



Merle Hay Neighborhood Association

"Working Together to Make a Difference"

P.O. Box 31036 Des Moines, IA 50310

Web: www.merlehay.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MerleHayNeighborhood

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October 2014 Newsletter

MHNA Soup Supper, Quarterly Meeting, and School Salute on Oct. 16

Please join MHNA for its next quarterly meeting on Thursday, October 16, at the Northwest Community Center, 5110 Franklin Ave. Our annual soup supper will get underway at 6 p.m. The meeting will start at 6:30 p.m.

The quarterly meeting will be highlighted with "School Salutes." We plan to provide updates from elementary, middle, and high schools that serve our neighborhood, and share information on what Merle Hay residents and businesses can do to better support our neighborhood schools. We will also provide updates on Tower Park improvements and brainstorm priorities for 2015. We look forward to seeing lots of folks on Oct. 16. Please invite your neighbors!

If you would like to get something on the meeting agenda, please send requests by email to jason.pulliam@gmail.com.

If you would like to bring soup, a dessert, or beverages for the 6 p.m. soup supper, please call April at 515.707.6386.

Critter Camp is Back!

Submitted by Windsor Elementary School

Windsor Elementary is in our second year of partnering with the Animal Rescue League of Iowa to house "Critter Camp." It is a program where we foster small animals until they can be adopted. It helps out the ARL with housing for some of the animals as well as getting the animals more socialization. It is very beneficial for our students as they learn to care for animals, they learn empathy skills, and some of our ELL or reluctant readers don't like to read to a teacher or friend because they are embarrassed but LOVE to read to the animals. We currently have a rabbit, 2 pairs of mice, a guinea pig, and four birds. It is a great program and we are honored to be a part of it!

For more info on Windsor Elementary, visit <http://windsor.dmschools.org/>

Box Tops and Campbell's Labels for Education

Submitted by Hillis Elementary School

Clipping Box Tops is an easy way to help Hillis School support the initiatives happening in our building. Box Tops are worth 10 cents and they quickly add up to real cash for our school. To help Hillis just look for pink Box Tops on products, clip them, and bring them to school and place them in the collection bin either in the main hallway or just inside the entrance of our school.

We are also collecting Cambells UPCs and beverage/sauce caps, which can also be clipped and placed in the same collection bin.

If you'd like more information on Box Tops Collection or Campbell's Soup Label connection, please contact Marnie at marniestein@msn.com or Lisa at lisa.kai.grimes@gmail.com

Hillis School appreciates your support!

For more information on Hillis Elementary, visit <http://hillis.dmschools.org/>



Tower Park Celebration!

The Des Moines Park and Recreation Department held an event on September 12 to celebrate recent improvements at Tower Park. (Pictured left)

This spring, Polk County Public Works gave Tower Park a huge boost by installing an interior recreation/walking path. Last fall, the city resurfaced the tennis courts.

Currently, a new basketball court is under construction, along with various other site improvements.

MHNA thanks our volunteers, and partners at the city and county for helping us make continued progress on Tower Park's master plan!

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Annual Holiday Lights Contest

The Merle Hay Neighborhood Association will sponsor its 10th annual Holiday Lights contest. Judging will take place on Monday, December 15th. If you would like ensure your house is included in judging, please contact April at [515-707-6386](tel: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 to Merle Hay Mall. Judges will be looking for creativity, originality, holiday spirit, neatness and theme coordination. Our neighborhood always looks beautiful, but let's make it glow with holiday spirit!

National Night Out Recap

Thank you to everyone who supported MHNA's annual observance of National Night Out, "America's Night Out Against Crime." The event was held on Aug. 5 at the Northwest Community Center. Special thanks are due to our sponsors: **Bankers Trust, 3905 Merle Hay Road, Prairie Meadows, Dairy Queen, 5814 Hickman Road, Old Home Bakery Outlet, 2922 Merle Hay Road, and of course, the Des Moines Police Department!** It was a great night, and we look forward to next year's event!

We also want to thank MHNA's social committee for planning the event! Our volunteers are great!

Tips for Dealing With Vacant Properties

Keeping a watchful eye on vacant properties is an incredibly important part of keeping the Merle Hay neighborhood safe, stable, and desirable. When vacant properties are not well-maintained, they can really take a toll on property values and neighborhood perception. Here are some helpful tips on how to deal with vacant properties:

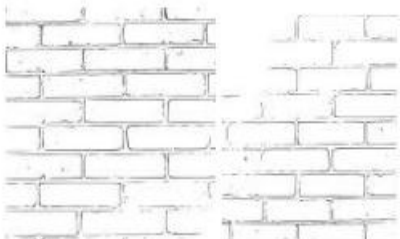
- If a property appears to be in an unsafe or unstable condition, contact the City of Des Moines' Neighborhood Inspections Division (NID@dmgov.org) or (515) 283-4046.
- If you see or suspect criminal activity, call Des Moines Police at 283-4811. Dial 911 for emergencies.
- Report overgrown grass or weeds to the Polk County Weed Commission: 515.286.3005 or weedcommission@polkcountyiowa.gov.
- Ask MHNA for help. Complete contact info is available at www.merlehay.org

Volunteer Opportunities at Hillis Elementary

Hillis Elementary has volunteer opportunities for those interested in helping students learn about energy, water, food, waste, sustainability, and more. Three programs featured at Hillis include:

- ECO Hour:** Each Wednesday from 12:45 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. Teachers, FoodCorps service members, and volunteers share lessons with students about food, wellness, and sustainability.
 - Cora's Cupboard:** (Times are Flexible) This is a space where teachers, special guests, and volunteers teach students about cooking with fresh foods, food science, and more.
 - Thursday Homework & Garden Coalition:** Thursdays from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. This is an opportunity for families to come together to learn about and practice healthy eating habits. Through education and working together, parents and students work on projects related to the Hillis school garden, exercise, and much more.
- More Details:** Call 242-8412, or send an email to Beth Sloan at Elizabeth.Sloan@dmschools.org. Or contact Chelsea Krist at Chelsea.Krist@foodcorp.org. Hillis is located at 2401 56th Street.


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