

NEAT News

Volume 2, Issue 3

North End Action Team

Summer 2005

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Letter from the President

I was very proud of our neighborhood on Memorial Day. As I sat in the back of the pickup truck towing the giant boat built by our North End daVinci Club members followed by our youthful artists-in-training from Green Street Arts Center I was reminded of the talent that exists in our neighborhood; I was proud to see our children holding their heads high. The public perception about our neighborhood will improve as our children, programs, and institutions demonstrate achievement.

I urge all of you to attend the annual **Ferry Street Garden Party on August 17th**. This event is one of the most festive in the city and an opportunity to look at Ferry Street in a new light. This year, along with the usual gourmet dinner will be a performance of the NEAT Notes and salsa dancing accompanied by the fabulous Nelson Bello Band, including instruction for those of us who need to dust off our dancing shoes. The Ferry Street Garden is flourishing and a source of great pride to its gardeners and the neighborhood.

Finally, congratulations to the Green Street Arts Center for its recent year-end festival celebrating the first season of its existence and to those participants who performed so well. I look forward to this event annually as a confirmation that the arts are thriving in our neighborhood.

Peggy Busari



*Left:
The North End
Action Team's
daVinci Club
and their award
winning
boat/float in
Middletown's
Memorial Day
Parade. (see pg.
3 for full story)*

If you are interested in your child becoming a part of the daVinci Club, please contact the NEAT office. 346-4845

Hot Spots?

If you have public safety and/or possible code violations in your building or on your street please inform NEAT of the nature of the problem. Chronic problems are reported to municipal department leaders as *hot spots* at the monthly North End Community Policing and Code Enforcement meetings. City department heads have been responsive to the neighborhood's request for attention to problem sites and encourage residents to report problems when they occur.



Members of the da Vinci Club painting a NEAT flag in preparation for the Memorial Day Parade

MCSAAC to Fund NEAT Hiking Club

NEAT's Hiking Club will venture north in August thanks to \$1500 in funding from the Middlesex County Substance Abuse Action Council. Thirteen hikers ranging in age from 10-15 will hike Mt. Cardigan in New Hampshire's White Mountains and spend 2 nights in the Appalachian Mountain Club lodge at the mountain's base. Hikers will be accompanied by MCSAAC Executive Director and NEAT Advisory Board member Kate Antonucci, Middlesex Community College professor and NEAT Math Club leader Pam Wahl, Middletown City Planning Director and Hiking Club co-founder Bill Warner, NEAT organizer Izzi Greenberg, NEAT organizer Lydia Brewster and possible others. NEAT Hikers have hiked much of the Mattabeset Trail and Bear Mountain on the Appalachian Trail.

SAVE THE DATE:

Annual Ferry Street Community Garden Party

**Ferry Street Community Garden
5:30 PM**

Dinner and Dancing

Fifteen Million Dollars Targeted to Ferry Street Housing

The Richman Group, a Greenwich-based developer of rental housing has been awarded \$15 million in tax credit financing from the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority to build 96-units of rental housing on the north side of Ferry Street. The developer hopes to begin construction late this year. Remediation of substandard housing in the Ferry and Green Street area has been a goal of NEAT since it began in 1997.

The site plan is presently under review by a sub-committee of the Redevelopment Agency. Richman representative Pam Mikusova, along with Richman's architect have presented preliminary design ideas to the Redevelopment Agency and to members of NEAT. NEAT members have also met with Mikusova and a property management consultant to the housing developer to hear about possible amenities and tenancy requirements. The housing will be subsidized for residents earning up to 60% of average median income in the area (\$42,000. for a family of 4).

Broad Park Development Corporation, a successful Hartford-based housing developer is expected to develop owner-occupied housing to complement the Richman project. The goal of NEAT and the City of Middletown is to create comprehensive improvements to the neighborhood and bring a balance of ownership and rental housing. NEAT maintains a commitment to improve the housing stock without eliminating existing residents who have endured neighborhood disinvestment while working hard for positive change.

NEAT, Wesleyan, and the City of Middletown will discuss management of open space that is expected to abut the Green Street Arts Center. The open space will allow for the continuance of the popular Ferry Street Community Garden and recreation space for the neighborhood and the Green Street Arts Center.

The City of Middletown will oversee the temporary or permanent relocation of 22 units of housing that will be affected by the redevelopment project. NEAT organizer Izzi Greenberg is working with city planner Michiel Wackers to make sure all residents affected by the construction of new housing are informed and aware of their rights and options. Redevelopment Agency representatives, city planning staff, and political leadership are expected to attend the July 13th NEAT meeting to help North End residents fully understand the redevelopment plan and its goals.

DaVinci's Amazing Rowing Machine wins Mayor's Trophy

A 30-foot handmade boat built by NEAT's daVinci Club members was towed the length of Main Street in the Memorial Day Parade with NEAT President Peggy Busari leading the crew from the back of the truck. DaVinci boat builders sat in the boat, which was complete with paddles and constructed of Styrofoam covered with fiberglass. It sported NEAT's flag, the daVinci flag, and a colorful beach umbrella. Six months of work went into the project that earned the group the mayor's trophy in the Memorial Day Parade. A second, outrigger hull, will be attached to the main hull when the daVinci's compete in the Connecticut River Raft Race on July 30th.

Friends of the River leader George Frick was the mastermind behind the design and construction of daVinci's Amazing Rowing Machine with help from North End resident Rachel Sinay, Nat Holmes, Sam Rosenthal, and Izzi Greenberg. The daVinci boat builders include: Josh Arabas, Dylan Hansen, Tenzin Masselli, Amanda and Carlos Negron, Naomi Adorno, Eric Quinones, Eddie and Emma Peterson, and Samantha Cedeno,

Support for the daVinci project came from the Middlesex County Community Foundation, the Rotary Club, the Kiwanis Club, and from corporate donations.



Neat's President, Peggy Busari, Community Organizer, Lydia Brewster, and Girls Group member, Sam Vinci ride in the truck!

Environmental Justice Committee

Residents of the North End interested in participating on a committee to become informed, aware, and provide advocacy on the environmental health of the North End should contact NEAT. Issues relating to air and water quality, environmental toxins, public health concerns, and industrial contamination are important to the long-term health of the neighborhood. An interested and informed neighborhood is the best protection against environmental dangers.

Green Street Arts Center Announces Fall Schedule

Just as summer is beginning, it's time to start thinking about registering you or your child for The Green Street Arts Center's programs. The after-school program is a Monday-Friday, 3:00-6:00pm multi-disciplinary (visual arts, applied arts, dance, theatre, music, film, and more) program. Classes begin on August 31, 2005 and run through June 15, 2006. We will observe all Middletown scheduled days off and holidays. Our 5-day-a-week program can accommodate 90 students ages 7-18. At least 50% of those slots are designated for children in Middletown's North End. The remaining slots are open to the other students from throughout Middletown and the region. Financial assistance for all options of the after-school program is determined on a sliding scale based on income and family size. Early registration begins July 5, 2005.

FREE LUNCH!

Beginning on July 5th there will be a daily FREE LUNCH program offered at the Green Street Arts Center between 11:30 AM and 1 PM. The free lunch program is a combined effort of CRT, the Green Street Arts Center, and NEAT. Green Street Arts Center and NEAT staff have coordinated with the Community Health Center summer day camp director Nat Holmes and city arts director Stephan Allison to encourage summer campers to stop in at Green Street Arts Center for a nutritious lunch between morning and afternoon sessions of camp. Middletown police officers will be available to provide safe crossing for children crossing Main Street.

Green Street Arts Center will provide light arts entertainment on a weekly basis. Parents are urged to help in escorting area children to the Center.

There is no cost for the program and anyone 18 and under is invited to take part throughout the summer.



Arts in the Garden Series Begins

It's that time again! Head out to the Ferry Street Community Garden for some fun in the summer sun.

This year's Arts in the Garden series is kicking off on **July 5th** with the traditional Scarecrow Party with Old Saybrook artist Dave Brown. We will make festive creatures to populate the garden for the rest of the season. Bring your fun old clothes to decorate the scarecrows with: hats, high heels, gloves, whatever! And wear clothes you don't mind getting dirty. The next event will be Vejigante Mask Making on **July 6th** where participants can make wonderful, colorful masks. On July 20th, put on your sneakers for an evening of Hip Hop Dance with professional dancer, Tylon Hendricks, and be prepared to move! On **July 27th**, come move to the rhythms of Africa and dance and drum with professional musician Kwaku Kwaakye "Martin" Obeng. On **August 3rd**, we'll make musical instruments with Scott Kessel out of found objects. All summer workshops begin at 5:30 pm, are free and open to families and friends of all ages.

The most important event is always the Ferry Street Community Garden Party! This year's dinner party will be held on **August 17th**, with a rain date of August 18th. We will have a salsa party with the Nelson Bello Latin Jazz Band and professional dance instruction by Alisa Bowens. There is a suggested donation of \$15 for an individual, or \$25 for a family, and dinner and dancing are included. There will be a full gourmet dinner with dessert. Put on your dancing shoes and come with an empty stomach!

The series is funded in part by the Middletown Commission on the Arts



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The next NEAT meeting will be held on **July 13th** at 6:30 pm at the Green Street Arts Center.

SAVE THE DATE:
Annual Ferry Street Community Garden Party
Ferry Street Community Garden
5:30 PM
Dinner and Dancing

Announcements

* The NOMA gallery at 648 Main St. is currently showing the works of Jeffrey Korp, Monika Malewska, and the regular contributing members. The show will be up until July 17. All artists are welcome at the weekly life drawing workshop held on Fridays from 7 - 9:30 pm. The gallery is an all-volunteer co-op gallery and is accepting applications for membership as either artist or supporting member for the next fiscal year. Artist membership is \$150/yr which entitles the artist to unlimited shows. Gallery commission for members is 25% of sales. Members are required to put in 4 hours a month sitting the gallery. We also have a category of Supporting Artist membership at \$75/yr. Supporting artists receive one group show a year. Non-artist Supporting membership is \$40/yr.

* The North End has a new business! Fragrant Oils & More is open at 654 Main St., in the North End Artists Co-op Building. Their grand opening was June 1, and we hope they are successful! Stop in and welcome them to the neighborhood or shop their line of 100% alcohol free body care products.

* Do you love art? Come by Middletown Framing's **Arts in the Alley** on Saturdays. Is located at 500 Main St. and is open from 10 am to 5 pm. Call Middletown Framing for more info at 347-0064 or go to www.middletownframing.com/alley. Vendors are also welcome to inquire.

