The purpose of the Heritage Hill Association is to provide neighbors a way of collectively building a healthy, historically preserved community in which people can live and work in a secure and stable environment.

2014 Report to Neighbors

Who we are:

The Heritage Hill Association is the neighborhood organization of the Heritage Hill Historic District. Our boundaries are the northern rear property lines of Crescent Street to the southern rear property lines of Pleasant Street (including the 600 block of Union SE); the eastern property lines of Union Avenue to the western property lines of Lafayette Avenue; also included is a jog down State Street to Jefferson Avenue to Fulton Street. Everyone who lives within these boundaries is a member of the Heritage Hill Association. Non-residents can also be members by contributing annual membership dues. Resident neighbors and businesses are encouraged to support the work of the Association through its annual pledge drive.

Active, engaged, and mobilized neighbors, working with our neighborhood institutions, the City of Grand Rapids, and all community resources, are the best indicators that Heritage Hill is a vital place to live and work!

Heritage Hill is recognized by the American Planning Association as A Great Place in America. This Old House magazine has named Heritage Hill as one of the Best Neighborhoods in the United States.
The Heritage Hill Association
126 College S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616-459-8950 Fax 616-459-2409
Hours: 9 am - 5 pm, Mon.-Thurs.
Voice mail available for after-hours messages.
EMAIL: heritage@heritagehillweb.org
WEBSITE: www.legacyheritagehill.org

Purpose:
The purpose of the Heritage Hill Association is to provide neighbors a way of collectively building a healthy, historically preserved community in which people can live and work in a secure and stable environment.

Office Staff:
Jan Earl, Executive Director
Barb Lester, Crime Prevention Organizer
Maria Zache, Administrative Assistant
Tanya Harris, Office Assistant

The Heritage Hill Association Board of Directors
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* 1st Term
** 2nd Term

The Heritage Hill Association Board of Directors meets at 7 on the third Wednesday of each month at the Hauenstein Center - H1 Community Room at Mercy Health Saint Mary’s. The meeting is open to the public.

The Heritage Hill Foundation Board of Trustees
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Heritage Hill Association Committee Chairs
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The Heritage Herald - Circulation 4,800
The Heritage Herald is published by the Heritage Hill Association Board of Directors six times a year (bi-monthly). The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Board of Directors. We reserve the right to edit. Address correspondence to The Heritage Herald, 126 College SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.

The Heritage Hill Association's 2014 Report to Neighbors

*THE PURPOSE OF THE HERITAGE HILL ASSOCIATION IS TO PROVIDE NEIGHBORS A WAY OF COLLECTIVELY BUILDING A HEALTHY, HISTORICALLY PRESERVED COMMUNITY IN WHICH PEOPLE CAN LIVE AND WORK IN A SECURE AND STABLE ENVIRONMENT.*

**WHO WE ARE**, (CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE):

Population Stats: There are 1,300 Heritage Hill structures that are occupied by 3,467 households per the 2010 U.S. census. The total population is 4,103 and that averages to 1.2 people per household. Of the total population, 81% are Caucasian, 9% are African American, 4% are Hispanic or Latino, 2% are Asian, the remaining 4% are mixed races; 70% are tenants and 30% are owners (Heritage Hill has the largest concentration of rental opportunities in the city of Grand Rapids) 64% of our residents are moderate to low income; 66% of our structures are either owner occupied or neighbor owned and 34% are absentee-owned. The concentration or density of our housing is over twice the GR average; 19% of our households do not own cars (this trend is growing as residents seek out non-auto alternatives; walking, public transportation, bikes).

**The Association's Programs:** Heritage Hill is an urban neighborhood and the Association’s programs inform, assist and work with neighbors to **address urban problems**—neighborhood safety, land use conflicts, increasing traffic and parking demands, institutional expansion/ construction containment, housing and preservation issues, promotion of neighborhood schools, access to services, and other issues inherent in a densely populated, core city neighborhood. Just as with old houses, a neighborhood is dependent on a good and ongoing maintenance program!

**A LITTLE HISTORY:**

In 1968, neighbors organized together to stop mortgage red lining (banks would not loan money to buy a house in Heritage Hill) and urban renewal plans that would have demolished over 75% of Heritage Hill structures. The first goal of the Heritage Hill Association was to block the bulldozers. Neighbors worked diligently to invoke national preservation legislation that put Heritage Hill on the National Register of Historic Places. This stopped the demolitions and set a precedent throughout the U.S. that is still cited today. In 1988, the Association was the first Grand Rapids neighborhood to establish its own Master Plan of Heritage Hill. Today this plan continues to be updated and guides the Association and the City regarding life in the neighborhood. A 200-300 Prospect Plan and the State Street Corridor Area Specific Plan are additional planning guidelines developed by the Association and neighbors.

**OUR SERVICES:**

The **Crime Prevention Program** is provided to increase neighborhood safety with services that activate neighbors in **Neighborhood Watch, Drug Watch, and Block Club Organizing.** Key components include free home security surveys, personal safety information, victim assistance, and producing and distributing crime information/alert/e-alert notices and fliers. Block Club organizing keeps neighbors working together to prioritize problems, identify resources, and develop and implement action plans to resolve problems. In 2014, this program was primarily funded by federal Community Development Block Grants that the **City of Grand Rapids** receives and then funds a myriad of community programs, one of which is the Heritage Hill Association’s.
Neighborhood Improvement Program addresses all the other quality of life issues that are not crime related. Its purpose is to generate resident involvement, educate and train, and encourage leadership to preserve, protect, and maintain the residential qualities of Heritage Hill; to resolve issues of concern; and build upon neighborhood strengths that improve the quality of life in the neighborhood. Issues commonly include land use conflicts, traffic/parking struggles, institutional expansion, promoting neighborhood schools, etc. Additional components consist of educating, referring and assisting residents with available City services and community resources and implementing and re-evaluating needs identified in the Master Plan of Heritage Hill. Like the crime prevention program, this program is partially funded by the federal Community Development Block Grant funds that the City of Grand Rapids awards to the Heritage Hill Association’s program.

Apartment and Homes Listing Service: Due to our large rental community, the Association produces and publishes a list of available apartments in Heritage Hill whose landlords choose to list with us. It is an extremely popular service and Heritage Hill apartments are in demand. Our list is free to tenants and available on our Web site (www.heritagehillweb.org) and at the HHA office. To list an apartment, landlords pay a fee: $45 for a studio apartment; $50 for a one-bedroom; $55 for a two-bedroom and $60 for 3 or more bedrooms. The listing is for 2 months or until the apartment is rented, whichever comes first. The list also includes Homes for Sale in Heritage Hill. For Sale listings cost $100 and run for two months. Additional services that we offer landlords and tenants include assistance with their respective rights and responsibilities.

The Heritage Herald: The Association produces and publishes 6 bi-monthly newsletters that are mailed to a combined 4,500 addresses in Heritage Hill, non-resident members, businesses, city offices and other community resources. It publicizes events, issues, and other information of interest and concern to neighbors. The Herald provides information, promotes neighborhood identity and fosters community. The Association also uses Email alerts and Facebook to keep people informed and activated. Please forward your email address to us heritage@heritagehillweb.org to be added to this distribution list.

Heritage Hill Website: The Association’s website hosts a variety of information regarding our neighborhood. The apartment listing is posted on the website as well as the guidelines of the City’s Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and the application for all exterior work. There is information and links to the Federal historic tax credits. Most every house in Heritage Hill has historical, architectural information and photos from 1969 and 2004 posted on our site. Go to the “about” heading on our home page and scroll down to the “house search”. The Association’s Facebook is also easily accessed from the home page of the website.

The Weekend Tour of Homes
(3rd Weekend in May) This is the largest fundraising and promotional effort of the Heritage Hill Association. The funds are needed to sustain our Crime Prevention and Neighborhood Improvement programs. It also promotes our architectural heritage and neighborhood as a great place to live, work and visit! The date for 2015 is May 16 and 17.

The Heritage Hill Garden Tour: The Garden Tour rotates from the south to north every year so the 2015 Garden Tour is headed back to north end of Heritage Hill. This is the call-out to all you northern Heritage Hill gardeners! Please consider opening your quiet space this summer and call or email the office and let us get you on our garden line-up in 2015.

Social Events: The Association hosts two annual neighborhood wide events to bring neighbors together to gather around our community table. The Neighborhood-Wide Night Out is in August; the Holiday Potluck and Annual Meeting is the week after the Thanksgiving weekend. The Association also invites neighbors to hold an annual neighborhood-wide Yard Sales Day in June.


**Architectural Files:** The HHA office maintains the architectural survey files of each house in the neighborhood that were compiled in 1969. This survey was needed to place Heritage Hill on the **National Register of Historic Places** that effectively saved over 75% of the neighborhood from demolition. Much of the information from these files is posted by address on our website in the house search category under the “About” heading.

**Etc, Etc, Etc...** The Heritage Hill Association office is often the first place neighbors call numerous questions regarding ... most anything. Common questions include historic preservation guidelines, landlord/tenant rights and responsibilities, contractor referrals, neighborhood issues, who lives at ... who to call for this ... how can I handle this problem ... what is that house zoned for ... when is garbage day ... where do I vote ...etc., etc, etc.

**THE ASSOCIATION AND NEIGHBORS’ ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2014:**

**LAND USE ISSUES:**

**Pleasant Park** is a reality in 2014. The ribbon was cut in July to the cheers and drum beats of neighbors and kids. This is the crown jewel of decades of wishing and hoping, culminating with the past three years of dedicated planning, fundraising, and construction. The Park is alive and rare to see empty since it officially opened this summer. The sledding hill is a hit this winter. Neighbors planted trees this past fall and the perennial gardens will take shape in the spring. Watch for the call-out for volunteers to help with these. Huge thanks to the **Friends of GR Parks and the City of Grand Rapids** for making neighbors’ dreams and efforts come true.

**State Street:** The Association's Corridor Area Specific Plan began moving through the City’s approval process. A zoning plan was needed so that City enforcement could realize the plan. An Association task force provided that zoning interpretation. State Street’s renewal blossomed this year with the redevelopment and expansion of **345 State Street** (July 2015 opening), the $12+ million renovation of the **Styvesant Apartments**, and the grand opening of **HQ** (youth center) at 320 State Street. This joins the prior years’ openings of Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi at 311 State Street and the Cornerstone Church at the former Church of Christ Scientists at the corner of Lafayette and Washington. And more is in the works as the former Grand Rapids Public Museum becomes the new museum school of GRPS planned for 2016.

**Residential Permit Parking:** The City enacted a permit parking ordinance early in 2014 and we asked residents if residential permit parking would help ease parking congestion in primarily north end portions of Heritage Hill. There was not an outpouring of support but some blocks have captains that will be circulating petitions in early spring of 2015. If there are enough neighbors who want permit parking, the Association will apply for a targeted restricted parking zone with the City of GR.

**Potpourri of land use:** The Association’s zoning committee reviews and investigates all zoning variance requests in Heritage Hill. Positions are proposed based on the Heritage Hill Master Plan, the City’s zoning code criteria, and neighbors’ feedback. In 2014 the Association was involved in the following:

- **44 Lafayette NE:** Supported increase to 5 units at this 4 condo building. Neighbors met with owner and reviewed needs. GR Planning Commission approved a total of 6 units deeming that the size of the building could support the additional units.

- **50 College SE:** This large commercial parcel has had several inquiries for potential new development in the last year. There has been no specific proposal but the Association determined it should be proactive due to the size and location of this parcel. A neighbors’ planning process began taking shape in
late 2014 to recruit facilitators and design the process for seeking neighbors preference in use and design. The charette was held in early January, 2015 with a full report to be presented in late winter.

- **543 Prospect SE**: A request to convert this single family home to a 2-family dwelling was proposed; meetings held with neighbors, and decision made to oppose the use due to its location in the middle of this single family block. The City’s Zoning Appeals denied the two-family request.

- **540 Cherry SE, Sanford House**: New owners proposed using this institutional home as a residential recovery treatment home for women. The site had been used as a treatment facility but needed the residential component to its use. Association members and neighbors met with the owner, toured the property and were concerned with potential future uses as a residential facility. The use was opposed but included key points that needed to be included if the City’s Planning Commission supported the use. That is what happened. The facility was under construction most of the year with extensive restoration.

- **320 State Street**: Held a neighbors’ meeting with the new owners to review and discuss allowed use as a homeless youth drop in center. Welcomed HQ at its open house in November, 2014.

- **616 Lofts Open House**: Following extensive work to this former church building, invited neighbors to tour its new life as an apartment building. 616 Lofts began leasing in July and has had full occupancy almost immediately.

- **Michigan Street Corridor Plan**: The draft plan was unveiled in February 2014 followed with final editing and reworking throughout most of the year. Its formal approval process began in December. The Plan will likely take effect in 2015. Many of the Michigan Street projects that are happening now follow the guidelines of this extensive Corridor Plan.

- **Bed and Breakfast ordinance/Air BnB**: The taskforce regarding Bed and Breakfast and AirBnB use in Grand Rapids presented recommendations early in 2014. Several Heritage Hill representatives served and worked hard to offer a fair yet protective ordinance within residential communities. These recommendation became the ordinance in Grand Rapids. Air BnB licenses began being issued last fall.

- **GRForward**: Heritage Hill reps began working on this Big Idea plan for downtown and riverfront and are hosting a series of meetings and promoting the variety of city forums. Exciting ideas are in movement to open the river for fun recreation and environmental protection. The first HH meeting was held in December, 2014 with the next two in February and March.

- **Tapestry Square/ICCF**: The Heritage Hill Association has worked with ICCF for many, many years on development of the Wealthy Division corridor. The Association was involved in a task force that worked on marketing strategies to attract a grocer to this district. Discussions also included the redevelopment of the Prospect, Lafayette, Wealthy corner that is still waiting for funding before plans become final. Groundbreaking will begin for the housing units at the Logan, Sheldon corner in late January, 2015.

- **Schools**: Educational choices expanded in 2014 at the GRPS Central campus. Innovation Central is home to 4 specialty high schools - Academy of Health Science & Technology; Academy of Design and Construction; Academy of Modern Engineering; and the Academy of Business, Leadership & Entrepreneurship as well as the Montessori High School. The Association supports its schools and strongly encourages exploring all options to find a good fit for your family.
Investigating and comparing school options is a lot easier than moving and leaving the neighborhood! We welcomed a new principal, John Roberts who now leads the Child Discovery Center at 409 Lafayette SE.

- **Maintained a communication network** with each of our neighboring hospitals, colleges and universities, and neighborhood associations.
- **Road construction:** Was torturous for the mid section of Heritage Hill for most of 2014 even though the drama of it all was mildly entertaining for some. Traffic, parking, and construction noise and vibration made it tough going throughout most of the year. And it is coming back in 2015 - not on College or Washington although intersections will likely be torn up.

**Crime Prevention:**

Priorities for working on crime are based on residents’ concerns. Concerns always have to do with personal safety so **home burglary** and **street safety** are at the top of the list. In 1987 there were 151 burglaries in the neighborhood. In 2014 neighbors reported 24 home break-ins, although in six cases the intruder found an unlocked door or window to enter. The numbers reflect a nation-wide reduction in serious crime as well as a downward trend locally. But, our numbers in Grand Rapids have been going down since we passed the **Deadbolt Lock Ordinance in 1989** that requires deadbolts, window locks and a number of other safety hardware on homes and apartments in Grand Rapids. Heritage Hill burglaries have been reduced almost every year since then.

**Personal safety:** Though many crimes are lower than decades ago, crimes of violence occur and are difficult for us to prevent when they come from within a family or circle of acquaintances. Last spring Glenn Converse, a neighbor on the 300 block of Washington was killed inside his apartment. This was not a case of home burglary. We are saddened and concerned that it occurred. The case is under investigation but no arrest has been made as yet.

There were 9 aggravated assaults in 2014 and four were acquaintance or family-related and two were at a school. Our streets are safer but with so many residents walking and biking it is vital that personal safety stay a priority.

**Vehicle break-ins:** Thefts from vehicles are a low-risk crime for the thieves. We continually warn neighbors to reduce the problem by removing valuables and many do. But new neighbors are often not aware of the problem and learn the hard way. We had **50 thefts of property or parts in 2014** though that number is moving downward from 73 in 2012.

**Graffiti:** Spray painted buildings and utility boxes have a negative effect on the image of our neighborhood. In April of 2014 the Association developed **Adopt-A-Box**, a project that asks neighbors to sign up...
to keep a utility box in their area graffiti free. Six neighbors have painted over tags on utility boxes in all areas of the Hill since then and even during this winter. Thanks very much to all who are keeping us free from graffiti!

**Crime Fighting Resources:** Any area that has successfully reduced crime generally has neighbors to thank for it. Neighborhoods decay quickly if the people who live in them are not actively engaged in responding to crime problems and working to stop them. The Heritage Hill Association has a history of using any resource we can to make the neighborhood safe. **We work with the Police Department and our Community Officer Arron Rossin, our City Commissioners, Fire Safety, Housing Inspections, rental property owners, block captains and crime victims, to address problems.**

**Block Reps:** We work with Community Officer Aaron Rossin on these problems and with block contacts too. Each block generally has at least one person we know that will help out in a crime crunch. Some blocks have a Block Rep/Captain and many have a lot of active neighbors who HHA calls on to work on issues or problems. It is based on the concept of Neighborhood Watch.

**Neighbor Groups:** Block Clubs have a long history in Heritage Hill and all over the city. Once a group of three or more neighbors gets together change begins to happen. Neighbors on Prospect near Washington SE met this fall after a man was shot in a drug-related incident in the area. The neighbors and HHA staff met with the managers of the four-unit building and our neighborhood Police Team Captain and community officer. The group worked toward an understanding that increases communication and encourages crime reporting to each other and to the police.

**Union Avenue Neighbors** just south of E. Fulton organized a meeting this spring and met with City Engineering staff and Jim Cobb from Black and Veech who we call “the Fixer” to discuss the street construction going on there. Block Clubs have gained access to many resources and information by working with HHA and residents on their blocks who also have contacts. Often issues can be worked out prior to problems developing.

The **North College Block Club** celebrated the completion of exterior painting at a second home on the block that had become distressed over the years. The group met and worked together and with HHA to get the city to follow up on long issued orders to the owners and success was achieved after two years. If they had ignored the problems they would still be living with them. They are masters/mistresses of their fate!

**COFFEE WITH OUR COP** Ongoing contact with our Police Team keeps us safer. Getting to know our Community Officer at block meetings and other informal settings encourages neighbors’ involvement in crime prevention. GRPD officers are meeting with neighbors for coffee whenever invited.

**Officer Rossin** and the HHA Organizer met with tenants and the manager at the newly rehabbed Stuyvesant Apartments for **Coffee with Our Cop.** Coffee and donuts and discussion of safety inside or on the streets filled up the hour. Tenants would like to continue the conversation so we plan to meet again soon. If you have a coffee or tea pot and a few chairs you can host a Coffee with Our Cop too.

The **500 block of Prospect SE** also hosted a **Coffee with our Cop** last spring at Suzanne DeHaans’ home. There is no set agenda for the Coffees. **Officer Rossin** was familiar with the block because he has been on the force for 14 years but he got a chance to meet the people who live there. Neighbors learned a lot about what to report and when, especially when it comes to suspicious activity. Call HHA if you would like to have Coffee with your Cop!
FREE HOME SECURITY SURVEYS: In 2014 the Crime Prevention Organizer performed nine free Home and Apartment Security Surveys for home owners and tenants. Some were victims of crime but most were interested in finding out where a prowler could get in and what could be done to stop it. The recommendations provided a detailed list of vulnerable spots and how they could be secured. This year we found a long unused door to the outside had been left unlocked for months. The owner was surprised. We also noted that at surveys of several apartments, window locks and deadbolts for doors were either missing or not functioning. With permission of the tenants we provided a copy of the recommendations to the rental owners. Survey recommendations help you prevent a burglary.

Call us at 459-8950 to set an appointment for a free survey. We can also send a copy of the recommendation to the rental owner with your permission.

CRIME ALERTS & UPDATES In 2014 the Heritage Hill Association sent out 20 E-Alerts through our E-Mail Network to neighbors on crime related issues. Topics included the summer increase in burglaries; thefts from locked and unlocked vehicles and how to prevent them; suspicious activity and how to report it to the police; thefts of returnable bottles from garages, hall ways and porches; a shooting on Washington SE and updates on that crime; Block Club assistance available from HHA; community meetings with GRPD; Prowler Alerts; Bike Rider Safety; Emergency Snow Clearing; and 911 and 311 reporting tips. Neighborhood Activist Training; People’s Law School, Neighborhood Watch Tips, Burglary Prevention Information was sent and neighbors often responded with incident updates and thanks. Send your E-address, name, address and phone to us to join our E-Network at heritage@heritaghillweb.org

HOUSING & YARD CONDITIONS In 2014 we assisted neighbors who reported concerns about deterioration of housing or of grounds around homes and businesses. Most properties in the area are well kept but with several absentee owned buildings housing code violations had become noticeable. This year we have worked with tenants and owners on issues such as: tall weeds and grass; dead trees; trash and garbage carts overflowing or not picked up; “orphaned” trash carts at rentals (owners can now call the city for pick-up); peeling paint on homes, garbage, household goods and vehicles in yards, traffic issues at a school, broken steps, unpainted wood, and a driveway with huge holes. The list goes on and on. We provided information on finding owners wherever they are (in state and out), how to work with them, and if the owner won’t cooperate, how to work with the city inspectors. Clean and safe housing is our goal. Neighbors are welcome to give us a call if you have questions or need help.

BEYOND OUR BOARDERS: Heritage Hill Association Staff and Board members work with other neighborhood associations as well as with many city departments, including the police department and courts. We chair the Neighborhood Coalition that works on city-wide issues of mutual interest. The Coalition interviewed candidates for Chief of Police this spring and then met several times with the new Chief this summer and fall. We are also working with another coalition to stop legislation that will place impediments in the way of rental housing certification inspections (Senate Bill 313). We worked with to organize the 2nd Annual Neighborhood Activist Training with East Hills Council of Neighborhoods and Eastown Community Association last spring. We continue to meet on tenant rights issues with Kent County Renters Alliance. Though it is no longer staffed, the free legal clinics are still provided four times a month at the Urban League and Steeple Town Services. We are part of Good Neighbor Committee working with representatives from GVSU, Aquinas, Calvin, GRCC and the GRPD, Commissioner Ruth Kelly and City Code Enforcement staff to develop a problem solving guide to assist students and their neighbors in getting along together.
Neighborhood Fun and Fund Development:

- Organized and orchestrated the annual **Weekend Tour of Homes** in May. Recruited hosts, house captains and 243 volunteers to staff the homes and welcomed 3,100 tourists.
- Organized 7th annual **Garden Tour**. This showcases the variety of urban gardens and private areas of our neighborhood.
- Compiled and produced 6 issues of the **Heritage Herald** and distributed to 4,500 neighbors and friends.
- Produced and updated the apartment listings on a weekly basis.
- Organized the Heritage Hill **Night Out Picnic** at the Central High campus in August; Organized the annual Heritage Hill **Neighborhood-Wide Yard Sale Day** in June; the **Holiday Potluck and Annual Meeting** in December and the fun **WHAM** wine, beer tasting, art auction in November.

**Texas Hold-em** - Staffed 4 gaming events at TJ’s Game Room throughout 2014.

**HHA Staff Rearranged:** Our best afternoon receptionist, Willhelmina Daniels retired in October; Tansy Harris, our energetic and social media expert was hired in October to assist all office needs.

**Plus:** Assisted 1000’s of calls and requests regarding a multitude of quality of life issues in Heritage Hill.

**And** we carry on in 2015 and work with you to make Heritage Hill the best it can be. We welcome all new neighbors in 2015 and encourage you to get active in your neighborhood. We have a place for you!

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**INNOVATIVE School Choices in Your Neighborhood!**

- Grand Rapids Montessori (PK-12)
- Innovation Central High (9-12)
- Congress Elementary (PK-5)
- University Prep Academy (6-12)
- Coming Fall 2015...
  Grand Rapids Public Museum School

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EMILY & JONO KLOOSTER
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Visit WeAreGR.com for more information.
Huge thanks to our recent Heritage Hill Association contributors:

Peter & Nedra Agnew
Jonathan & Leslie Anderson
Amy Ruis Art of the Table
Paul Asselin & Jack Sytsma

Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Lisa Baars
David & Jean Bahle
Ron Beechum
Margaret & Robin Bowles
Emily Brink
Bylsma Painting
Child Discovery Center
Ed Clifford & Leslie VanBecker
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**Board Notes**

The November 2014 Board meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather.

Discussion at the December, 2014 Heritage Hill Association Board Meeting included:

**2015 HHA Board Welcome/2014 HHA Board send offs:** All Board members introduce themselves and welcomed new Board members Teresa Dittmer, Ryan Huizenga and Erin Shupe. Big thanks went out to Mark Hutchison, Tansy Harris and Stephanie Eckley for their Board service.

**2015 Offers Election:** Board members voted to unanimously approve the 2015 Heritage Hill Association Officer’s Slate: Jim Payne as President, Charles Roelofs as Vice President, Mary Robinson as Treasurer and Suzanne DeHaan as Secretary.

**HHA 2015 Budget:** The Board went into Executive Session and adopted the 2015 HHA Budget per the Finance Committee recommendation.

Neighbors are welcome to attend monthly Board meetings. The HHA Board meets at 7:00 p.m. on the third WEDNESDAY of every month at the Mercy Health Saint Mary’s campus. **Hauenstein Center, 220 Cherry SE, 1 Community Room** (main floor, turn left at the first hall and first room on your left). There is a possibility that the meeting location would need to change so please call the office (459-8950) or visit the website (www.heritagehillweb.org) to confirm the exact meeting room.

If you would like an item placed on the Board agenda, please call the HHA office at 459-8950 before 4:00 p.m. of the second WEDNESDAY of the month. If you would like to address the Board regarding an agenda item, public comment is taken at the beginning of each meeting. For non-agenda items, public comment is taken at the end of each meeting. Typically, Board meetings run from 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.

If you would like to receive monthly Board agendas via email, please email us your request (heritage@heritagehillweb.org).

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**Absolutely Everyone is Welcome.**

We don’t presume you to be Christian, we only hope to be Christian towards you.

Sundays at 8:30a and 11:00a

www.westminstergr.org
Neighbors gathered at our community table to celebrate neighbors at the Annual Holiday Potluck and Meeting this past December.

Big Applause to:

Martha’s Vineyard and GRCC for the holiday spirit.

Newly elected Board members
Teresa Dittmer
Ryan Huizenga
Erin Shupe
plus returning Board members
Peter Albertini
and Suzanne DeHaan.

Distinguished Service Award Recipients
Jim Payne
Suzanne DeHaan
Marie Koster
Craig Nobbelin
Kate Diedrich
Karen Coy
Steve Faber of the Friends of GR Parks,
Suzanne Shultz and Jay Steffen, GR Planning Department
Dyer Ives Foundation
Jeff Thomas
Don Rietema
Mike Buller and Santa

Contributing Restaurants:
Grand Rapids Pizza and Delivery (GRPD), The Green Well, Marie Catrib’s, Making Thyme, Tacos el Cundado
The team at Midtown Craftsmen takes pride in delivering solid craftsmanship while incorporating the latest innovations to bring enjoyment, function, and value to our customers homes and businesses.


Welcome to our historic congregation in the heart of Grand Rapids — a center of hospitality, worship, spiritual formation, mission, and outreach.

We look forward to connecting with you!

Sunday Worship:
9:15 and 11:00 am

First United Methodist Church
227 Fulton St E • Grand Rapids, MI 49503 • (616) 451.2879
www.GrandRapidsFUMC.org

Auto larceny is crime that plagues all neighborhoods because it is less risky for thieves. Some do not break a window; they just look for unlocked vehicles that have items of value inside. There were 50 incidents of thefts from vehicles in 2014. One neighbor called us to relay his experience as a Victorious Victim!

In November a neighbor on College SE called to let us know that the night before he left a laptop and other items in his vehicle overnight. He knew the risk but thought he could get away with it just this once. (We have all done that a few times.) Of course the laptop was stolen that night. The owner had an app that identified the new location of the stolen laptop. Our neighbor used his “find my computer” app, drove to a large Kentwood rental complex and found the apartment where his laptop was. He called the Kentwood Police who arrived and retrieved the laptop from a surprised tenant in the building. The owner had also put a “lock” on the laptop so it would not operate for the thief.

Cops & Hoods Potluck: The Neighborhood Coalition organized a potluck lunch for Grand Rapids Police Community Officers from all over the city in November. The officers (Cops) and neighborhood organizers (Hoods) shared great food and some good laughs. We Hoods thought this event would serve as our 2014 thank you for the excellent work our Community Officers do in the areas they serve. Aaron Rossin is our CO and his e-mail is arossin@grcity.us if you would like to communicate with him.

Stuyvesant Apartments Coffee with our Cop Aaron: Community Officer Aaron Rossin and I met with tenants and manager of the Stuyvesant in their new Community Room. There are quite a few new tenants but also some that have lived there for over 20 years. The calls for police service to the building have gone down significantly since the building’s new owner completed the 12 million dollar renovation and the problems are less serious. We enjoyed coffee and donuts and tenants want to meet again in a month or so. All are welcome.

133 Union NE: This multi-unit building that suffered a fire last summer is now in the process of rehabilitation. The exterior siding has been removed and new exterior doors and windows have been given the approval by Historic Preservation. Electric and building permits have been pulled and we hope to see this large building emerge as an attractive and safe dwelling for tenants in the Hill.
512 College SE: This home was damaged by fire this winter. Most damage was from smoke but several rooms need extensive repairs. The Blackwell family has lived in the home for over 50 years and it was most recently occupied by the owner’s granddaughter and great-granddaughter. Friends and family have come forward to clean, repair and paint but more help is needed. Call our office if you would like to participate and we will pass your offer on to the family.

Dial 311 to report Icy or Snowy Sidewalks: In early January we started to see icy and snow covered sidewalks. The city of Grand Rapids reminds owners to keep sidewalks clear and those who are near corners are asked to keep the crosswalk curbs cleared too. Tenants should check leases to see who is responsible for sidewalks and if your lease requires you to do it, go out and buy a shovel.

Blocked sidewalks are a violation of City code. Neighbors can file a report of uncleared sidewalk by calling 311 or by using the 311 app on their cell phones. The owner of the property will be notified and given time to clear the walk. If the violation continues the City can send out a crew to do the job but the fee is substantial.

GRAND RAPIDS POLICE DEPARTMENT APPLICATION PROCESS OPEN FOR NEW OFFICERS

The Grand Rapids Police Department and the City of Grand Rapids are pleased to announce that the application and hiring process for new officers is currently open. The Police Department is seeking qualified and motivated men and women who wish to serve the city of Grand Rapids as a police officer. Those seeking employment must successfully complete a multi-step process and need to be licensed police officers through the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards, or eligible for licensure, by May 15, 2015. Those seeking employment must have received a passing score on the EMPCO Police Officer Exam (www.empcob.net), after which time they will be required to fill out an online application through the City of Grand Rapids at http://grcity.us/human-resources/Pages/default.aspx.

If you have any questions about the hiring process, please contact Recruiting Officer Jason Gady, at 456-4247, or via email at jgady@grcity.us. A more detailed description of the position can also be found on the City of Grand Rapids website under “Job Opportunities” at:

https://www.facebook.com/GrandRapidsPoliceDepartmentRecruiting  
http://agency.governmentjobs.com/grandrapids/default.cfm

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Remembering Neighbors
In many issues of the Heritage Herald we note the passing of neighbors and provide a bit of information about them. There are many we may not list because we are often not aware of their deaths or have no information about them. Please let us know of neighbors and their stories so we can remember them in the Herald.

Remember Heritage Hill Property Owners:
There is a City Preservation Ordinance that governs all exterior changes, repairs and/or additions to Heritage Hill properties. Call the Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission at 456-3451 for information on approvals. You can access the application form at the City’s website, www.ci.grand-rapids.mi.us at the Planning Department section or at the Heritage Hill Association’s www.heritagehillweb.org. This ordinance applies to all exterior changes, repairs, and/or additions to your home and property. Items such as doors and windows including storms, yard structures, driveway and sidewalk approaches, and fences do need HPC approvals.

We will remember...

James Lyle Bronner

9/4/1936 - 10/2/2014. We remember Jim who lived at the Stafford Arms apartments for decades. Jim graduated from Michigan State University and made a career in interior design. His greatest passion was the theater where he acted and directed many productions. He was a co-founder of the Grand Rapids Community Summer Theatre, now known as Circle Theater. He loved traveling, especially to New York City where he spent time with friends and attended theater and opera performances. Jim delighted in meeting and having friendships with several stage stars including Elizabeth Wilson, Barbara Cook and Bill McIntyre. He was an avid reader and his day was not complete until he had read the New York Times and done the crossword puzzle. He delighted in being center stage sharing his life stories and all other things he deemed important. This unique and unforgettable character has taken his final curtain call. He will be greatly missed. Memorial contributions can be made in Jim’s name to Circle Theater, 1607 Robinson Road, Grand Rapids, MI 49506.
Published in the Grand Rapids Press.
An Hile

Our neighbor An Hile left us on November 28, 2014. She and her husband Bob Roche were members of the North College Block Club. As an adventurous young woman in the 1960s An went to California and became a fashion model during that exciting time. Later she moved to Michigan and enjoyed a 20-year career in real estate. In the 1990’s she became acquainted with Bob Roche on the internet. They were married and moved to Heritage Hill. An, a talented artist, soon became a neighborhood activist, and served as a Neighborhood Watcher (ask about the “machete incident”). An was very charming and was her true self at all times -- a wonderfully open hearted and open minded sweetheart.

Paula McNeely

On December 13, 2014, we lost longtime neighbor Paula McNeely. She lived in her Heritage Hill home on College SE for over twenty years, bravely battling cancer for thirteen of those years. From the day she moved in she was a powerhouse in the neighborhood, captaining her block, organizing pot luck parties, picnics and Halloween haunted carriage houses, campaigning relentlessly for traffic calming measures and pocket gardens and much more. Even as her health declined she maintained her sense of place in the community by continuing to be present, visible and involved. Her three children, very young at the onset of her illness, were her inspiration to live which she did with enthusiasm, courage and dignity. She is fondly remembered and will be greatly missed.

2015 City of Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Awards

The City is accepting Historic Preservation Award nominations now through March 14. The recognition will happen in May, 2015. Contact Rhonda Baker, rbaker@grcity.us, with your nomination suggestion.
First United Methodist Church

invites you to join them for their final Dynamic Preachers Series event featuring Rev. Dr. James Alexander Forbes, Jr. for a weekend Friday, March 13 – Sunday, March 15 of community events and presentation during worship on Sunday, March 15 at 9:15 and 11:00 am.

Rev. Dr. James Forbes, Jr. is Senior Minister Emeritus of The Riverside Church New York City and President of the Healing of the Nations Foundation. You won’t want to miss this progressive and thought-provoking speaker. Visit www.grandrapidsfumc.org/dynamic for weekend times and details.

Please remember us when your apartment needs renters. Your dollars not only find you tenants but also support the programs of the Heritage Hill Association! You can list your apartment right at the website or stop by the HHA office. We welcome you!

RENTHERITAGEHILLWEB.ORG

Heritage Hill Apartment Rental and Home Sales Listings All sizes and prices -- Spread the word!!!

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When you think of Downtown Grand Rapids and the Grand River, do you find yourself thinking about what’s there now, or do you imagine the potential of what could be?

We’re in the midst of making a dramatic transition from being a city of sprawl to re-focusing on two of the city’s strongest assets: the Grand River and Downtown. Grand Rapids Forward is a comprehensive planning process that invites the public to join Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. [DGRI], the City of Grand Rapids, and their partners in envisioning the many ways in which we can leverage this momentum to make progress towards a holistic vision for Downtown and the Grand River.

**Your voice is important:** Please join your neighbors at these two upcoming planning meetings.

**Heritage Hill Mini Series**
**February 10 and March 10, 2015**
5:30pm - 7:00pm
Cornerstone Church
48 Lafayette SE
Tidy Home Helpers
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Gentle on your Environment

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A Case for the Birds

Greetings!

My name is Bethany and I’m your neighbor on Antisdel. As the weather is getting colder and winter takes its place among us, you might agree that birds and other wildlife have quite a challenging time finding food. We’re fortunate enough to live in a neighborhood that hosts a variety of wildlife that includes several squirrel species, chipmunks, rabbits and many bird species.

My purpose for composing this brief letter is to encourage you to think about what measures you can take this winter to feed these animals, particularly our neighborhood birds. Why birds? Well, birds serve three key purposes in our environment that would make our ecosystems impossible to function without:

• **Health Indicators:** Birds serve as indicators as to how healthy an ecosystem is. You won’t see birds in an area that has poor air quality (pollution), toxic water, or limited plants or insects. Do you remember hearing about DDT and Bald Eagles back in the 1990’s? Scientists found that our Eagles were dying off because of the poisons found in DDT, a commonly used pesticide during that time, were making their way to rivers and poisoning the fish that the Eagles were eating.

• **Pest Control:** Birds eat a lot of the insects that we typically find obnoxious: mosquitos, spiders, etc. It’s great to have them around making sure these insects don’t exist in abundance!

• **Pollinators:** Birds help disperse seeds from trees and plants, extending forests across the country and assisting plants/shrubs in our yards. Hummingbirds serve as key pollinators in our gardens and enable our flowers and vegetables to thrive.

A Proven History in Heritage Hill.

Liz and Todd have a successful history of helping our neighbors buy and sell houses, condos and income properties in Heritage Hill.

Call either of us today to discuss your options in the current real estate market.

Opening Doors for You!

Liz Klinzing (616) 292-5173
Todd Theisen (616) 427-6189
www.HomeInGR.com

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Women’s City Club
Annual Used Fulton

Tuesday, April 21 - 9 am to 7pm
Wednesday, April 22 - 9 am to 4 pm
Thursday, April 23 - 9 am to 4 pm

Each Keller Williams Office is independently owned and operated.
There are a couple of important (and easy!) things that YOU can do this winter to help birds thrive.

1. **Put up a bird feeder** – this is the most important one! It doesn’t have to be complex or particularly fancy. A simple feeder hanging off a sturdy branch or off a feeder pole (found at Meijer for about $15) will do. Different kinds of feeders attract different species of birds, so that’s something to consider when purchasing your feeder. Most packaging will tell you which species the feeder is created to attract. We have Cardinals, Chickadees, Dark-Eyed Juncos, Goldfinches, Sparrows, Nuthatches, Woodpeckers, Blue Jays, and European Starlings in our neighborhood.

2. **Create shelter** – whether this is achieved through installing bird houses or collecting old Christmas trees to throw in your backyard, birds appreciate shelter from the elements just as much as we do. Get creative in thinking about ways that you can provide birds with a warm place to stay this winter.

Birds are extremely important members of our neighborhood that deserve our help this winter. If you’ve never watched them outside before, maybe this season will introduce you to a new hobby! They’re quite fun, entertaining, and charming to watch at feeders and around the yard.

Enjoy this bird treat by hanging it on a branch or porch hook. Happy winter! 😊

Your neighbor,
Bethany
DATES TO REMEMBER

All Heritage Hill Association Meetings are open to neighbors.

**Tuesday, February 10, 2015**
GR Forward Planning with Heritage Hill neighbors
5:30 - 7:00 pm.
Cornerstone Church - 48 Lafayette SE

**Wednesday, February 18, 2015**
HHA Board Meeting - 7:00 pm.
Mercy Health Saint Mary’s | Hauenstein Center, H1 Community Room
220 Cherry Street, between Lafayette and Jefferson Avenue

**Tuesday, March 10, 2015**
GR Forward Planning with Heritage Hill neighbors
5:30 - 7:00 pm.
Cornerstone Church - 48 Lafayette SE

**Wednesday, March 18, 2015**
HHA Board Meeting - 7:00 pm.
Mercy Health Saint Mary’s | Hauenstein Center, H1 Community Room
220 Cherry Street, between Lafayette and Jefferson Avenues

**Wednesday, April 15, 2015**
HHA Board Meeting - 7:00 pm.
Mercy Health Saint Mary’s | Hauenstein Center, H1 Community Room
220 Cherry Street, between Lafayette and Jefferson Avenues

**Annual Dates to Remember**:

**Saturday and Sunday, May 16th and 17th, 2015**
2015 Heritage Hill Weekend Tour of Homes

**Saturday, June 6, 2015**
Annual Heritage Hill area Yard Sales Day

**Tuesday, August 4, 2015**
Heritage Hill Night-Out Social

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**First Park Congregational Church**

United Church of Christ

10 East Park Place NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here!

Worship with us
Sunday at 10:30am
Located in the heart of downtown, next to Veterans Park and the Public Library

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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United Church of Christ

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Located in the heart of downtown, next to Veterans Park and the Public Library

An Open and Affirming Congregation