenges of NENA, and to share those thoughts in writing with the Board of Directors. After the discussion period, twelve individuals stepped forward as candidates for the eight vacant board positions, each with an impressive skill set and a unique story of their interest in the neighborhood and potential contributions to the board. The membership then split into the four respective neighborhoods, in which the two candidates were selected to represent their neighbors, in a ballot process tallied by NCEC Commissioners and the independent Facilitator team.

Upholding its promise for a transparent and fair process, the sitting NENA Board immediately convened to formally appoint the community-selected candidates to the NENA Board of Directors.

**Neighborhood Garage Sale:** Organized and helped promote over 100 sales in the neighborhood, fostering neighbor-to-neighbor interactions and reuse of household items.

**Technology Committee:** NENA started a technology committee to review current operating procedures and make recommendations on how to improve. Tech savvy volunteers came together to centralize documents, improve email functions, review the website (changes coming soon!), and improve overall functionality of our operations.

### ***11. Housing***

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

Approximately 15-20 percent.

### ***12. 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?

The NCR department, especially Stacy Sorenson, assisted NENA through a difficult transition in 2014 and provided the support necessary to move forward.

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?   5  

**2. *City Communications – effectiveness***

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

The Minneapolis Connects newsletter does a nice job of highlighting successful neighborhood projects and information, but it would be nice if it was available in different languages.

The public hearing notices from CPED continue to be hard to understand. We would like to see a description of the item(s) being addressed written in plain language and easy to share with our residents.

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

**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.

Public hearing notices often arrive with very little notice. It would be nice if these notices were delivered via electronic mail in addition to postal mail.

Notices from NCR are timely.

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?

We would appreciate more communication with other city departments, besides NCR. Specifically, we would like to strengthen our relationship and communication with CPED and Regulatory Services. Our newly revamped Housing Committee plans to connect with both departments to increase communication.

5. ***City Assistance***

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

Stacy Sorenson is doing a great job assisting NENA with our current organizational and financial needs.

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?***