Fall Family Night a Success

By: Gina Ostrowski

The Early Childhood program and the After School program invited families to join us at the community center for some food and fun. On the evening of W ednesday, November 9th, we had a Harvest Party and Family Literacy Night. The children from the neighborhood had the opportunity to play fishing for letters and Bingo. They could also get their faces painted, listen to The Very Hungry Caterpillar, and do an art project. Everyone had the chance to enjoy warm beef stew, cake, and juice.

We want to thank all of the volunteers who helped make the evening fun for everyone. We had volunteers from the university, community, and our own youth program. It was encouraging to see many of our teens take initiative and really get involved by cleaning the center and spending time with younger kids. Several of our teens are turning out to be great leaders.

The staff enjoyed having the opportunity to meet and get to know the families in the community better. It was nice to see so many friendly face and we want to thank everyone for coming.

MG&E Energy Saving Tips

Winter Energy Saving Tips

• Lower the thermostat at night and when you're away
• Let the sun in during the day to reduce heating costs
• Close drapes and shades at night to save money and improve comfort

20 Year Anniversary Celebration

That right Kennedy Heights Community Center will be celebrating 20 years of service and community building next year. To mark this historic event the community center is planning to host a Many Cultures, One Community Festival next summer. The festival will celebrate the many cultures of Kennedy Heights and the history of the community. There will be a performance stage, free food, and children's activities. We have just begun the planning process and we want your HELP!! All current and past residents and other interested community members are invited to join the planning committee. Please come and help us shape this wonderful community event. The first planning meeting will be Friday December 2nd from 5:30 to 7:00 PM. If you would like more information or would like to be included in future planning meetings please contact Alyssa at 244-0767. We hope to see you on December 2nd.
Greetings from the Executive Director

The first snowflakes of the season fell last week and the beginning of the Wisconsin winter is upon us. Before the first snow fell the community center was able to host a Fall Family Fun Night. Hard work by staff, contributions from many community volunteers, and high participation by area families ensured a smashing success. A big thanks to everyone who helped and attended.

Aside from the first snow, November is also the month of Thanksgiving. Kennedy Heights is grateful to have a lot to be thankful for this year. Over the course of the year many businesses and individuals have donated money, resources, and time to the center. The column on page 3 lists the most recent contributors. Without community support Kennedy Heights Community Center would be unable to provide the level of services that we have now.

Kennedy Heights is pleased to have a high level of participation and engagement from the community. From the start of the Early Childhood Program Monday morning to the end of the Women’s Group Friday night each week over 100 community members use our services.

Everyday, I am thankful for the talented staff, committed volunteers and dedicated board members that help make sure our programs and services run well everyday. Their devotion and service is the life blood of the organization.

Recently, it is the small unexpected gifts that I have been most thankful for. An older couple that lives on the North side did a food and personal care items drive for our food pantry. We received a van load of goods that will help us through us through the end of the year. And then, last week I received a call from RSVP, a local volunteer organization, they wanted to make us mittens and hats for children in our programs. All I needed to do was tell them how many. Finally, a community volunteer, Eileen Rimson, dedicates hours and hours of time each year coordinating The Giving Tree program for the Kennedy Heights Community Center. She secures a holiday gift for community members in need.

A heartfelt thank you for all the gifts Kennedy Heights Community Center has received over the last year.

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News From the Heights

Trick or Treat Food Drive

By: Dre Verdi
Fall is always a busy time for Girl Neighborhood Power. In October Girl Power sponsored the 4th annual Trick or Treat so others can Estó food drive. Kennedy Heights Girl Power collected over 400 pounds of food for area food pantries. Also in October two of our youngest Girl Neighborhood Power girls participated in a WORC radio show promoting a Positive Youth Involvement Week of which the food drive is part. GNP participants attended the Youth Leadership Conference at Memorial High School as part of positive youth involvement week. Finally, congratulations to Malinda Hongmanivahn who was recently named GNP Girl of the Month for her regular attendance, positive leadership, and commitment to service.

Strengthening Families Program to Return to Kennedy Heights

By VamMeej Yang
The Kennedy Heights community center is pleased to announce that starting 2006 the Asian Outreach program will offer the 7 week Strengthening Families program for parents and their 10 to 14 year old children. The program will meet for two hours every other week. During the first hour parents and youth will meet separately to discuss the weekly topic. During the second hour the parents and youth will meet together to practice skills and have fun together. The program is designed to prevent teen substance abuse and other behavior problems, strengthen parenting skills, and build stronger families. Program topics will include supporting goals and dreams, appreciating family members, using family members, understanding family values, building family communication, reaching our goals, and finally a graduation. The program will first be offered in Hmong with a series to follow in English. Please contact VamMeej 244-0767 for more information or to sign up your family.

Poets Corner

By Mathew Abbosmoi, Age 10
After School Program Participant

Jack jumped over the ocean;
To get to the magic potion,
He fell on a bell and smelled
A smell it smelled like baby lotion.
By Jody Schmitz

On Monday, January 9, the Kennedy Heights food pantry will introduce some new features that are planned to make access of the pantry easier for residents to use it.

Starting with the first food pantry of 2006, the time will be changed to 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM. This should give all residents, including those who work until 5:00 PM, a chance to use the pantry.

In addition, a special color plan will be used to eliminate waiting and the use of numbers to get into the pantry. Each family will be assigned a color which they will keep. The colors will be moved around weekly in the pantry schedule so that families will each get a chance to be among the first users and have first choice of the available foods.

Those unable to get to the pantry for some reason will be allowed to get neighbors or friends to select their food or pick up pre-packed bags. If a resident is unable to make such arrangements, bags will be pre-packed for them and must be picked-up within 24 hours. Arrangements must be made by 4:00 PM the day of the pantry.

The Kennedy Heights food pantry was started in 1999 and has been operated by volunteers since then. An average of 30-35 families are served each week. Volunteers, Jack Krebs and Mel Morganbesser, do the shopping for the pantry at the Second Harvest, Food Bank and Community Action Coalition. Volunteers, Cathy Almeida, Beulah Lee and Eileen Rimson, help at the pantry each week. UW Extension staff, Kazoua Moaau helps with nutrition education. If you are interested in volunteering in the pantry or hosting a food drive for Kennedy Heights food pantry please contact Jody Schmitz, adult program coordinator.

These new policies were approved by the Kennedy Heights Board of Directors. They were drafted by a group of residents and volunteers in October based on community focus groups and a survey of the community this fall. Please do not hesitate to contact Jody Schmitz 244-0767 with any additional questions.