

Here Comes the Sun!

Summer Lawn Care Program

From Eyesore to Neighborhood Gem



Remembering the Past. Creating the Future.

WESTVIEW *neighbor*

May / Jun
2012

A Reason to Celebrate!

History of the Westview Summer Solstice by Ayana Gabriel

Humble Beginnings

Five years ago, former Westview resident Tonyel Stewart had a great idea. He was tired of the strained relationship among police, firefighters, and neighbors, and weary of conversations that centered only on crime and other negative occurrences in the neighborhood. Tonyel and other residents believed that a celebration honoring police and firefighters would help foster more positive relationships.

On June 21, 2008, the first *Westview Neighborhood Cookout* was held at Ontario Park. Residents, police officers, firefighters, and local politicians gathered to celebrate. The next year, local businesses and politicians donated items and money for the event. Free hot dogs and hamburgers were provided for residents, music played from home sound systems, and kids played in the

streets that had been closed for the event.

A Growing Spark

In 2010, the festival moved to KIPP STRIVE and grew even bigger as Westview celebrated its 100 year anniversary. That year, the Westview Community Organization (WCO) partnered with the Atlanta BeltLine. The BeltLine hosted a 5K race and unveiled the Southwest portion of the BeltLine trail that runs through Westview. Home sound systems were replaced by local DJs and a live neighborhood band. There was even a friendly BBQ competition among Westview neighbors.

By the festival's fourth year in 2011, several neighbors realized that the event could become a staple of Westview: a positive, family-friendly event to highlight the neighborhood's many assets to both residents and non-residents. All that was needed was a new name. An informal poll was taken, and neighbor Clementine Malta-Bey suggested *Summer Solstice* since the celebration had always been held at the end of June, close to the summer equinox.

The BBQ competition was expanded to include four more SW Atlanta neighborhoods – Adair Park, Ashview

Heights, Beecher-Donnelly, and West End. Local vendors and artisans from inside and outside of the neighborhood sold goods. Guest DJs played music, and neighborhood kids used the wide lawn space of KIPP to play games for prizes.



The Celebration Continues

This year, *The Westview Summer Solstice* marks its 5th anniversary. Due to construction of KIPP STRIVE Primary, the festival will move to Muse Street between Ralph David Abernathy and Lucile running along the BeltLine. The organizers envision one day having festivals at the future neighborhood Belt-Line Enota Park.

The 2012 Westview Summer Solstice will be June 23rd, from 2-8 pm. Food, fun, and games will be in store for kids, adults, and seniors. Come out and bring a neighbor!

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Trimming Lawns, Training Youth

This summer, the Youth of Westview group is teaming up with Atwood Community Gardens to provide lawn maintenance services for residents of Westview. Ten children involved in Atwood Community Gardens' Herb & Farm Summer Internship will learn the ins and outs of running a lawn care business.

This summer program will teach the kids valuable lessons about a healthy work ethic, teamwork, responsibility, and customer service, while giving them an opportunity to earn their own money. The goal of the program is to increase the kids' confidence, hope for the future, and sense of pride in their neighborhood. A portion of funds generated will be set aside for summer activities and school supplies for the Youth of Westview.

So when you see the Youth of Westview in their uniform of blue shirt and khaki pants, congratulate them, and ask them if they can cut your lawn!



Need Your Lawn Trimmed? Want to Get Involved?

The youth are looking for clients and workers! If you are interested in having the Youth of Westview cut your lawn this summer, or have a child who you would like to participate in the program, please contact John Perdew at: 678-378-9906 or johnperdew@comcast.net.

Meet Warren A. Dates

Westview Neighbor

by Keith Blackmon

Minister Warren A. Dates moved into Westview in March, 2012. Originally from Gadsden, Alabama, Dates is the CEO and Founder of the *The 6:52 Project Foundation*, which partners with individuals and organizations to produce educational content and programs to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The *Westview Neighbor* sat down to chat with Minister Dates about the neighborhood.

What do you like about living in Westview?

I love the neighborly camaraderie. It really reminds me of being in Alabama. There is a certain peace and love one feels living here. Our neighbors are great and it just feels like where I was meant to live.

How do you see your foundation helping Westview and the Greater Atlanta area?

The foundation can be quite a resource agent for education, advocacy and referrals in the community; we are also available for peer counseling, public

speaking, and workshops. We are not just here to reside, we are here to partner any way we can!



What do you hope to see in the Westview Community?
I'd love to see Westview become the model beautification award winning community. I recall my childhood seeing several homes on our block that received the city's beautification award and the pride the

community felt for each other as a result.



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A Pocket Park in Westview

by Earl Picard

The newly installed Stokes Avenue park was once a community eyesore. But thanks to the efforts of neighbors and outside support for a growing nationwide movement, it's now poised to become the newest neighborhood gem.

When there are no large parcels of land that can serve as community parks, one solution is to develop pocket parks.

Also known as mini-parks, vest-pocket parks, and parkettes, pocket parks are small outdoor spaces, usually no more than ¼ of an acre. They are most often located in urban areas that are surrounded by commercial buildings or houses on small lots; but they can be created on vacant lots, old parking lots or medians. Pocket parks are most desirable in areas with no places for people to gather, relax, or enjoy the outdoors. When converted to pocket parks, little-used, undervalued, or dilapidated properties can be transformed into neighborhood assets – green and beautiful places that build community, encourage pride, and add value to neighborhoods. One study conducted in Greenville, SC found that attractively maintained small and medium parks have a positive influence on neighboring property values.

Removing an eyesore, fostering community pride and preserving property values were the motivations for creating the Stokes Avenue pocket park. The house at 1556 Stokes Avenue was clearly an unloved place. Built in the 1980s as infill construction it was known as ‘the blue box’ by neighbors because it was a bland-looking, two-story box shaped structure with a faux roof. It rapidly became an eyesore as the siding began falling off and the lot became overgrown. The deterioration



of the property continued for years. Concerned Westview residents finally decided to take action by lodging a code enforcement complaint.

When members of the community showed up in court in March 2010, they learned that the property belonged to a woman whose estranged husband had left it in her name without her knowledge. She agreed to sign the property over to the community so that the house could be torn down and turned into a pocket park. The property

was demolished in October 2011 and turned over to the community with the help of the University Community Development Corporation (UCDC). The Westview Community Organization (WCO) applied for and received two grants: a ‘Love Your Block’ grant, and a grant from NPU-T. These grants paved the way for the land to be turned into a pocket park.

Work on the park started on April 7, 2012, as neighborhood volunteers set fence posts, attached rails, and began installing pickets. Volunteers pitched in again on May 19 to move the process further along by finishing the fence and planting flowers. The final phase of the park should be completed before the end of June.

By developing the Stokes Avenue pocket park, Westview has joined a growing, progressive trend. Philadelphia pioneered the idea by creating some 60 parks in the 1960s. Major cit-



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westview facts...

Westview Cemetery: In August 1884, land was purchased for Westview Cemetery. Westview Cemetery was to be built to accommodate the growing population in Atlanta after Oakland Cemetery sold all of its plots. The property was described by the Atlanta Constitution as being an "exceedingly handsome piece of property" with streams, pine fields and "pleasant retreats for visitors." It was comprised of 577 acres and was purchased for \$25,000. To date, it remains the largest cemetery in the southeastern United States. Westview is the final resting place for many famous Atlantans, such as: Asa G. Candler, founder of Coca-Cola; Henrietta Egleston; Henry W. Grady, one of Georgia's most celebrated journalists; Joel Chandler Harris, author of the "Uncle Remus Stories"; William B. Hartsfield, Mayor of the City of Atlanta; Donald Lee Hollowell, civil rights attorney; and Robert W. Woodruff, president of Coca-Cola.



Important Numbers

Zone 4 Police: 404-756-1903
Pothole Posse: 404-768-4653
Code Enforcement: 404-330-6190
Sanitation: 404-330-6333
Tax Assessor: 404-612-6440
Watershed Mgmt: 404-658-6500
Housing Authority: 404-892-4700

Pocket Park (cont.)

ies like New York, San Francisco and San Diego soon followed. The phenomenon quickly caught on in smaller cities. Savannah, GA, Harrisonburg, VA, Versailles, KY and Carmel, CA all have pocket park movements. Since 1995, Indianapolis has provided annual grants to community based organizations that seek to develop pocket parks. Atlanta's Midtown Alliance has recently opened a 'pop-up pocket park' next to John Marshall Law School, giving people in one of Midtown's busiest areas 1/4 acre of green space to enjoy.



However, the creation of a pocket park is just the beginning. Without functional design, community support, appropriate use and maintenance, a pocket park can easily fall into disrepair. Most pocket park visitors live within a 1-2 block radius of the park, and are expected to not only be active users of the park but also active maintainers of the park. Community members fortunate enough to have a pocket park can pitch in by picking up trash, and volunteering to keep the space neat and tidy. It's a small price to pay for a pocket of natural beauty just steps from your door.

Upcoming Events

Westview Community Organization Meeting — 1st Monday of every month; 7:00 pm, Calvary United Methodist Church, 1471 R.D. Abernathy Blvd.
NPU-T Monthly Meeting — 2nd Wednesday of Every Month; 7:00 pm, KIPP STRIVE, 1444 Lucile Ave.
Westview Summer Solstice — June 23, 2-8:00 pm, Muse St.

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