

# Oshkosh Neighborhood News

SEPTEMBER, 2015

## Schools and Healthy Neighborhoods

*"Efforts to transform schools and revitalize neighborhoods should be linked in ways that are mutually reinforcing." ~ Michael Schubert*

There is little argument that the health of schools is linked to the health of neighborhoods. People often make neighborhood selections based on the perceived qualities of local schools. In many communities there are significant efforts underway to transform schools, but these efforts are seldom linked to neighborhood improvement efforts occurring in the same communities. From a Community Development perspective, we can look at schools through a different lens. We can see schools as community institutions with networks of people and leaders. As community institutions, schools contribute to how the image of a neighborhood is defined. Schools are a kind of sub-market of people who make a number of residential decisions—either voluntary or involuntary—about the neighborhood—and whose decisions can be influenced through local level interventions. Knowing this, we can begin to ask some important questions about how neighborhood improvement efforts can be better aligned to enhance school image, improve school performance, and improve the educational and social outcomes for students and school parents. In other words, is it possible to position the work of improving neighborhoods in ways that also strengthen our schools? In con-

sidering potential linkages between local schools and neighborhood improvement, it is best to think small. Following are some strategies to consider:



- **Market our schools.** Schools, like neighborhoods, can be considered a product that has to be marketed to potential customers. Schools are community assets and we need to influence how they are perceived.
- **Address the student mobility rate in schools as a housing issue** by providing housing counseling to school parents to help them address issues that impact their housing situation and their involuntary mobility.
- **Develop schools as community centers.** The health of any community is dependent on the availability of common space for interaction, service provision, recreation, culture, and arts.
- **Train parents and neighbors to work in classrooms.** Children learn better when their parents and other adults are actively involved in their education.
- **Help teachers buy houses.** Helping teachers live in the neighborhood could improve morale and enhance performance. Furthermore, having teachers live in the neighborhoods where they teach can be an important neighborhood outcome.
- **Make schools the beneficiary of both public and private resources.**
- **Use neighborhood revitalization tools to make the areas around local schools more attractive and safe.** The "Broken Windows" theory suggests that social disorder takes root where physical conditions begin to slide. We have Drug Free School Zones, but we might also consider creating "Blight Free" zones as a way of arresting the decline of physical conditions and making the path children travel to school safer and more attractive.

These simple actions could prove to be a great start to more intentionally connecting our schools and neighborhoods. Additionally, these interventions cost little financially, but could create big returns that benefit both schools and neighborhoods.

Excerpted from "Schools and Neighborhood Revitalization: An Invitation to New Thinking" by Michael Schubert

## City Partners with Communities at Oshkosh North, Neighborhoods

**"A great group of  
10 Oshkosh North  
HS Communities  
students toured  
Algoma Park  
Neighborhood. We  
covered a third of  
our area and  
enjoyed good  
questions and  
beautiful weather!"**

**~Jenifer Jensen,**

**APNA**



Early in September, the faculty at Communities, a charter school within Oshkosh North High School, partnered with Community Development staff to help students learn more about Oshkosh neighborhoods. Planning Services Division staff had the honor of visiting the school and delivering a presentation about the importance of neighborhoods, what the City is currently doing to support neighborhood improvement efforts, and how the students can help. Resident leaders from six existing neighborhood associations volunteered

their time to host neighborhood walking tours and provide the students an opportunity to experience the neighborhoods first-hand and learn about the unique assets and challenges of different areas in the City. Meanwhile, each student is applying his or her knowledge to their own neighborhoods and creating a presentation about what makes their part of the City a great place to live, work, and play. The students will also participate in a panel discussion with Mayor Cummings; Ruth McGinley, Vice-President of the Millers Bay Neighborhood Association; and

City staff representatives to expand their knowledge of local government functions. The learning unit will culminate in a Neighborhoods Showcase to be held at The Waters, (cont. on pg. 3)



**Communities students tour the Algoma Park Neighborhood with resident leader, Jenifer Jensen.**

## Driving Tips Around Schools: Keeping Kids Safe

Parents, caregivers, and those who drive in neighborhoods near schools can play an important role in enhancing safety near schools by following safe driving practices. At arrival and dismissal times, drivers are often in a hurry and distracted which can lead to unsafe conditions for students and others walking, bicycling and driving in the area. Drivers

should always:

- Slow down and obey all traffic laws and speed limits, both in school zones and in neighborhoods surrounding the school.
- Comply with local school drop-off and pick-up procedures for the safety of all children accessing the school.

• Avoid double parking or stopping on crosswalks to let children out of the car. Double parking will block visibility for other children and motorists.

• Avoid loading or unloading children at locations across the street from the school. This forces kids to unnecessarily cross busy streets—  
(Cont. pg. 3)

## Autumn Property Maintenance Tips

Autumn is officially upon us and with falling leaves comes falling temperatures. While you're enjoying the season's colors, it's also wise to prepare your home for the coming winter.

1. Make sure your heating system is tuned up. Before winter really sets in you want to make sure your system is in tip top shape.

Perform a visual inspection and if anything seems off, call an HVAC specialist to repair the problem.

2. Double insulate your attic. Proper insulation will help you stay cozy and save money this winter.
3. Prepare your yard for the winter. You may want to consult a landscape com-

pany, since they will have the best advice for keeping your lawn and garden healthy through the cold months.

4. Check your water heater. Ideally you'll want to drain your unit and refill it. Large mineral deposits that build up over the summer may cause it to go on the fritz at the worst possible time.

## Communities, cont...

1393 Washington Avenue, on Tuesday, September 29, 2015 from 7:30 a.m.—9:00 a.m. This event is free and open to the public. Please join the Communities students for some light refreshments and to view the gallery of presentations of Oshkosh neighborhoods in an open-house format. For more information, tune into Oshkosh Community Media Services at 101.9 fm and listen for the public service announcements recorded by the students, or catch the latest episode of Oshkosh Today on channel 2.

Communities is the product of Richard Leib, Julie Dumke, Brad

Weber, and Oliver Schinkten. The program was founded to help students learn content differently than in the traditional classroom. Communities students learn content through real-life application, pairing with local businesses and partners to help solve community problems. If you are interested in partnering with Communities, please visit their website at: [www.communitiesonhs.org](http://www.communitiesonhs.org), click on the “partners” button at the top of the page, and fill out the online form.



**Communities students tour the Millers Bay Neighborhood with resident leaders Ruth McGinley and Polly Kimball**

## Driving cont...

often mid-block rather than at a crosswalk.

- Prepare to stop for a school bus when overhead yellow lights are flashing.
- Stop for a school bus with its red overhead lights flashing, regardless of the direction from which the driver is approaching. Drivers must not proceed until

the school bus resumes motion and the red lights stop flashing.

- Watch for children walking or bicycling (both on the road and the sidewalk) in areas near a school.
- Watch for children playing and gathering near bus stops. Watch for children arriving late for the bus, who may dart into

the street without looking for traffic.

- Watch for children walking or biking to school when backing up (out of a driveway or leaving a garage).

By exercising a little extra care and caution, drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians can co-exist safely in school zones.

## We Want to Hear From You!

Do you have a comment or question about the content of this newsletter? Do you have a topic you'd like us to cover or a suggestion on how we can improve this newsletter? We want to hear from you! Contact Planning Services to submit your suggestions, articles, editorials, upcoming events, or anything else neighborhood related that you'd like to share.

**City of Oshkosh**

**Planning Services Division**

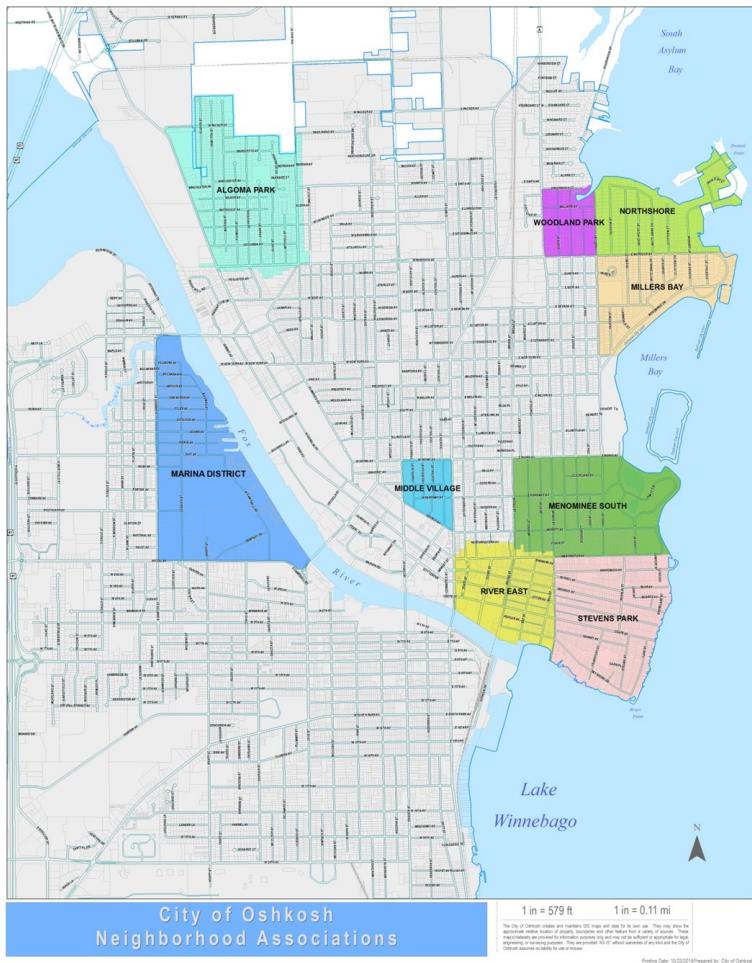
**215 Church Ave, Room 204**

**(920) 236-5059**

**[planning@ci.oshkosh.wi.us](mailto:planning@ci.oshkosh.wi.us)**



**City of Oshkosh**  
Department of Community Development



## Upcoming Events

EVENT	LOCATION	TIME / DATE	COST
<b>Neighborhoods Showcase</b>	The Waters	7:30-9:00 a.m., Tues., September 29, 2015	<b>FREE</b>
<b>44th Annual Gem &amp; Mineral Show</b>	Sunnyview Expo Center	9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m. Sat., September 26-27, 2015	\$2 adults, \$1 students, kids 12 and under <b>FREE</b>
<b>Night Whispers—Real Oshkosh Ghost Stories</b>	Oshkosh Public Museum	Thurs., Fri., and Sat., 6:30 and 7:30 p.m. Oct. 1-30, 2015	\$10/ticket, pre-registration required. Limit 15 people per tour. <b>Not suitable for children under 10.</b>
<b>Free Fridays</b>	Community Theater 445 N Main Street	Every Friday. Doors open at 6:30, show starts at 7:00	Free admission on Fridays, \$3 on Saturdays. Cash only.