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HEADLINE: Western Hills neighborhood to hold summer festival

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BODY:

Last December, Minnie Holloway, who lives in Residence Park, attended a Culture Works meeting on how to complete a grant proposal for the Montgomery County Arts and Cultural District. "I was interested in having Western Hills Park come alive again," said Holloway, who's active in the Becker, Lilac and Tyson Block Club. After the workshop, she contacted Dr. Robert Walker, director of Wesley Community Center, for names of other Western Hills neighborhood association residents to plan a summer event at Western Hills Park.

"He gave me a list and also told me to contact the priority board," she said.

Contacts were made, a proposal was submitted by members of the Residence Park and Crown Point neighborhoods, and the volunteers received a grant.

Now, after much effort and many meetings, the group is ready to present its first annual Summer Fun-fest at the park on Aug. 27.

In part, the festival will be a celebration of the park's revitalization.

Western Hills Park is located between Western Hills and Becker Drive (behind First Dayton Little League).

For many years, it had been a neighborhood park filled with children and parents. In more recent years, however, areas of the park had become overgrown with brush and weeds, and neighbors stayed away from the area.

"I've lived in the neighborhood for a long time, and when Mrs. Holloway called me, I didn't even know there was a park there," said Angela Mumford, a member of the organizational group who had to go out and see it for herself.

After a letter-writing campaign to the city officials, Dayton workers began clearing the overgrown areas in March, and neighborhood residents plan to paint the shelter with the city's agreement to put on a new roof before the festival. The park is beginning to bustle with residents again.

Members of the planning committee are block club representatives Wilbur Heflin from Residence Park, Waverly Howard from Southern Ridgewood Heights, Sam Davis from Western Hills, Angela Mumford from the Mia-Whitmore Expanded Association, Jean Lofton from Midway, Shari Nesby and Robert Walker from the Wesley Center, and Holloway.

Summer Fun-fest will kick off with a parade at 11:15 a.m. Aug. 27 at Elmhurst Avenue and West Second Street in Residence Park, travel down West Second Street to Seeley Drive, right on Seeley to Tyson Ave., left to Becker Drive and down Becker to the park.

The grand marshal is ex-Dayton commissioner Bootsie Neal.

Featured entertainment will include the Vessel of Honor Praise Dancers at 12:30 p.m. and

African Dance with Crystal Carpenter at 1:30 p.m. The headline group, Serious Young Musicians, will begin at 4:30 p.m. and play until closing at 6 p.m.

Visual artist Clifford Darrett will have a display of his artwork and presentation, with art activities for children, in the shelter house. Marlon Shackelford will give a motivational speech at 2:30 p.m., and there will be block club recognitions and a neighborhood karaoke contest.

There will be food and a disc jockey throughout the festival.

FirstDay, Mead help with school supplies

Representatives from First-Day Financial Federal Credit Union and MeadWestvaco will distribute free school supplies at Dayton elementary schools from 10 to 11 a.m. today.

Students at Allen, Edison, Fairview, Franklin, McNary, Meadowdale, Patterson-Kennedy, Van Cleve at McGuffey, Bellehaven, Lincoln, Loos and Webster elementaries will be receiving packs of supplies to start off the new school year.

The two organizations are partnering with the SHOPA Kids In Need Foundation to provide school kits to students. Employees from Mead WestVaco, Standard Register, SHOPA and FirstDay, including Toni Lindsey, vice president of marketing for FirstDay Financial FCU, will help with the distribution.

Sorority sends 'Happy Boxes' to troops

Members of the Preceptor Gamma Sigma Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi sorority have been preparing "Happy Boxes" for United States military service members stationed in Afghanistan.

One of the grandsons of a sorority member is stationed in Afghanistan, and the group has sent boxes of beef jerky, dried cranberries, magazines, hard candy, combs, toothbrushes and other toiletries to the troops.

"They are in tents with no room for furniture, so they've strung a clothesline outside the tents and we sent them magazines and newspapers, which they clip to the line and take turns reading," said Pauline Money, one of the project organizers.

The sorority is working on more boxes to ship out at the end of this month.

Anyone wanting to contribute to the effort should contact Money at 277-7654.

Dayton students back in school

Dayton students started back to school on Monday, beginning a unified year-round school calendar.

Dates for school open houses are staggered, and some have already been held.

There are a few coming up in the next week: today, both Loos and Meadowdale elementary schools will have their open houses. Loos' will be at 6 p.m., and Meadowdale's will begin at 5:30 p.m. and end at 7:30 p.m.

Hickorydale and Carlson elementary schools will have their open houses on Tuesday. Hickorydale's event will be from 5 to 7 p.m. and Carlson's is scheduled from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Students in the news

* Former Daytonian Cheryl M. Anderson, a 2002 graduate of Colonel White High School, and Jason M. Steeber of Beavercreek recently graduated from the Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps ROTC Leader Development and Assessment Course, also known as "Operation Warrior Forge," at Fort Lewis, Tacoma, Wash.

The 33 days of training provided military training and evaluation for cadets.

Anderson is the daughter of Maureen Stanford-Anderson of Trotwood and Henry Anderson Jr. of Jonesboro, Ga.

Steeber is the son of Keith and Sheri Steeber of Dayton.

* John Gorman and Regina Keough of Dayton have received their bachelor's degrees from Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wis.

Gorman received his degree in English, and Keough received hers in public relations.

Marquette's dean's list included Hannah Carrigg of Dayton, who is enrolled in the school's College of Arts and Sciences.

If you or a friend or relative recently achieved an honor, or your club or organization has an activity that would make interesting reading, call Virginia Burroughs at 276-4441, e-mail her at vburroughs@woh.rr.com or send a typewritten notice to: Neighbors, Dayton Daily News, 45 S. Ludlow St., Dayton, OH 45402. We want to hear from you.

GRAPHIC: VIRGINIA BURROUGHS/FOR THE DAYTON DAILY NEWS SUMMER FUN-FEST
Committee members include: (from left) Georgia Wortham, Minnie Holloway, Darnell Brown, Waverly Howard, Dennis Coatney Jr., Dennis Coatney III, Robin Coatney, Angela Mumford, Emma Andrews and Shari Nesby. Committee member Robert Walker is not shown.

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