

NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

A newsletter dedicated to keeping Renton's communities informed

Issue 5, October 2009

Celebrating Successful Picnics

With the economic changes affecting our lives in recent months, the summer neighborhood picnics served as a valuable tool for bringing people together. In tough times some of the most comforting things we desire are food, friends, family and a place to gather. Due to City budget constraints, hamburgers and chips were not provided this year. Some residents solicited sponsorships from neighborhood businesses to help fund raffle prizes, extra food/beverage items and entertainment. Neighborhood leaders became fully engaged in planning, promoting and hosting picnics that were as unique as their neighborhoods. The diverse variety of ethnic cultures in many neighborhoods was reflected at many picnics



Kids gather to strike a piñata at the South Union neighborhood picnic

through a variety of international foods, languages and customs. Many of the smaller neighborhoods combined efforts this year and together held very successful picnics. The sound of music reverberated through neighborhoods...all from the talents of residents or through sponsors from neighborhood businesses. South Renton listened to the sounds of their neighborhood jazz band, Unique Groove. Dave McCammon from Cascade, attended this picnic and enjoyed the music so much that he obtained funding from the Cascade Shopping Center to sponsor that same band at their picnic two weeks later! Neighbors set up stereo systems on the grass at LaCrosse and at Earlington. The weather prevailed as one of the nicest summers we have experienced!

The only picnic to have rain was at Maple Ridge Estates. On the other end of the weather scene, North Renton Neighborhood endured its picnic in the record breaking temperature of 103!



Maplewood Glen & Maplewood Gardens for their first picnic

Special Thanks to:

- All the neighborhoods who hosted picnics
- Volunteer chefs Ray Sled, George Stahl and Kevin McQuiller
- Police Chief Kevin Milosovich
- Block Watch Coordinator Cyndie Parks
- K-9 Units
- Neighborhood Fire Stations
- Neighborhood Program Liaisons
- Mayor Denis Law
- City Council Members

Picnic Recap

19 Picnics
 36 Neighborhoods
 8 Combined neighborhood picnics
 4750 Residents
 1 Picnic in the rain
 5023 Cups of lemonade



Dressed for the rain at the Maple Ridge Estates picnic!



Block Watch in your Neighborhood

The Block Watch program is based on the theory that when neighbors work together, they become the first and best lines of defense against crime. Many of us know and watch out for our closest neighbors, but a group of neighbors at one end of the block who are doing this may not know the group of neighbors at the other end of the block. Organizing a Block Watch makes this watchfulness more efficient, and allows you the opportunity to map out your block with participating neighbors' names, addresses and telephone numbers to be used in case of an emergency. Through Block Watch, neighbors make a commitment to watch out for each other's homes and report suspicious activities to the police and to each other. They also keep each other informed about unusual occurrences, burglaries, thefts and other crimes or problems occurring on their block. The Block Watch program also serves as a communication device between residents and their local police department.

The City of Renton Block Watch program provides protective information which can be used to increase your security at home as well as a monthly newsletter with crime prevention information and statistics.

For information on starting a neighborhood Block Watch, contact Cyndie Parks, Block Watch Coordinator, at cparks@rentonwa.gov or 425-430-7521.

Cyndie will meet with you and your neighbors, provide information on the benefits of a Block Watch and help get this program started on your street.

"We recently held our first Block Watch meeting having 40 neighbors in attendance. Cyndie mentioned many ways to protect our homes and talked about suspicious activities and the importance of reporting anything unusual. We hope to follow up with another meeting and discuss the idea of having street captains."

Bob Johnson, Maplewood Gardens resident

"We have a very active Block Watch. We are linked by email and all know each other. We have had two police interventions. Cyndie has been very helpful and occasionally attends our neighborhood meetings."

George Daniels, North Renton resident



Police Chief Milosovich and Block Watch Coordinator, Cyndie Parks

Shop Your Neighborhood



During these tough economic times, it is important to support the small businesses in our neighborhoods. Many of these businesses are participating in the "Shop Renton, Buy Ahead of the Curve" campaign by providing a special offer of some sort to patrons with CurveCards.

CurveCards are FREE

Get one at:

1st Floor at Renton City Hall

(1055 South Grady Way)

Renton Chamber of Commerce

(300 Rainier Avenue North)

Through the mail

(call 425-430-6582)

Explore YOUR neighborhood shops and look for the CurveCard decal!
To view the listing of participating businesses go to www.GoRenton.com

Be sure to watch for special offers through the Shop Renton campaign as the holiday season approaches!

Growing a Community Garden



LaCrosse "Pea Patch"

Has your neighborhood considered starting a community garden?

What started out as an under-used dog park in the LaCrosse Neighborhood sprouted into a Pea Patch last spring. Last January at their board meeting, the idea of a community garden was introduced and by March, resident Priscilla Fitzgerald (a certified WSU Master Gardener) agreed to spearhead the project. Using home owners' association funds and neighborhood labor, the space began its metamorphosis.

The area already had a sprinkler system and resident Rick Dorey was able to tap into it forming two spikets for a couple of hoses. Residents signed up for garden spaces vowing to help build, cultivate and maintain their plots. Pressure treated wood was used to create the ten 8'x8' garden plots. They were placed directly on the existing grass and lined with newspaper to help prohibit weeds from intruding. A mixture of compost and sand and ten inches of top soil filled each framed plot. "Many other neighbors became intrigued and interested in helping when 30 yards of top soil appeared one afternoon!" said Priscilla. A set of "Garden Rules" was drawn up based on the rules at the City of

Renton Community Garden. Priscilla stated that, "rules help to establish guidelines, our mission, and create community ownership." There is much cultural diversity in this neighborhood and this was displayed by some very interesting plants. Priscilla's husband, Chris, was given a "xuxu" seed. "I'd never heard of this vegetable before, but I threw it in the ground to see what it would do and I haven't seen much yet!" said Chris. Apparently this vegetable is also known as "chayote" and is a gourd-like squash that grows on a vine. It is a perennial which bears fruit in 3 to 5 years!

The garden has proved to be very bountiful. "Things grew too fast, and too big! We've learned that some items, like tomatoes, need to be planted in moderation," noted Priscilla, who has harvested over 50 pounds of them! "Neighbors have done a lot of vegetable swapping and we have made several trips to the Renton Food Bank to donate our abundance of produce." Besides hard work and a fruitful

season, many new friendships have developed. There has been a lot of story-telling, sharing of knowledge and recipes, learning new words accompanied by fun competitions of whose plants are bigger or more plentiful. "A real camaraderie was formed in this international garden," explained Priscilla.

For next spring, the garden will expand to 30 or more plots and hopes to house a variety of berries as well as flowers. Priscilla managed to procure catalogues from the Territorial Seed Company to serve as guidelines for the resident gardeners. She made a small donation and in return received several packets of seeds for next year! "The Pea Patch has been a wonderful time of growing produce, flowers and most importantly, friendships. I look forward to doing it all again!" exclaimed Priscilla. In the meantime, she will be canning and freezing lots of tomatoes, and volunteering her expertise at gardening clinics held at McLendon Hardware in Renton!

The Neighborhood Grant Program has matching funds dedicated to stimulating community projects that build stronger neighborhoods. A community garden is an example along with landscaping street-scapes, identity signage, beautification of trails or play areas, neighborhood clean-up, newsletters and more.

The second round of grant 2009 applications are due Friday, October 9, 2009

The 2010 City of Renton Neighborhood Grants will be available after the first of the year.

For more information visit <http://rentonwa.gov/living/default.aspx?id=2234>



*Master Gardener,
Priscilla Fitzgerald*



A couple of the 8'x8' plots



The bounty of the Garden!



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Upcoming Events in Renton

October

Harvest Festival & Business Expo 10/10 (10am-4pm)
(Renton Piazza, information at 425-228-1977)

Renton FilmFrenzy 10/16-18

Curvee Awards Gala 10/27

Downtown FilmWalk 10/28 & 29

(more information at www.RentonFilmFrenzy.com)

Holiday Boo Carnival 10/24 (10am-2pm)

(Renton Community Center)

Trick or Treat & "Olde" Fashion Halloween Party 10/31 (1-4pm)

(Downtown in Main Street Square)

November

Holiday Craft Bazaar 11/7 10am-4pm

(Renton Senior Activity Center)

Hassle Free Holiday Bazaar 11/20 (11am-6pm) & 11/21 (9am-5pm)

(Renton Community Center)

December

Clam Lights 12/04 6:30pm

(Gene Coulon Memorial Beach Park)

Holiday Celebration & Tree Lighting 12/05 (3-7pm)

(Renton Piazza, S. 3rd & Burnett Ave S.)

K9 Candy Cane Fun Run & Walk 12/6 (9am)

(Renton Community Center)

Santa's House 12/11&18 (5-7pm) and 12/12 &19 (1-4pm)

(Renton Piazza)

For more information, visit www.rentonwa.gov

Councilmember Parker Achieves Lemonade Goal

Congratulations to Councilmember King Parker for not only reaching his goal of serving 5000 cups of lemonade at the neighborhood picnics but also surpassing it! The final count... **5023** cups of lemonade!! There was even a little competition at the Kennydale picnic over whether more hot dogs or more lemonade would be served...the winner, lemonade! The result: 877 cups of lemonade vs. 840 hot dogs!! Picnic program interns Kyle Hayden and Marisa Mikelson helped Parker achieve his goal. Both were recognized as Parker celebrated the accomplishment at a recent City Council meeting. "Kyle was so great getting me all set up and ready to serve and Marisa was my mixologist!" stated Parker. We wonder what he's got in store for next year!!



Kyle Hayden helps Councilmember Parker set up to serve lemonade at the Cascade Picnic