

Community Participation Program 2014 Annual Report

Neighborhood Organization: Victory Neighborhood Association

Contact person: Debbie Nelson

Date of Board Approval: 4/1/2015

1. Stakeholder Involvement

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

- What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2014?
 - Neighborhood Meetings
 - Home Security Workshop
 - Ice Cream Social
 - Welcome Bags
 - Tiny Fields
 - Farmers Market
 - Garden Tour
 - Gardening Workshop
 - Footlights Program
 - Holiday Lights Contest
 - Music in the Heart of Victory
 - Facebook (990 members)
 - Twitter (240 followers)
- How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2014?
 - A special effort was made to reach out to veterans in our community through the Memorial concert at the Flagpole.
 - Our Youth Corps is an effort to engage senior citizens and the youth in the neighborhood and connect them with the youth performing outdoor chores for the seniors.
- Did you find any strategies to be particularly successful? Why?
 - Meetings where there was information or discussion of topics that directly affected or interested residents.
 - Special events with food. People are drawn to events where they feel recognized, honored and acknowledged. "Breaking bread" together makes people feel they are connected and accepted.
- What did not work so well? Why?
 - Meetings in the colder months of the year when people are reluctant to leave their houses and drive great distances do not work well. Also meetings without a specific topic of interest or concern – very few

people want to attend a meeting just to attend a meeting, engage with the organization or discuss administrative details.

- How many people did you reach through direct contact (door knocking, meetings, one-on-ones, etc.)?
 - 61 individuals attended one or more neighborhood meetings throughout the year. 56 people contacted the office by phone but many more people contacted us via e-mail.
 - We distributed 23 Welcome bags to new residents in 2014. Most are delivered by block leaders or neighbors of the new resident.
 - We estimate at least 500 people attended the Ice Cream Social at which ViNA staffs a table to inform people about the organization and engage them. In addition ViNA volunteers conduct many of the activities at the ICS allowing them to connect with other residents in the neighborhood.

- How many individuals volunteered in organization activities?
 - 9 residents held a seat on the board at some time during 2014
 - Another 107 residents volunteered in other capacities by serving on committees, with programs such as the Youth Corps, Tiny Fields, the Farmer's Market, or Holiday Lights Contest, at events such as the Ice Cream Social, Music in the Heart of Victory or at the Do Good Have Fun event and by preparing and delivering newsletters, participating in the garden club, managing the website, and helping at meetings or in the office.
 - 55 individuals from outside the Victory Neighborhood volunteered to help with the cleanup at Ryan Lake at the Keep America Beautiful - "Do Good Have Fun" event.

- How many individuals participated in your organization's activities?
 - 13 seniors and youth participate in the Youth Corps, 45 students participate in after school activities at Loring School, over 30 residents continue to steward Little Free Libraries, 12 are now growing Tiny Fields,
 - 100+ attended the Memorial Concert at the flagpole, 77 participated in the annual Garage Sale, 20 attended the Home Security Workshop, 19 signed in for the Garden workshop, it was estimated that more than 500 were at the Ice Cream Social, about 125 shop the Farmer's Market each week from July through September, 40 attended the Music in the Heart of Victory concerts, and over 175 took the annual Garden Tour. We are unable to determine how many attend the annual garage sale but it is estimated to be in the hundreds.
 - We closed on two Home Improvement Loans in 2014 and issued one Home Security rebate.

- How many people receive your print publications?
 - Our print publications go to all 2057 household in the neighborhood which house 4718 residentsⁱ.
 - In addition we send our publications to 21 individuals or organizations outside the neighborhood.

- How many people receive your electronic communications?
 - Our e-newsletter is sent bi-weekly to 268 recipients
 - There are 990 members of the Victory neighborhood FaceBook page
 - There are 246 Twitter followers

2. 2014 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?
 - **Ryan Lake Park** -ViNA has been working since 2004 to stabilize the shoreline and upland of Ryan Lake, the only lake in North Minneapolis which was an impaired body of water. In 2004 the neighborhood completed a complete shoreline restoration at the lake to prevent run off which was contributing to the pollution in the lake and creating a lake full of algae by the end of each summer. Gradually the water quality began to improve but the shoreline began to be overrun with invasive plants and volunteer trees.
- Who was impacted?
 - The neighbors directly across from the lake had their view blocked , but every resident of the neighborhood who walked or rode their bike to the lake to a find peaceful stop, observe the wildlife, fish from the dock , or canoe on the lake were impacted by their inability to see or access the lake . Also the overgrowth in the small stand of woods on the shoreline made the area feel unsafe resulting in fewer people wanting to visit the park.
- What steps did you take to address the issue or opportunity?
 - We organized a clean-up of the lake shore in partnership with Keep America Beautiful and Bud Light in July of 2014. We also planted additional gardens on the upland of the park. 87 individuals signed up to help with the event, 55 of who were from outside of the neighborhood.
- What was the outcome?
 - 3080 pounds of green waste, brush and invasive species were removed
 - 120 plants and bulbs were planted with 400 pounds of compost
 - 900 ft. of shoreline was restored
 - After a hard day's work everyone relaxed with a picnic lunch and Bud Light beverages. (No NRP or CPP money was spent on this event.) It was completely funded by a grant from Keep America Beautiful.)

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2014 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?
 - **Victory Tiny Fields** - We wanted to expand on our pilot program of urban farming and get more people involved in growing, cooking and preserving their own food, being more active and living a healthier life style.
- Who was impacted?
 - Residents in the Victory and Cleveland neighborhoods who grew their own vegetables on their boulevards
 - Residents who were engaged in the process by observing and learning from their neighbors
- What steps did you take to address the issue or opportunity?
 - A crowd funding account was set-up to raise funds to expand on the pilot program which was “seeded” by the Victory Neighborhood. Nearly \$1000 was raised.
 - Besides adding fields in Victory, several other nearby neighborhoods were approached as a partner for the expansion because several of their residents had responded to request for more farmers after viewing the fields in Victory. We partnered with the Cleveland neighborhood because they agreed to begin the program in their neighborhood with our help in 2014 and then to support and expand the program in the years after.
- What was the outcome?
 - In 2014 we added 11 Tiny Fields in the Victory Neighborhood to our original five.



- The Cleveland Neighborhood started six Tiny Fields in 2014 and is prepared to expand in their neighborhood in 2015.
- We are reaching out to the Webber Camden, Folwell and Jordan neighborhoods to help them start Tiny Fields in 2015 because we have had requests from residents in those neighborhoods for the program.
- The Victory Tiny Fields project was featured in Eating Well magazine and FOX News 9 and received the 2014 St Paul Garden Club Award from the Minnesota State Horticulture Society.

3. 2014 Accomplishments

Please provide information about your other accomplishments in 2014:

- What were your organization's major accomplishments?
 - The completion of the road work at the intersection of Penn/44th/Osseo Road providing traffic calming and making it more pedestrian friendly.
 - Renewing the shoreline at Ryan Lake and getting a commitment and a design from the MPRB for trails and a plaza at the park.
 - Engagement with Hennepin County/ Penn Avenue Community Works to determine the future use of Penn Ave and Osseo Road.
- How were individuals in your community directly impacted by your work?
 - Penn /44th /Osseo Road – One resident summed it up best on FB by posting "I actually crossed the street with my son without feeling like I was going to be killed!" This intersection is the primary commercial node in the neighborhood and while many of the businesses suffered during the actual construction, many now feel that they will see additional foot traffic in their business.
 - The neighbors living directly across from Ryan Lake Park were very pleased with the shoreline renewal as it opened the lake up to view. It increased the exposure to Ryan Lake and many residents can now bike or walk there. Even more amenities will be added to the park for all to enjoy in the next couple of years.
 - All residents who live bike or travel on Osseo Road or Penn Ave will benefit from the redesign of the road way.



4. *Housing*

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

Approximately 18 % of staff time was spent on housing related activities, including monitoring the Home Improvement Loan programs, rental property, vacant homes and lots, and talking to CPED about tax –forfeited properties and proposals for homes to be built in the neighborhood. Additional hours were spent by members of the Housing Committee and the Board of Directors primarily to meet with developers and others looking to build on vacant lots or individuals/ companies proposing to rehab vacant properties.

5. *Financial Reports*

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

Please see separate sheet.

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?

1.) Public Works 2.) Regulatory Services/Licensing 3.) Minneapolis Park and Rec

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? **For the most part No - not timely. Notice of Public Hearings from CPED planners are very user unfriendly. They meet the letter of the law as far as giving notice - but provide very little useful information.**

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

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. **The only notice we received for this year was regarding sidewalk replacement - which was timely and Public Works was very responsive to our inquiry for more information and a meeting.**

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 -for Sidewalks in PW.

4. ***City Departments***

How can City departments improve the way in which they function in your neighborhood? **More engagement before rather than after the fact. i.e. We were very engage in the original Above the Falls plan. Only this year did we find out that the city had made changes to the Northside land use in the plan.**

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 funding for food/events .We know that community events with food engages people 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__

Other comments?



Memorial Concert – May 2014



Ice Cream Social – June 2014



Ice Cream Social – June 2014



Cooking Demo – July 2014



Mayor at Camden Farmers Market -2014



Volunteer Recognition -2014

ⁱ These numbers are from the 2011 Minnesota Compass Report