

# NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

A newsletter dedicated to keeping Renton's communities informed

Issue 6, January 2010

## Neighbors Coming Together



*Making caramel apples and masks*

In addition to our summer neighborhood picnics, neighborhoods are holding events at various times of the year bringing people together. Here's what some of our neighborhoods are doing:

**On a cool, wet Sunday at the end of October neighbors in the South Renton Connection**, the area's neighborhood association, gathered at Burnett Linear Park to share food, stories, crafts and enjoy a little break dancing. Three tents provided shelter from the rain and housed crocks of chili, spaghetti and hot cider. Hamburgers and hot dogs sizzled on a nearby grill as neighbors flocked around warming their hands. Everyone who attended contributed something, including food, plates, condiments and artistic talents. A highlight of the gathering...decorating masks and making caramel apples with all the fixins!! This neighborhood attempts to plan one activity a month. They have held

neighborhood clean-ups, a bike day and an egg hunt. "Based on the success of our summer picnic we wanted to try holding a Pot Luck for our neighborhood in the fall," said resident Kris Sorenson. "Even with the rain we had about 80 neighbors attend so we viewed it as being very successful! It's a nice way to reconnect with everyone," added Kris. To promote this event the steering committee made flyers printed in both English and Spanish then emailed or hand-delivered them to neighbors. This committee meets twice per month and is currently busy planning events for this winter!



*Hot dogs sizzle in the cold rain in South Renton*

**The Summerwind neighborhood** holds an annual Flashlight Egg Hunt every spring. "Each family participating brings a dozen filled eggs per child," explained event coordinator Debra Mikolaizik. The eggs can contain candy, toys or small amounts of money. "With different families providing eggs we get a variety of surprises for the kids," Debra added. The eggs are hidden in their neighborhood park. Summerwind also holds an annual neighborhood garage sale and an Ice Cream Float Night at the end of summer. Events are advertised in their newsletter and on "A-frames" throughout the neighborhood as the activity date approaches.

**Kennydale neighborhood** also has several events happening throughout the year. In lieu of their quarterly meeting in July, they hold an Ice Cream Social. Neighbors bring ice cream and toppings, and games for the kids to play. "It's low key, fun and a great way to catch up with people," said neighborhood president, Darius Richards. "It's a much more intimate atmosphere than our big neighborhood picnic in September," he added. Kennydale neighbors also have a Sock/Underwear drive throughout the year and donate the items to children in need at Kennydale Elementary School. Other neighborhood planned events include Earth Day activities and a holiday lighting contest. The events are promoted through their newsletter.

**North Renton neighborhood** held a Block Party at the end of the summer. Going off their Block Watch list neighborhood association president George Daniels and his wife Sally, went house to house inviting their neighbors as well as calling and emailing them. "We've had several new families move into our area of the neighborhood and this was a great way to meet new faces, exchange stories and welcome our new neighbors," explained Sally. "We held the party in our back yard and provided chicken, hot dogs and some games for the kids. Neighbors brought side dishes," Sally added, "It was really fun and very successful!"

## Connect to MyRenton

The [Renton Reporter](#) has launched a new way for neighbors to get and stay connected. Neighbors can now share their stories with the rest of Renton. [My Renton](#) is now featured on the [Renton Reporter's](#) home page. It's a highly interactive site where Renton residents can post stories and photos, comment on the happenings of the day and, have a voice in their community. The [Renton Reporter](#) is partnering with Serra Media to launch MyRenton for the rest of the Sound Publishing family of community newspapers in Washington state. There's a map that shows where a news story or an event is happening, all based on Renton's recognized neighborhoods. It's easy to use and there is an initial signup for those wishing to take advantage of the site. Residents could consider making it a key part of their outreach to each other. The neighborhoods on the site are based on the location of the City's recognized neighborhoods. Get connected to MyRenton at [www.rentonreporter.com](http://www.rentonreporter.com). For more information, contact Dean A. Radford at [dradford@rentonreporter.com](mailto:dradford@rentonreporter.com) or 425-255-3484, ext. 5050.

### **"Together We Can" Neighbor to Neighbor Leadership Workshop**

**Featuring:**  
**MyRenton and other communications tools**  
**City services information**

**As we endure these tough economic times it is important that neighborhoods stay connected with each other.** The upcoming Neighbor to Neighbor Leadership Workshop is the perfect opportunity to link up with other neighborhood leaders in the City of Renton. Join us for a light breakfast as we share information and concerns, network with each other and chat with City officials. Learn where other "recognized neighborhoods" are located and become informed on City of Renton services and projects. This year Dean Radford from the [Renton Reporter](#) and Seth Long from Serra Media will present new ways for neighbors to get and stay connected and share their stories with the rest of Renton through the new interactive website MyRenton. "Together We Can" continue to build community through our neighborhoods!

**The event will be held Saturday, January 30, 8-11:30 a.m. at the Renton Senior Activity Center.**

For more information or to RSVP, please email or call:  
[Norma McQuiller](#), @ 425-430-6595  
[Wendy Kirchner](#), @ 425-430-6594.

## Grant Funds are Available!



*Refurbished entry sign at Summit Park*

**It's time to take those future neighborhood project ideas and make them a reality!** Applications for the 2010 Neighborhood Grant Program are now available. **\$83,000** has been

allocated for the 2010 Neighborhood Grant Program! Grants are available to residents who have organized themselves to plan and implement projects for the purpose of improving their neighborhoods. Eligible projects include physical improvements that build or enhance a feature of your neighborhood or benefit the general public such as landscaping, community gardens, urban parks, playgrounds, identity signs or incorporating artwork into your neighborhood. Communications grants are also available and may be used for newsletters, flyers and other methods of conveying information amongst neighbors. The typical grant is \$3,000 to \$5,000 per project, although the actual amount is based on a project's merit and is determined by the Renton City Council.

**Grant applications are due by 5 p.m. on Friday, March 12, 2010.**

*Awards will be announced in May.*

**We will hold a Grant Workshop on Monday, February 8, at 6:30 p.m. on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of Renton City Hall**

for anyone interested in applying for a grant or wanting to learn more about how the Neighborhood Grant Program works.



*Neighbors work together at Victoria Park*

For more information, contact:  
[Norma McQuiller](#) @ 425-430-6595  
[Wendy Kirchner](#) @ 425-430-6594  
Or visit [www.rentonwa.gov](http://www.rentonwa.gov)  
(search for neighborhoods)

## Get to Know Our Neighborhood Liaisons

### One of the perks of being an “officially recognized neighborhood” with the City of Renton

**Neighborhood Program is having a City liaison assigned to you.** Not only do these volunteer liaisons hold other jobs within the City, they are also available to answer questions, attend meetings and address issues that pertain to their designated areas. We are very fortunate to have 22 city employees currently serving in the liaison program as volunteers. In 1997, the City’s Neighborhood Program began with a vision to promote positive communication between residents and city government. Through the efforts of a select few city staff volunteers, a pilot program was established with two neighborhoods, Summerwind and Talbot Hill, working through their local PTA’s. Meet two of our first neighborhood liaisons!



*“Grill Master” Ray Sled*

### One long time volunteer neighborhood liaison is Ray Sled, Water Maintenance Manager for the City.

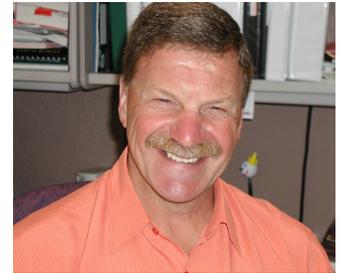
Most of you know Ray as one of our “Grill Masters” at the neighborhood picnics. In addition to being an expert barbecue chef, Ray was one of the first volunteer city liaisons with the Neighborhood Program.

In 1999, Ray was an instrumental contributor to the original committee which spurred the idea and implementation of this pilot neighborhood program. He helped develop the volunteer liaison aspect of the program and helped establish groupings of neighborhoods around the City. Ray became the first city liaison for a neighborhood group formed through the Highlands Elementary School PTA. “Parents were concerned that the lack of good sidewalks made it unsafe for their children to walk to and from school. This became a project within the Public Works Department and I became the neighborhood city liaison,” explained Ray. “Around 300 people attended our neighborhood picnic that year, which was held at McKnight Middle School.” After a few years of neighborhood liaison work, Ray transferred to volunteer chef on the barbecue where he remains today. “Being a part of the Neighborhood Program has allowed me to meet many of the people we (at the City) serve, watch neighbors interact with each other and feel the different dynamics of each neighborhood,” added Ray. “Plus it feels good to give back to the community!” Ray is married with one son and has two grandsons. He enjoys yearly retreats to Hawaii and has done much traveling to all corners of the earth. When you see Ray at a picnic this summer ask him about one of his trips to Africa, New Zealand, Pakistan or Argentina and you’re bound to be engrossed in some amazing conversation!



### Another long time volunteer neighbor liaison is Jerry Rerecich, the City’s Recreation Director.

Jerry became part of the core group piloting the Neighborhood Program at its onset.



*Jerry Rerecich, always smiling*

“There was a big emphasis that we were a volunteer group,” Jerry remembers, “and the residents liked that.” Jerry became one of the first liaisons and was partnered with the Summerwind neighborhood and a few other ones near Sierra Heights Elementary School. “Summerwind held its meetings at the school and there were a lot of police issues in that area at that time. Having a liaison gave residents a point of contact when problems arose,” said Jerry. Being a neighborhood liaison over the years has proven to be very fulfilling to Jerry. “When a resident has a concern, it feels good to get to the root of the problem and it feels even better after you have helped them solve the problem,” he explained. Jerry has found that serving as a liaison has opened the door for contacts in different City departments and has afforded him the opportunity to educate others about the Neighborhood Program. “The liaison program brings City employees together who ordinarily might not get to serve together,” he added. Things are about to change for Jerry...after 40 years of working for the City of Renton, he is retiring at the end of this month!! With woeful hearts, we bid Jerry a fond farewell. What’s in store for the next chapter in his life? “Some much needed home repairs, a little bit of traveling and joining a softball league!” said Jerry, grinning. We hope that Jerry will join us for a hot dog at one of our neighborhood picnics this summer!!





## Neighbor To Neighbor

Editor, Wendy Kirchner

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## This Old House

Many of our neighborhoods are made up of older homes. Owners of older houses usually choose them for love...they are charmed by the home's architectural details or its role in the City's history. Older homes have the extra benefits of being well-crafted and generally energy-efficient. But they do offer special challenges, and that's where the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) comes in. The National Trust maintains a web site full of resources for historic homeowners at <http://www.preservationnation.org/resources/homeowners/>. The site offers tips for weatherizing your older home without compromising its historic character and a Frequently Asked Questions section that can help you with queries from "Where can I find funding to help restore a home?" to "How do I go about researching my historic residence?" (The Renton History Museum can help you with that one, too.) Downloadable resources advise you about how to choose an energy auditor, how to repair old windows, and how to select appropriate paint colors. You can even share a story about your experiences as an historic homeowner or upload a photo to the "This Place Matters" project. Historic homeowners are not alone...take advantage of the help available out there!

**-Elizabeth Stewart, Manager, Renton History Museum**

Liz invites you to attend these upcoming programs through  
March at the Renton History Museum:  
**Celebration of Black History Month 2/9 (5-6 p.m.)**  
**Centennial of Women's Suffrage 3/23 (5-6 p.m.)**  
(more info at [www.RentonHistoryMuseum.org](http://www.RentonHistoryMuseum.org))

## Mark your Calendars!

### Neighbor to Neighbor Leadership Workshop

**Saturday, January 30**  
**8-11:30 a.m.**

*Renton Senior Activity Center*  
*211 Burnett Avenue North*

### Grant Workshop

**Monday, February 8, 6:30-7:30 p.m.**

*Renton City Hall, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor*

### Quarterly Neighborhood Leadership Meeting

**Thursday, March 11, 6-7:30 p.m.**

*Renton City Hall, 7<sup>TH</sup> Floor*

### Grant Applications Due

**Friday, March 12, by 5.p.m.**



**Graffiti has a negative impact on our community.** It gives the appearance that our neighborhoods are unsafe, which creates fear and devalues property.

### How You Can Help:

**Report it** Contact the City of Renton as soon as possible if you are hit with graffiti or if you see graffiti in your neighborhood.

**Remove it** Studies show that the best way to lower the rate of "tagging" is to rapidly and continually remove the graffiti.

**Adopt a Neighborhood** Adopting a neighborhood and working with others in your community is an effective way to ensure it stays clean and free of graffiti.

**To learn more about how you can help keep your neighborhood free of graffiti call 425-430-7362.**