



Merle Hay Neighborhood Association  
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Des Moines, IA 50310

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# Merle Hay Neighborhood Newsletter

## Help MHNA Beautify Our Neighborhood!

Calling all green thumbs! Have a passion for planting and gardening? Are you interested in helping improve our neighborhood's curb appeal? Well, you're in luck! MHNA's Beautification Committee can always use extra hands to plant, water, and weed our neighborhood flowerbeds at the following locations:

- Merle Hay Road and Cummins Parkway
- University Avenue and Cummins Parkway
- Merle Hay Road, Hickman Road, and Merklin Way
- Urbandale Avenue and 57th Street
- Urbandale Avenue and 49th Street
- Tower park
- Tenny Standpipe at Merle Hay Road and Madison Ave.

We have been emphasizing perennial plantings in recent years at our neighborhood flowerbeds and gladly accept donations. If you would like to donate perennials or help plant and tend beds, please contact Beautification Committee Chair Kathy Battles at 865-3040, or by email at [kmbattles@msn.com](mailto:kmbattles@msn.com).

MHNA thanks all of the volunteers who help tend our flowerbeds! We couldn't do it without you and we always encourage more neighbors to pitch in.



## Participate in the 2020 Census

A reminder to please complete the 2020 Census form when it comes in the mail. The Census helps get the most accurate population count possible in Des Moines. It also helps measure the city's growth, plays a vital role in planning for Des Moines' future, and guides decision-making and resource allocation by city leaders. By April 1, 2020, every household will have received an invitation to participate in the 2020 count. Responses can be submitted by phone, mail, or online. Visit [census.gov](https://census.gov) for more information. For the best local information, visit [DSM.city](https://dsm.city) online and search for DSM Counts.

## Get Your Tiny Trees!

MHNA has coordinated and supported numerous tree-planting projects in our neighborhood in recent years. We also encourage individuals to plant trees on private property. You can do just that through the City of Des Moines' Tiny Trees program, which allows residents to get up to five FREE individual trees each year. Planting trees helps increase property values in our neighborhood, save on heating and cooling bills, provide oxygen, and create habitat for wildlife. Tiny Tree orders are due on Wednesday, April 15. Learn more by calling Des Moines Public Works' 24-hour customer service line at 283-4950, or go online to [DSM.city](https://dsm.city).

## Connect with Us!

Facebook: [@MerleHayNeighborhood](https://www.facebook.com/MerleHayNeighborhood)  
Website: [www.merlehay.org](https://www.merlehay.org)

## MHNA Quarterly Meeting on April 16

Please join the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association for our next quarterly meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 16 at the Northwest Community Center. We have invited Carl Voss, who was recently elected to an at-large seat on the Des Moines City Council, to be our guest speaker. Councilman Voss will share some of his priorities and plans on the council, and field questions from attendees. We'll also have plenty of neighborhood news, public safety updates, refreshments, and more. Mark your calendars and invite your neighbors.

\* Please note that as of March 23, the Centers for Disease Control recommended postponement or cancellation of in-person events that consist of more than 10 people. MHNA will continue to monitor the situation. Please check [merlehay.org](https://merlehay.org) and MHNA's Facebook page for meeting and event updates.

## Mega-SCRUB Set for April 18

The Merle Hay Neighborhood Association will once again partner with Des Moines Public Works to host the annual Spring Clean Up to Reduce Urban Blight (SCRUB) from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 18 at Hoover High School on Aurora Avenue. SCRUB allows Des Moines residents to discard unwanted items and trash for free, helping enhance our neighborhood in the process by cutting down on junk and debris. For complete SCRUB program details, visit the Des Moines Public Works webpage or call 283-4950. If you would like to volunteer to help MHNA coordinate the SCRUB event, please contact Chuck and Peggy Warrick at [cpwarrick@msn.com](mailto:cpwarrick@msn.com), or 515-289-6092. Volunteers primarily direct traffic and field questions from people who bring trash to SCRUB. Thanks to everyone who pitches in to make this annual event such a big success!

Please check [merlehay.org](https://merlehay.org) and the MHNA Facebook page for event updates.

## Report Potholes

Spring is here, and that means potholes are too! The City's free myDSMmobile app for iPhone and Android allows citizens to report issues such as storm and sanitary sewer problems, street light outages, traffic sign issues, and yes, those dreaded potholes. Please download the MyDSMmobile app and use it to help identify and resolve issues in our neighborhood and throughout Des Moines.

## Bring the Family! Free Flicks Coming to Tower Park on June 18.

MHNA is partnering with the Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department to bring the popular Free Flicks program to Tower Park! Please mark your calendars for Thursday, June 18.

Free Flicks is a summer-long series of outdoor movies in neighborhood parks. The films are shown on a 25-foot portable screen and begin after sunset. Admission is free and blankets and lawn chairs are encouraged. People are free to bring their own snacks as concessions are not available for purchase.

Movies will not take place in the event of rain. Please check the MHNA and DSM Parks Facebook pages for updates. We plan to announce the movie selection soon!



Merle Hay Neighborhood Association  
"Working Together to Make a Difference"  
PO Box 31036 Des Moines, IA 50310

*April 2020*





## Get an Early Start on Your Garden!

Spring is here! With sunny days and warmer temps, the yard is beckoning you to get out and enjoy it. Here are a few things you can do if you want to get your hands in the dirt.

**Start seeds:** Radishes, peas, lettuce and spinach can be planted in the ground now. Start tomatoes and peppers in small pots with potting mix and place them next to a sunny window indoors. They can be planted outdoors in May.

**Prune:** Ornamental grasses, lavender, butterfly bush, and 'Annabelle' hydrangea can be cut back now. Wait to trim lilac, forsythia, magnolia and other spring bloomers until after they flower.

**Make a plan:** Design a vegetable garden on graph paper. Most vegetables like tomatoes and squash grow best in full sun (6 hours of direct sunlight) but herbs, greens, and lettuce can be grown in part sun, too. You can even grow them in a pot or include in a flower bed.

Think about what you can add to your yard. Take a look out the window from where you spend a lot of time, like the kitchen or living room. Add a small flowering tree or a pot filled with colorful annuals so you can enjoy the view even more! A flowery container or hanging basket by the front door make your house more appealing and friendly.

These are just a few things you can do to get you excited about spring. If you are interested in personalized consultation and advice for your yard contact me at Sunshine Custom Gardens, located right here in the Merle Hay neighborhood! You can reach me at 515-865-9940, or find me on Facebook!

## National Night Out on August 4

We had a great turnout for National Night Out in 2019. Help us make this year's event even better!

The Merle Hay Neighborhood Association will host its annual observance of National Night Out, America's night out against crime, from 6pm to 8pm on Tuesday, August 4th at the Northwest Community Center, 5110 Franklin Avenue. There will be food, games for kids, family-friendly entertainment, door prizes, and great tips and information from public safety personnel about how to safeguard your property against crime.

Tableware, food, and drinks will be provided. National Night Out is a great way to meet your neighbors and learn more about safety within your home and while you're out and about. Please help spread the word! If you would like to volunteer or have a table at this year's event, please contact April at 515-707-6386, or [abeck@shazam.net](mailto:abeck@shazam.net).

## NFC Lending Expands in Merle Hay Neighborhood

The Neighborhood Finance Corporation (NFC) has expanded its lending areas in the Merle Hay Neighborhood. NFC is a non-profit lender that aids neighborhood revitalization and homeownership via first mortgages, forgivable home repair loans, and more. To see NFC's lending areas and learn more about their lending programs, visit [NeighborhoodFinance.org](http://NeighborhoodFinance.org), or call 515-246-0010.



## MHNA Meeting Dates

MHNA holds its quarterly membership meetings on the third Thursday in January, April, July, and October. Our remaining meetings in 2020 are scheduled for April 16, July 16, and October 15 at the Northwest Community Center, 5110 Franklin Ave. The April and July meetings will start at 6:30 p.m., and the October gathering will kick off at 6 p.m. for our annual supper. Please check [merlehay.org](http://merlehay.org) and the MHNA Facebook page for info on other events, gatherings, projects, and opportunities to get involved.

## MHNA Membership - Join the Cause!

A reminder to please join or renew your MHNA membership for 2020! Becoming a member of the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association helps you make a difference in our community. Membership dollars help support the events and activities of our all-volunteer association. Joining also helps you lend your voice to any number of civic issues such as public safety, neighborhood revitalization, park improvements, commercial corridor redevelopment, and more.

Anyone who lives, rents or owns property, or has a business within the neighborhood boundaries may join. Non-residents may also join as associate, non-voting members. As a 501(c)(3) organization, all dues and donations are tax-deductible.

Membership dues are as follows:

- Individual: \$15
- Couple: \$30
- Business: \$30
- Church, School, or other Non-profit: \$10

Dues can be paid in person at association meetings or mailed to: Merle Hay Neighborhood Association PO Box 31036 Des Moines, IA 50310. Thank you for supporting MHNA this year and every year!

## Officer and Board Elections

Officers and board members were elected when the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association held its annual meeting on January 16. Here are this year's board members:

- Chris Morse, President
- April Wyss, Vice President
- Marilyn Nizzi, Secretary
- Peggy Warrick, Treasurer
- Kathy Battles, Board Member
- Chris Janson, Board Member
- Jason Pulliam, Board Member

Thank you to former Treasurer Ron Stoen, who served MHNA for many years, and Machele Shaffer, who served on the board in 2019.

## O'Donnell ACE Hardware Home Improvement Corner

### Window Repair Services and Other Spring Tips!

O'Donnell Ace Hardware has some spring home maintenance tips. When you are washing your windows, be sure to clean your windowsills and weep holes so water will drain off. Inspect your windows for broken glass, screens with holes, or broken corners. Ace offers a full-service screen and window repair shop where we rescreen window and door screens and replace glass in windows, including thermal pane units. If your patio screen is too large to be hauled in your car, we also offer pick-up and delivery services.

Check your sump pump by pouring a few gallons of water into your sump pit, make sure it turns on and pumps out the water. After the pump shuts off, pour more water in to insure it turns on again. Clean air vents will help cut down on allergens and improve your A/C and furnace performance. Wash your vents in soapy water, vacuum inside the vent to remove dust and debris (watch for sharp edges), and change your furnace filter.

Don't forget: O'Donnell Ace Hardware also has garden tillers, lawn aerators, and Rug Doctor carpet cleaners available for rent!



Follow us on Facebook at O'Donnell Ace Hardware Hickman Rd Des-Moines.

## WatchDSM Security Camera Program

MHNA members heard from the Des Moines Police Department at our October meeting about a new volunteer effort to help keep our neighborhoods safe. DMPD now allows residents to register their security cameras with "WatchDSM." Here's a snapshot of how the program works:



- Participation is 100% voluntary.
- DMPD will never have direct access to your security camera.
- For those who register, DMPD may contact you if a crime occurs in the vicinity of your security camera and officers think you may have helpful footage.
- Any residents or businesses within Des Moines city limits are eligible to participate.
- Participants can opt out at any time.
- Learn more at [DSM.city/WatchDSM](http://DSM.city/WatchDSM)