

Tower Grove Heights Gazette

GRAND TO GUSTINE

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Volume 23, No. 4

Winter 2012

Walking the Difficult Path



BY ELLEN WILSON Sometimes we all have to make choices that are hard. Sometimes those choices change our lives forever. It is easy to keep doing the same thing, but it is hard to change your whole life to do the right thing. For the ninth year the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association has again selected families through the 100 Neediest Cases program. This year both families are stepping up to do the right

thing even when it has put them in extreme financial hardship. Our first family is led by a Grandmother who has taken custody of her grandchildren when their mother was unable to care for them. The Grandmother has had both knees and a shoulder replaced and has deterioration in her back making it impossible for her to work at the moment. She has worked all her life and is uncomfortable being in a position of depending on others for support. Our second family is starting over. The Mother left an abusive husband taking nothing with her but her children. After living in a shelter for over 8 months they now have an apartment and she has a job, but they have very little else.

Both families are doing what they can to care for themselves and the young children in their care, but they could use some help. I hope you will join me again in lending a

ONE HUNDRED NEEDIEST CASES

hand to those reaching out for one. Our goal is to provide a holiday morning gift surprise for the children and help each family with bills and food to try to give them a moment of relief that they can enjoy with their families.

There are several ways you can help. You can donate a new unwrapped gift that fits one of the family members, donate items or a gift certificate fitting one of the general needs, or donate cash (or check – made out to TGHNA) which will be used to buy gifts and pay for utilities. Drop your donations at the drop point and we take care of the rest. All gifts will be wrapped and distributed to the families. Choose one (or more) of the following:

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Mayor Slay Visits Tower Grove Heights



To recognize the 25th anniversary of the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association, Mayor Francis Slay came to the October 23rd membership meeting. As seen in the photo, the mayor presents a Proclamation honoring the organization. Alderman Jennifer Florida also presents a Resolution from the Board of Aldermen. Receiving the documents is Rich Seifert, 2012 President of TGHNA, wearing the official neighborhood t-shirt.

The Proclamation, which declared June 15th Tower Grove Heights Day in the City of Saint Louis, had been displayed, with the Resolution, at our celebratory Block Party on Spring Avenue that weekend. The mayor's visit aligned almost perfectly with the first recorded meeting of the Neighborhood Association back in October of 1987.

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Walking the Difficult Path

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

Family 1:

Grandmother raising grandchildren after surgery left her unable to continue working.

Grandmother (55): Size: XXL/16; Shoes (8.5)

Boy (12): Size: 14/16; Shoes (8)

Girl (10): Size: 12/14; Shoes (7)

Special Requests: winter clothes; coats; shoes; educational toys/aides; remote controlled vehicles; hand held games; jewelry; nail sets; lip gloss

Family 2:

Working mother supporting family after leaving her abusive husband.

Mother (27): Size: M/7; Shoes (8.5)

Girl (6): Size: 7/8; Shoes (13)

Boy (3): Size: 3T; Shoes (10)

Special Requests: winter clothes; gas card; sheets/comforters (queen and twin); towels; kitchen items (pots, pans, toaster, iron, dishes, silverware, coffee pot); interactive books; dress up; Barbie/dolls; trains; wrestling; action heroes

Both families need the following:

Health Care Items – Consider: personal hygiene products, home cleaning supplies; a gift certificate to Walgreens or Target...

Holiday Food Items – Consider: gift certificate to Schnucks; Shop N Save; Aldi...

Educational Items – Consider: age appropriate books; family games; school supplies...

Cash – for gifts or utility bills which are paid directly by 100 Neediest Cases (checks to TGHNA)

There is always a need for volunteers to help distribute flyers to the neighborhood and to wrap the gifts. If you are interested in helping to wrap or flyer, contact Ellen.

Due Date for Donations: December 14

Wrapping Party: December 15 at 10:00 a.m. at Ellen's house

Drop Point and Contact: Ellen Wilson, 3617 Juniata St., 314-771-1732



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Green Happenings at Brightside St. Louis

by Marilyn Browning

I've written before about the Green Alley project in our own neighborhood of Tower Grove Heights. Phase I of the project has already resulted in a completed pervious paver system in the alley between Utah and Humphrey in the 36-3700 block of our neighborhood. Phase II, covering the remaining alleys on either side of Utah in the 36-3800 blocks will begin construction this spring. These pervious paver systems are designed not only to look great, but to retain water runoff and prevent it from overloading our sewage treatment plants in times of heavy rainfall.

However, there are other projects around the city where big things are happening to reduce runoff and water use. Brightside St. Louis (formerly known as Operation Brightside) has established a demonstration garden and learning center that are not only environmentally friendly but also turn an abandoned city lot into a beautiful space.

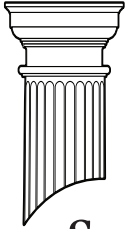
You've probably passed Brightside St. Louis many times at the corner of Kingshighway and Shenandoah. Brightside got its start back in 1982 and over the last thirty years, has teamed community residents with city government to green and clean Saint Louis through trash pickup events, a recycling center, flower plantings, and graffiti removal. The demonstration garden and learning center are one more way Brightside is leading the way in greening Saint Louis.

A whole range of ideas are being incorporated into this formerly empty lot. Native plants in the landscape will not only reduce the need for water, pesticides, and fertilizer, but will also provide seeds and berries for birds, insects and mammals. A rain garden will slow runoff and act as a holding area for rain water. Permeable pavements for sidewalks and parking will allow rainwater to sink below the surface and be held like a sponge. A cistern to hold rain water for watering plants in dry times will be installed sometime soon. Collectively the rain garden, cistern and permeable surfaces will divert and hold rainwater runoff that would otherwise overload our storm sewers and water treatment plants during times of heavy rainfall.

continued on page 11

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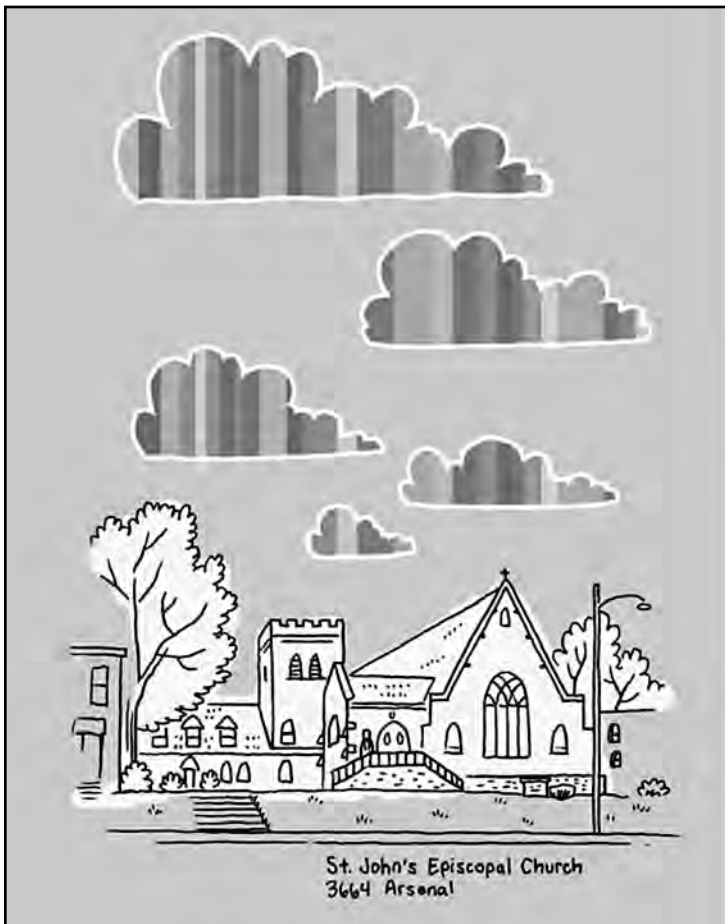
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The Connecticut Castle

BY **RICH IEZZI** **N**ow what? Jean and I just spent six months chasing a 'short sale' and came up empty. The plan was for mom and dad to buy a 2-family flat that needed work and team up with my daughter and soon to be son-in-law to bring the building back to life. Then we'd sell it to them as owner-occupants. Now what?

A few weeks later, I was cutting grass at our flat on the 3600 block of Connecticut when a weird thing happened. I felt myself turning around to look at the 2-family across the street. It had been vacant on and off for years and the place was condemned. After a bit of sleuthing, I found a neighbor who had the number for the owner's mother. I left a message but heard nothing.

Then we got the call. The son had died and the mother would entertain an offer for the property. "It's condemned", said she. "I don't care", said me. "The A/C copper is stolen, the back wall has water damage, the floors are buckled and some ceilings have collapsed", she warned. "I'm interested", I replied.

It was an enormous building with over 1,500 sq. ft. per floor. When we took 'the kids' through it, my daughter was in and out of the place in two minutes and seemed unimpressed. Then I realized she was wearing her poker face. She wanted it.

We wrote a contract but didn't close for six months. At the title company, I literally jumped into the closing room. We finally had our building and christened it The Connecticut Castle.

This set into motion a routine that would continue for the next year and a half. My son-in-law Chris and I stripped woodwork,

re-hung the pocket doors, removed drop ceilings, replaced defective flooring and hauled out junk. On Saturdays we'd drywall ceilings and I'd tape them during the week. Chris was a great guy to work with. He never argued over the radio station (very important!) and always said "Let's do it" when I came up with a goofy idea. My daughter, Carolyn, proved her moxie when she picked up one end of a 300 lb. tub and carried it down the hall—with two guys on the other end. On Friday nights we'd all meet at O'Connell's Pub to critique our progress and discuss the plan.

Then the plan had to change. While passing through an obscure room in the basement of a church being sold, I saw it—a fireplace mantle almost ten feet high and eight feet wide carved in solid walnut with side towers that soared off the mantle shelf for five feet. But the mantle seemed out of place and ignored in the basement. On a whim, I contacted the church pastor and made him an offer. He accepted.



The new mantle would now transform the dining room into The Castle Room. The chimney breast was widened to eight feet, cove molding was added and a plate rail installed. Carolyn found an 18 light chandelier at the ReStore and picked up six wall sconces at a neighborhood sale. When the big mantle was installed, it fit by less than a half inch.

Eventually the downstairs was rented to a fun couple, the kids moved upstairs and for the first time in a long time, we didn't work on Saturday. All the big stuff was done. We went to another closing but this time it was to sell The Castle to the kids.

Right after that, I popped in on my daughter and she was surrounded by papers and a calculator. "What's up?" says me. "I'm figuring out when we can buy our next building", says she. Oh boy...

CORRECTION IN AUTUMN ISSUE OF THE GAZETTE:

Article by Rich Iezzi on page 6 entitled, **"Defying the Laws of Physics"**

Address of home featured should have been **3732** and **not 3722** Connecticut

Our apologies!

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35 YEARS OF SUPPORT TO STL NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS

By: Tom Rhodenbaugh

The St. Louis Association of Community Organizations (SLACO) is growing region wide membership based network of neighborhood organizations and their leaders whose efforts are focused on:

- Building the capacity of neighborhood organizations to meet organizational and resident needs;
- Serve as a information network to share information among neighborhood organizations and their leaders;
- Sponsor workshops and conferences on neighborhood issues and best practices in addressing them
- Serve as their advocate on issues impacting neighborhoods across the St. Louis region

SLACO's goal since its founding, has been to stimulate, grow and sustain neighborhood organizations and serve as an umbrella organization to promote neighborhood investment and improve the quality of life for all residents.

For most of its 35 years SLACO has sponsored the St. Louis Neighborhood Conference, convened neighborhood technical assistance workshops and provided leadership and support to address such locally defined issues as crime and safety, litter control, abandoned property, housing and commercial development, absentee landlords and environmental quality. These efforts are focused on bringing neighborhoods together to address their locally defined issues and implement programs to address them.

Among its many accomplishments over the years, have been its early efforts to address problem properties throughout the city. These efforts served as a prototype for today's Neighborhood Stabilization Programs. Other efforts have include successful efforts to ban the sale of quart bottle beverages that once littered our streets and endangered our children and early efforts to spotlight the role of poor air quality and its impact on child asthma rates among children, particularly those living near industrial areas.



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SLACO has also partnered with local developers to construct more than 500 units of safe and affordable housing and currently participates in the management of 175 units of rental housing in the City's West End, where it maintains its offices and through its community center, the Make a Difference Center, provides a range of family and youth services to local residents.

Today, SLACO continues these and related efforts in the community but these efforts are only as strong as its members. Membership is open to neighborhood organizations, such as Tower Grove Heights which for many years has been active in SLACO. In fact its past two board chairs have been residents of the neighborhood.,

Since it's members are small voluntary organizations with limited resources, such as Tower Grove membership costs are kept low and SLACO's small budget is supported by businesses, foundations, development fees and individuals committed to restoring and building active and engaged neighborhoods across the region. SLACO membership offers:


- Quarterly Electronic Newsletter, Action Alerts and an interactive list-serve focused on neighborhood concerns, activities, advocacy and fundraising
- Early registration for SLACO Neighborhood Roundtables, the annual Neighborhood Conference and Special Events
- Use of SLACO Web-Site (Host or Link to your Neighborhood Site)
- Representation on the SLACO Board
- Access to SLACO Resource Library (under development)

Additional information on the St. Louis Association of Community Organizations and how neighborhood organizations, organizations and individual can become members and supporters is available on line at www.slaco-mo.org or my contacting SLACO by e-mail at slaco.coc@gmail.com or by phone at (314) 361-9406.



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Green Happenings at Brightside St. Louis

CONTINUED



Brightside is also using a recently-developed design, Silva Cells, to grow trees in small areas. As I wrote in the last issue, trees are one of the best water runoff catchers of all. However, In many cities, trees are planted in "boxes" less than 3 feet by 3 feet within sidewalks and parking lots, limiting tree root space. The result is trees that damage sidewalks in their attempt to grow, as well as a shorter tree lifetime--typically less than ten years. Silva Cells, in contrast, consist of an interlocking framework of heavy-duty perforated plastic that suspends the overlying pavement and provides plenty of rooting space in the soil between the plastic supports. Downspouts can be connected to the perforated plastic pipe to supply water under impervious surfaces. Trees grown in Silva Cells are larger, healthier, and don't displace overlying pavements as their roots expand. As a bonus, since the framework itself takes up so little space there's plenty of room to run city utilities. The Silva Cells were installed in September of this year, and the trees were planted in November. In the coming years we'll be able to see the big difference that will make in the size, health, and longevity of the trees. To find out what a Silva Cell looks like and read more about how it works, visit www.deepproot.com.

Plenty of volunteer hours have gone into making the demonstration garden and learning center a reality-- hours contributed by Master Gardeners, Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Flora Conservancy, Brightside volunteers, and even the U.S. Marine Corps. Like Phase II of our Green Alley project, funding for Brightside's rain garden, cistern and other runoff-reducing efforts is through Clean Water Act Section 319 grants administered by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and Region 7 of the EPA.

Finishing touches were added to the garden area in November, including installation of the gateway entrance to the garden and the eye-catching purple coneflower structures (they look like large-scale umbrellas.) All in all, a green and beautiful addition to our city landscape, thanks to Brightside St. Louis!



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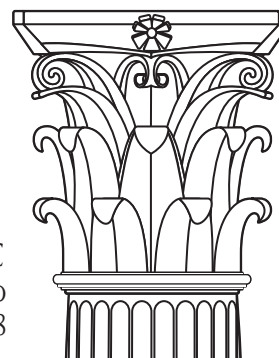
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- ✓ To make the Heights a cleaner and safer place
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Chronic & Difficult Cases

DO YOU SUFFER FROM:

- Back Pain
- Headaches
- Neck Pain
- Carpal Tunnel
- Shoulder Pain
- Disc Bulge
- Fibromyalgia
- Spinal Stenosis
- Indigestion
- Leg Problems

**FREE Phone Consultation To
Answer Any Questions...**

1. FIRST VISIT ALL FOR \$45*
2. MOST INSURANCE ACCEPTED
3. EASY PAYMENT PLANS

*The first visit offer is for new patients
only when paid for on the same day as the visit.

GRAND 
CHIROPRACTIC
Traditional "hands-on" treatment

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