



Merle Hay Neighborhood Association  
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Des Moines, IA 50310

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# Merle Hay Neighborhood Newsletter

## Urbandale Avenue Tree Planting

Keep an eye out for beautification efforts along Urbandale Avenue this fall! The City of Des Moines Forestry Division will be planting approximately 40 trees in the medians along Urbandale Avenue between Merle Hay Road and 48th Street. The trees will include a wide variety of overstory shade trees and understory ornamental trees, some unique to the area. The vision is to create a "walking arboretum" along Urbandale Avenue through the Merle Hay and Beaverville Neighborhoods.

This fall's tree planting is intended to be the first phase of a larger effort to restore the tree canopy along Urbandale Avenue. City staff have identified areas to plant an additional 60 trees in the city-owned right-of-way, which is the area between the curb and sidewalk. While the City will plant the trees at no cost, they ask that adjacent homeowners assist with watering. The Forestry Division will be reaching out to adjoining homeowners in the upcoming months, with the goal of planting additional trees in the spring. MHNA strongly encourages homeowners to support the tree-planting plan.



## Thank You to MHNA's Beautification Committee Volunteers!

MHNA extends its sincere thanks to our Beautification Committee volunteers who tend eight flowerbeds in the Merle Hay neighborhood: Kathy Battles, Committee Chair, Cindy Welsh, Connie Brady, Cathy and Jo Anne Talarico, Mike and Marilyn Nizzi, Margaret Hahn, Al Hopp, Eric Means, Ben Taylor, and Jason Pulliam.

We can always use more volunteers to water and weed MHNA's flowerbeds. The 2019 growing season will be here before we know it! Please contact Beautification Committee Chair Kathy Battles at 865-3040, or by email at [kmbattles@msn.com](mailto:kmbattles@msn.com) if you would like to help.

## Hillis Elementary PTO Book Drive

The Hillis Elementary PTA is hosting a book giveaway during conferences on October 23rd & 24th. The goal is to get kids excited about reading, and to make sure that all students have access to books at home. The PTA is asking for donations of new and gently-used books. If you would like to participate, please bring your donation to the upcoming MHNA meeting on October 18, 6pm at the Northwest Community Center. You can also connect with the organizers by emailing [PTO.Hillis@gmail.com](mailto:PTO.Hillis@gmail.com).

### Connect with Us!

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

## MHNA's Annual Supper and Quarterly Meeting on October 18th!

Please join the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association for our annual supper at 6 p.m. on Thursday, October 18, at the Northwest Community Center, 5110 Franklin Ave. We'll have a variety of soups, sides, and desserts. If you would like to contribute something for the supper, please contact April at 515-707-6386.

After supper, we'll hear from Polk County Supervisor Angela Connolly, who will provide an update on county business. We'll also hear from the local developer who plans to convert the former Franklin Junior High/First Federated Church building at 4801 Franklin Avenue into a mixed-use commercial property with a boutique hotel, restaurant, office space, and other possible uses. The new property owner plans to file for rezoning soon, and MHNA's October 18 quarterly meeting will allow residents and other stakeholders to ask questions and provide feedback.

The meeting portion will include public safety updates, neighborhood news, and a look ahead to 2019. Please mark your calendars and invite a neighbor. We look forward to having a great turnout!



## Non-Perishable Food and Winter Clothing to be collected at MHNA's October 18th Meeting

The Merle Hay Neighborhood Association will once again collect food and clothing donations for the less fortunate when we meet at 6 p.m. on Thursday, October 18, at the Northwest Community Center, 5110 Franklin Ave.

The food we collect will be donated to the Des Moines Area Religious Council's Food Pantry Program. For more information about the most-needed food items, please visit: <https://www.dmarcunited.org/movethefood/>

Through our "Keep the Kids Warm!" program, we will collect winter clothing for elementary school children in the Merle Hay neighborhood. Donations of new and gently-used coats, boots, stocking hats, gloves, and mittens are greatly appreciated. For more information about the clothing drive, contact Kathy Battles by email at [kmbattles@msn.com](mailto:kmbattles@msn.com), or 515.865.3040.

We will also accept free-will monetary donations for each program and use the funds to further each cause. Please help us continue our success!

## Donate Box Tops for Education to Hillis Elementary School

Calling all Box Tops! Volunteers from the Hillis Elementary School Parent-Teacher Organization will be collecting Box Tops for Education at the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association's next quarterly meeting at 6 p.m. on Thursday, October 18. The person who brings the most Box Tops will get a gift card from ACE Hardware! To be eligible, please place your Box Tops for Education in a baggie along with your name and contact information so you can be contacted if you win the gift card. Visit <https://www.boxtops4education.com/> for more information about how the Box Tops program benefits schools. Thanks for your help!



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

October 2018

## National Night Out Recap

Thank you to everyone who joined the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association in August for National Night Out! Special thanks to the Des Moines Police and Des Moines Fire Department for joining us and for your service to the community. We also wish to thank and recognize our generous sponsors and wonderful volunteers.

**Sponsors:** Bankers Trust, Ace Hardware, Dairy Queen on Douglas Avenue, Jersey Mike's Subs, Price Chopper on Merle Hay Road, Felix & Oscar's, Applebee's, Shang Yuen, KFC, McAlister's Deli, and Wasabi Chi.

**Volunteers:** April Wyss & Family, Marilyn & Mike Nizzi, Mary Keables, Kathy Battles, Chuck & Peggy Warrick, Eric Means, Tammy Keiter, Marlene Dominick, and Mary Zischler.

We apologize if we missed any sponsors or volunteers. Thanks again to everyone who made National Night Out happen!

## Recycle Right!

Did you know that plastic bags and wrappers cannot be recycled in your blue single-stream recycling cart? Nor can pizza boxes, styrofoam, rubber hoses, tupperware containers, or aluminum foil?

When these items are thrown in your blue cart, it ultimately costs the city money through increased processing expenses. To cut down on bad recycling, Des Moines Public Works has begun conducting curbside audits. In August, they rejected more than 650 recycling carts after spot checks identified non-recyclable materials inside. If your cart was left on the curb, this may be why.

Items that are accepted include paper, cardboard, milk and juice cartons, aluminum and steel cans (including aerosol), glass jars and bottles, yogurt containers, and plastic bottles/containers with twist-off lids. Plastic grocery bags can be returned to your grocery store drop-off sites.

For more information on what is allowed in your blue tote, visit [www.dmgov.org/Departments/PublicWorks/Pages/Recycle.aspx](http://www.dmgov.org/Departments/PublicWorks/Pages/Recycle.aspx)



## 2019 MHNA Meeting Dates

MHNA meets on the third Thursday in January, April, July, and October. Unless otherwise noted, the meetings start at 6:30 p.m. and are held at the Northwest Community Center, 5110 Franklin Ave. The 2019 meetings will be held on January 17, April 18, July 18, and October 17. Please mark your calendars!

## Officer and Board Elections

Elections for MHNA's 2019 Board of Directors will be held at our annual meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 17, at the Northwest Community Center. Elections will be held for president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and three board members.

If you are interested in running for an officer or board position, please send an email to Marilyn Nizzi at: [mmnizzi@outlook.com](mailto:mmnizzi@outlook.com).

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor when we meet on January 17. Membership dues must be current to run for a seat on the Board of Directors. Please consider running for a seat to help serve OUR neighborhood! It takes everyone doing their part.

## Annual Holiday Lights Contest

The Merle Hay Neighborhood Association will sponsor its 14th annual Holiday Lights contest this winter. Judging will take place in mid-December. If you would like ensure your house is included in judging, please contact April at 515-707-6386. Your home or your neighbor's home may be considered for a prize even if you don't contact us. Three homes will be awarded a \$25 gift certificate. Judges will be looking for creativity, originality, holiday spirit, neatness and theme coordination.



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## Snow Ordinance Reminders

It's hard to believe, but winter is just around the corner. Chances are good you may need a quick refresher on the city's snow ordinance. Here are the basics:

- City ordinance requires vehicles to be removed from snow routes while Public Works crews plow streets. Violators will receive a \$35 fine and can also be towed.
- Once snow routes are cleared, city crews plow residential streets.
- Front-yard parking is illegal at all times.
- Complete details on Des Moines' snow ordinances can be found at [www.dmsnow.org](http://www.dmsnow.org).

Please do your part to help city plow crews keep our streets as clear of snow and ice as possible.

Also, below are some reminders about the city's requirements for snow removal on sidewalks. As always, MHNA encourages neighbors to help each other with snow removal. Please lend a hand to elderly or disabled neighbors who may not be able to clear their own sidewalks. Thanks to everyone for your help!

- City ordinance requires sidewalks to be shoveled 48 hours after a measurable snowfall.
- Sidewalks should be shoveled full length and width, according to the City of Des Moines.
- Those who don't clear their walks could be penalized. Historically, fines for noncompliance have been \$50 for the first offense, \$75 for a second violation, and \$100 for a third.
- City ordinance prohibits snow from being blown or thrown into the street.
- Pedestrian ramps on street corners should be shoveled.

## Home Improvement Corner

sponsored by O'Donnell ACE Hardware  
5715 Hickman Road



## Lower your Heating Costs this Winter

Controlling heating costs is a simple way for homeowners to save a significant amount of money in the winter. In a drafty home, you could save up to 20 percent with an investment of as little as \$25. An easy solution is to add weather stripping around any areas that move or open, such as windows and doors. Caulk and spray foam are useful for eliminating drafts around non-moving spaces in your home, such as around window jambs and pipes.

Also, be sure to change your furnace filters every 2-3 months to keep your furnace running at maximum efficiency. By changing your air filter consistently, you can save an additional 5 to 15 percent on your utility costs!



**NEIGHBORHOOD  
FIX-IT  
FEST**  
TAKE CARE OF YOUR HOME

**Saturday, October 20th  
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.**  
In-store Demonstrations, Free Sample Giveaways, Fire Hats & Fire Safety Activity Books for the Kids!

## City Aims to Strengthen Area Near 48th & Franklin Avenue



City officials recently contacted the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association to share preliminary details of a plan to boost investment in the vicinity of 48th Street and Franklin Avenue. The area at the crossroads of the Merle Hay, Beaverdale, and Waveland Park neighborhoods is one of four pilot areas in Des Moines that the city has targeted for concentrated investments, aiming to make them stronger and more desirable. The approach is similar to investments that helped transform downtown, city officials said.

The proposal was approved by the City Council on September 24, and is a part of a broader update to the city's Neighborhood Revitalization Program. A roughly six-month planning process will begin in November, affording residents, businesses, and other stakeholders a chance to get involved.

MHNA looks forward to participating and encourages everyone to get involved. We will provide updates as more information becomes available.