

# NUSA NEWS

A Publication of Neighborhoods, USA

Summer 2009

## NUSA Presents Neighborhood of the Year Awards



*Lorraine Fury and Dr. Jayna Kapiski-Costa (center) of Citrus Heights, CA display the Grand Prize award for S.O.A.R. neighborhood's 2009 overall Neighborhood of the Year.*



*SOAR neighborhood residents march in their city's Red-White-and-Blue parade with their Neighborhood of the Year banner.*

### Grand Prize 2009 Neighborhood of the Year

Citrus Heights, CA has much to be proud of - and no one is prouder of their city than those who produced the first Senior Health Fair there in 2008. Dr. Jayna Karpiski-Costa, Lorraine Fury and Tonya Wagner of Sylvan Old Auburn Road (SOAR) Neighborhood Association, along with Helen Brewer of the Aging Adult Commission were overjoyed to see SOAR take top honors in the Neighborhood of the Year competition this year at the NUSA conference in Spokane.

"I never really thought we'd win," says Jayna. "I couldn't help crying when they announced us as the Grand Prize Winners because I was so happy, and at the same time I was wishing so much that Bill Hughes could've have been there. He was our first mayor when we became a city in 1997. He knew about NUSA and the good work it did to help neighborhoods. He was the one who created our Neighborhood Task Force and sent representatives to the NUSA conferences in Portland and Sacramento. He died of a heart attack in 2003. My tears were because he would have been so proud. He would've declared a city



holiday to celebrate - he loved NUSA!"

Jayna has been president of her neighborhood association for the past ten years, during which time they have become incorporated as a 501(c)(3). The city does not have a neighborhoods department but residents communicate with the city via the neighborhoods' umbrella organization, Residents Empowerment Association of Citrus Heights. It was this organization that helped Jayna become elected to the City Council. She is also an attorney and licensed veterinarian who makes house calls.

Her idea for a Senior Health Fair evolved from a discussion at a City Council retreat in which she suggested setting up a city commission to assist senior citizens. The idea was rejected with the argument that seniors could come before the council like anyone else. But Jayna felt that seniors were less likely than others to approach the city about their needs. She then asked the city manager if her neighborhood could present a senior fair on city hall property - in its rose garden, to be exact (Citrus Heights City Hall is situated in a nursery.) With permission and promise of staff, the garden, and \$750 seed money, she and four

other neighborhood associations set the date for May and began the contact work to create the event.

"It was amazing how all the partnerships pulled together," says Jayna. "We involved the adult aging commission which brought along the local Area Agency on Aging. Other public agencies joined in - the park district, the garbage company, the power company, in-home services for seniors - and we invited as sponsors our hospitals, senior-oriented businesses, banks and housing resources. We also looked for groups that promoted fun things to do when you're retired, like the Red Hat Ladies and widowers who go to dinner together."

"We invited state agencies that are consumer oriented and some county agencies, like food stamps and small claims court advisors. We partnered with local colleges for free massages, dental demonstrations and pet grooming techniques and the Lions Club provided eye screenings. Wal-Mart and Meals on Wheels donated food and snacks. "

Perhaps the most unusual aspect of this fair was that the 60 to 70 exhibitors, most of whom were non-profits, were not charged for their exhibit spaces and no entities that profit from seniors were allowed to participate. "No insurance companies, funeral homes, medical equipment dealers, etc. were allowed," says Jayna. "We have to protect our seniors from predators."

"We started with \$750 from the city and ended up raising \$7,000. The fair cost \$6,000 so we had some leftover for our other projects." SOAR plans to use some of their NUSA prize money to help provide a senior section in the new community center the city is building.

"At first, I thought we didn't deserve the NOTY award," says Jayna, "because some of the competition was really good, but after I look back on all the work we did and how delighted our seniors were, I think probably we did!"

## 2009 BEST NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAM AWARDS

2009 marked the third year that Neighborhoods, USA has recognized municipalities and businesses with the Best Neighborhood Program Award. This award is presented in two categories, Social Revitalization and Physical Revitalization.

### Physical Revitalization - Beautification



**FIRST PLACE:** Alhambra Graffiti Busters Club, Phoenix, Arizona - As a City of Phoenix community partner, the Graffiti Busters Club encouraged their peers to become more engaged in their communities by volunteering to help the city eliminate graffiti.

**SECOND PLACE:** Week of Hope Program, Manassas, Virginia - The Watch partnered with Manassas, Virginia's Week of Hope program to clean up Landgreen Street where Manassas cab driver Khawaja Ahmed was murdered. The project deterred crime, abated demoralizing blight and helped build community.

### Social Revitalization - Neighborliness



**FIRST PLACE,** Neighborliness Olympics, Hollywood, Florida - The Neighborhood Olympics program was created to enhance residential neighborhoods both physically and socially by providing the opportunity to increase membership and participation in local neighborhood associations and encourage working relationships among residents.

**SECOND PLACE:** Picnic Program, Renton, Washington - Neighborhood picnics were created to encourage neighbors to gather together to create a forum to discuss neighborhood issues and concerns, and allow neighbors to get to know each other better and their city officials better.

**THIRD PLACE:** Isaac Good Neighborhood Program, Phoenix, Arizona - The Good Neighbor Program is a series of educational classes that engages residents, encourages community participation and sustainability within Phoenix's diverse communities by creating a setting that is inclusive to all.

## "Hats Off to Neighborhoods"

### *23rd Annual Regional Neighborhood Network Conference*

Today neighborhoods are more important to our cities than at any other time in our country's history and for the first time, the City of Decatur, Illinois has the honor of hosting the 23rd Annual Regional Neighborhood Network Conference. Scheduled for September 17-19, the conference will provide a forum for the sharing of ideas that will help to make neighborhoods stronger, more efficient and supportive of all residents.

The RNNC has a long standing tradition of commemorating and fostering good neighborhoods. It all began in 1986. The idea for what would become the Regional Neighborhood Network was launched by the City of Louisville in the Department of Neighborhood Advocacy. Government officials and neighbor-

hood leaders from a five state region (Illinois, Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Indiana) met to exchange ideas and learn from one another. Nearly 25 cities from these five States now participate annually in the RNNC tradition, collectively hosting 300-400 people to the Conference.

This year's theme, "Hats Off to the Neighborhoods", salutes the hard work neighborhood leaders contribute to our communities each and every day. The goal for the workshops is to provide innovative, educational and encouraging sessions which will empower leaders in their continued quest to make their neighborhoods great places to live. For a registration fee of \$100, participants will be able to participate in: all workshops and mobile workshops; attend the Thursday night opening reception; enjoy meals and snacks all day Friday; celebrate neighborhoods Hollywood style Friday night; attend all meals with *Continued on page 7*

## NUSA Affiliate Memberships



### CALIFORNIA

Southern California - Southern California Neighborhood Partners  
Pasadena - Flintridge Operating Foundation

### FLORIDA

Florida - Florida Neighborhoods Conference  
Fort Lauderdale - Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations, Inc.

### IOWA

Iowa - Iowa Department of Economic Development - Iowa Neighborhood Resource Center

### OHIO

Cincinnati - Invest in Neighborhoods  
Dayton - Neighborhood Leadership Institute Alumni Association

### SOUTH CAROLINA

Columbia - Columbia Council of Neighborhoods  
Greenville - Healthy Greenwood Neighborhoods, Inc.

### TENNESSEE

Chattanooga - Chattanooga Neighborhood Association Council

### WASHINGTON

Tacoma - Edison Community Based Services Action Team

### WISCONSIN

Madison - Madison Neighborhoods, Inc.



National Neighborhood Day this year is Sunday, September 20th, 2009. Meet and welcome new neighbors and rekindle old friends. Send your neighborhood photos to [info@neighborhoodday.org](mailto:info@neighborhoodday.org). Check the new free website for facilitating neighborhood communications and activities: [www.OurCommons.us](http://www.OurCommons.us).





Joan Adcock, Jennifer Stritchfield and B.J. Wyrick, conference planners for 2010 Little Rock NUSA conference.

## Little Rock Prepares for NUSA

Plans are underway in Little Rock, AR for “the most outstanding NUSA conference ever,” in 2010, says Co-Conference Coordinator Joan Adcock.

“We’ve already set up our ten committees to make this happen. Letters and cards have gone out inviting sponsors, exhibitors and workshop presenters. We are starting early with our sponsors so we can keep registration for the conference as low as possible.” “And,” Adcock continues, “Little Rock’s Mayor Stodala and City Manager Bruce Moore are behind these plans 100%. The Mayor is sending letters to all the mayors in the state to invite them and/or their representatives to the conference. He has scheduled his reception to take place on Wednesday night at the Clinton Presidential Library.”

Adcock credits Spokane’s NUSA conference coordinators with providing much information to Little Rock. “They’ve been of great help to us and this information is being distributed to the various local committees.” She reports that the workshop committee is looking for presentations that will cover a wide spectrum of neighborhood needs at different levels of involvement and experience. Two special tracks will be presented by HUD and FEMA; these classes will be open to people seeking continuing education in their fields as well as NUSA attendees. Neighborhood Pride Tours will include historic and revitalized neighborhoods, as well as separately scheduled specialty tours of Heifer International Headquarters, Central High School and The Clinton Library.

The local NUSA organizing group is in the process of enlisting 400 volunteers to add to existing committees, serve on four new future committees, and to work at the conference itself.

The conference hotel is the Peabody Hotel but blocks of rooms have also been reserved at the Presidential Holiday Inn and the downtown LaQuinta. For updated conference information, go to [NUSA@littlerock.org](mailto:NUSA@littlerock.org).

*“Hats off to Neighborhoods” continued from page 6*

keynote speakers and honored guests; attend breakfast Saturday and have a boxed lunch ready for the road home and receive a free t-shirt, tote bag, handouts, and gifts!

If you are a veteran or emerging neighborhood leader, a citizen interested in strengthening an existing neighborhood, an organizer wanting to establish a new neighborhood association or community group, or are just interested in making your neighborhood a better place, this conference is for you!

The RNNC will be held at the Decatur Conference Center and Hotel located at 4191 West U.S. 36 in Decatur, Illinois 62522. To make hotel reservations call (877) 352-8800 or visit their website, [www.hoteldecatur.com](http://www.hoteldecatur.com).

## NUSA City/Municipal Memberships

NUSA affirms its role as advocate for neighborhoods through working with city government and encouraging them to create partnerships with their neighborhood associates. Letters have recently been sent to mayors across the country inviting city memberships. Current city memberships are below. If you do not see your city listed, contact Karen Harber, NUSA Administrative Assistant, at [kharber1@woh.rr.com](mailto:kharber1@woh.rr.com) or go to [www.nusa.org](http://www.nusa.org). Click on “memberships”.

<b>AB-CANADA</b> Edmonton	<b>COLORADO</b> Commerce City	<b>MARYLAND</b> Westminster	<b>S. CAROLINA</b> Spartanburg
<b>ALABAMA</b> Birmingham	<b>FLORIDA</b> Coral Springs Escambia County	<b>MISSOURI</b> Gladstone	<b>TENNESSEE</b> Chattanooga Memphis
<b>ALASKA</b> Anchorage	<b>GEORGIA</b> Fort Lauderdale Hollywood Jacksonville	<b>MISSISSIPPI</b> Hattiesburg	<b>TEXAS</b> Arlington Fort Worth Garland
<b>ARKANSAS</b> Little Rock Texarkana	<b>ILLINOIS</b> Leesburg Melbourne Miramar Orlando Pinellas Park	<b>NEVADA</b> Henderson Las Vegas	<b>VIRGINIA</b> Chesapeake Roanoke
<b>ARIZONA</b> Peoria Phoenix Tempe	<b>KANSAS</b> Wichita	<b>N. CAROLINA</b> Raleigh Winston-Salem	<b>WASHINGTON</b> Auburn Kent Seattle Spokane Tacoma
<b>CALIFORNIA</b> Buena Park Chino Hills Citrus Heights Compton Davis Escondido Lancaster Long Beach Monrovia Palm Springs Riverside	<b>KENTUCKY</b> Bowling Green Louisville	<b>OHIO</b> Cincinnati Dayton	<b>WISCONSIN</b> Madison
		<b>OREGON</b> Eugene Oregon City Portland	
		<b>PENNSYLVANIA</b> York	



The “26th Annual National Night Out” (NNO), a unique crime/drug prevention event sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch (NATW), has been scheduled for Tuesday, August 4, 2009 (Texas will celebrate on October 6th, 2009)

## Chattanooga Conference “UNITES”

Chattanooga, TN will host the 11th Annual Neighborhoods and Codes Conference at the city’s Convention Center on October 22-23. Conference theme is UNITES: Uniting Neighborhoods in Times of Economic Stress and is presented by the City’s Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development.

The dual-track conference will provide workshops on topics to empower neighborhood leaders and citizens, as well as provide training and continuing education to codes professionals. For a minimal fee of \$100, codes professionals can earn Continuing Education Units (CEU’s) upon completion of their sessions.

The Neighborhoods track is offered free-of-charge and will feature strategies to maintain financial stability and sanity for both individuals and businesses. Conference coordinators remind readers that Chattanooga is within a day’s drive of over half the population of the United States. Deadline to register is Friday, October 9, 2009. For more information on the conference, call (423) 425-3700 or visit [www.chattanooga.gov](http://www.chattanooga.gov).