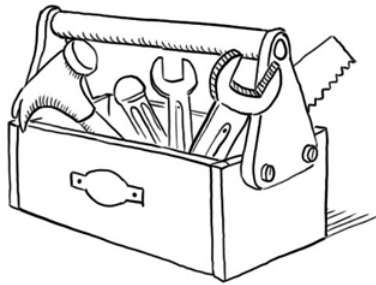

SMALL TOOL KIT for NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS



United Neighborhoods of Evansville

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So, You're Interested in Starting a Neighborhood Association?

What is a Neighborhood Association?

A neighborhood association is a geographically-based partnership of neighbors who get together, share their ideas, thoughts, feelings and work cooperatively to make their neighborhood a better place to live. It **includes homeowners, renters, and representatives from businesses, churches, agencies and schools** who are dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for residents and benefits all citizens within the Evansville community. Members of the association **should represent the entire community** and all of its issues. This group gathers together to decide what needs to be done and how to do it. Through their work, members develop a stability and credibility necessary to be an effective force in making a stronger neighborhood. (A *Homeowners Association* is **not** a Neighborhood Association.)

Neighborhood Associations Provide

- A chance to decide what needs to be done and to work together to make it happen
- A forum for discussion of local issues
- Stability and credibility, an effective force for a better neighborhood
- An opportunity for neighbors to contribute and build individual skills



Questions to Think About

- How do you want to improve your neighborhood?
- Are there issues that need to be addressed?
- Is there support for these issues?
- Why do you think you should organize?
- How can an organized group of neighbors be more effective at change?
- What type of potential leadership is there within your neighborhood?
- What type of resources does your group/neighborhood have?

Sample Goals of Evansville Neighborhoods

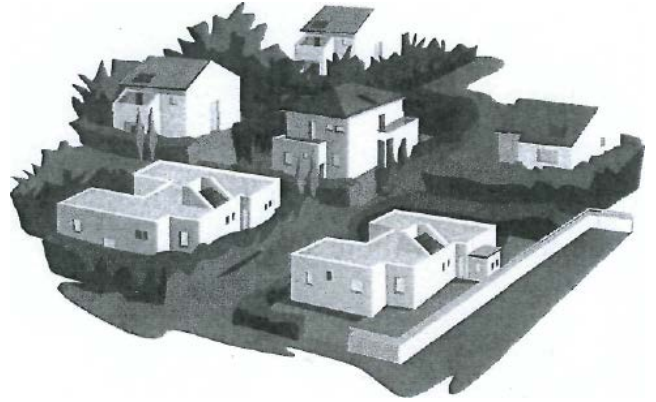
The following are examples of what Neighborhood Associations are working on now in Evansville. The goals were developed by neighborhoods as a part of their Neighborhood Action Plans. These suggested items are:

- Increased police presence: more patrolling, better response, and more meeting attendance
- Development of effective neighborhood watch programs
- Official representation and involvement in City government
- Maintaining existing parks and increased safety and community involvement
- Better communication with neighborhood leaders
- Repair/installation of street lighting where needed
- Replacement and proper care of street trees
- Increased recreational opportunities
- Affordable housing
- Removal/repair of abandon buildings

Why Start a Neighborhood Association?

Before you begin asking your neighbors to organize, they must be shown some of the reasons and benefits of forming a neighborhood association. Some of the advantages a neighborhood association offers:

- A collective voice is a stronger voice.
- Organization can prevent neighborhood decline.
- Knowing your neighbors provides a sense of security.
- Increases awareness of decisions that impact your neighborhood.
- Supplies a channel to meet neighborhood goals. Makes progress toward common goals possible through organized meetings and exchange of ideas.
- Provides an effective communication link with City and County officials, benefiting the residents through active participation in the larger scale decisions affecting their neighborhood.
- Acts as a planning resource for social activities. These social opportunities help bring people together and increase social capital.



Benefits of Organizing a Neighborhood Association

- Sharing information and assistance among the neighborhood residents through meetings, newsletters, and flyers.
- Creating and nurturing neighborly relationships.
- Solving immediate neighborhood problems (crime, traffic and parking issues, public space improvements, spot zoning, etc.)
- Providing a forum and focus for discussion with City and County officials.

Emphasizing the Assets of Residents

Perhaps one of the greatest benefits of forming a neighborhood association is allowing all of your neighbors the opportunity to contribute their individual gifts toward the betterment of their neighborhoods. Becoming involved as a leader, committee member, or volunteer helps members develop skills that can help them in their careers and relationships with others.



When confronting a problem, a neighborhood should look first within and then outside itself for an answer. The neighborhood focuses on its assets, or strengths, rather than needs and weaknesses. Working to solve their own problems in this way empowers individuals who are used to seeing themselves as needy.

In Progressive Neighborhoods

- Residents are actively involved.
- Residents have skills, knowledge, and resources.
- Residents are engaged through effective organization.
- Residents have collectively identified their assets and needs
- Residents have a collective vision.
- Residents are implementing plans to make their vision happen.
- Residents invest in the educational success of their youth.



So, You've Decided to Form a Neighborhood Association

You have decided you want to start working toward a positive change in your neighborhood. You have some ideas, but you will need a team to make a difference.



Step One - Identify Core Group and Plan Meeting

Contact one or two neighbors you are familiar with and who share your thoughts on benefits and goals in forming a neighborhood association. This will be your core group. After sharing ideas, make a short list of potential neighbors to expand your core group. If you haven't done so already, contact United Neighborhoods of Evansville (428-4243) for some ideas and resources. United Neighborhoods has a detailed "Tool Kit" for starting Neighborhood associations and would be happy to see that your group receives a kit.

Invite your friends over for cake and coffee. During this meeting, find out each person's passion or interest. Be sure everyone is on the same page and can agree on a few issues to pursue. Get everyone thinking about the purpose of your association, physical boundaries, and the date and location of the first meeting.

Step Two - Set the Boundaries

Decide where "the Neighborhood" starts and ends through the use of these parameters in creating your boundaries. Determine boundaries based on physical boundaries (e.g. main roadway), natural boundaries (e.g. park, woods, or river), or sentiment. You will need to define your boundaries based upon street names and block numbers. Check with United Neighborhoods of Evansville (UNOE) **to be sure your boundaries do not overlap** with those of another neighborhood association.



Keep the neighborhood manageable in size. The neighborhood should be small enough for members to pass out flyers door-to-door. Too large might be two miles by two miles. Too small might be four blocks.

Step Three - Get a General Background

Before you get too far into the planning of your neighborhood association you need some basic background on the neighborhood. Talk to longtime residents and research the history of the area. Find out the first homes, significant natural or personal events, and ethnic background. Plan a naming contest. The name may be based on history, a landmark, a nearby school, or a symbolic image. By researching the general background of your neighborhood, you can install a sense of pride and motivation in residents.

Step Four - Contact Your Neighbors and Get Them Involved

Announce the first meeting by personally distributing flyers. Also, have local churches put notices in their bulletins. Contact nearby schools and ask them to distribute hand-outs or brochures. Contact United Neighborhoods of Evansville (UNOE) to assist with designing and printing your flyers or postcards.



Step Five - Hold the First Neighborhood-Wide Meeting

Tips for Your Initial Gathering

- Keep it short, interesting and goal-oriented.
- Prepare, hand out, and follow an agenda.
- Have a sign-in list to serve as a contact list.
- Decide on a mission statement, registration, and by-laws. (Sample in UNOE Tool Kit)
- **Offer refreshments and time for mingling. Allow everyone the chance to speak up.**
- Set a date for election of officers (with term length in by-laws).
- **Discuss and decide on dues.**
- Set date, time and place for the next meeting.

Items to Consider for Future Meetings

- Decide on basic, minimum calendar of events.
- If possible, recruit block captains and spell out duties.
- **End meeting with committee assignments to deal with problems identified.**



Looking Toward the Future...

Proposed Actions for a Neighborhood Association

- Provide programs or training in areas of interest or concern. Ex: disaster prep, cleanups, saving energy, etc.
- Aim high; expect professionalism and accountability.
- Use a survey to get to know the assets and interests of your neighbors.
- Recognize and reward members routinely.
- Stress the positive whenever possible.
- Develop a strong sense of neighborhood loyalty.
- Develop a newsletter, distribute flyers, and collect e-mail addresses of members to communicate.
- Have seasonal or special events, e.g. picnics, potlucks, holiday parties or a get-together.
- Be inclusive in all affairs, spread the responsibility, and don't be cliquish.



Ideas for Programming

The following are ideas that you may consider if you decide to form a neighborhood association. After getting to know your neighbors, base programming on their interest and concerns:

- Offer violence preventing program speakers - focus on disaster preparedness, mentoring, crisis intervention, anger management, etc.
- Check with your local police sector office for programs of interest.
- Educate members about volunteer opportunities in the neighborhood.
- Organize a Neighborhood Watch program.
- Get involved in neighborhood beautification and clean-up.
- Work together for the safety of parks.
- Check classes at the library. They may be able to come speak to your group.
- Call United Neighborhoods of Evansville (812-428-4243) for a list of suggestions.

Membership in United Neighborhoods of Evansville (UNOE)

Some of the Benefits of Membership

- UNOE serves as a common forum for neighborhood associations to share information, knowledge, and expertise.
- UNOE actively participates in many activities that preserve, enhance, and promote Evansville neighborhoods.
- Find out more about what Evansville neighborhoods are doing.
- Find out how you can better assist your neighborhood.
- UNOE works closely with agencies such as:
 - Department of Urban Forestry
 - Parks Department
 - Department of Metropolitan Development (DMD)
 - Tree Advisory Board
 - Area Plan Commission (APC)
 - Area Emergency Management Agency (AEMA)
 - Police Department
 - City Council and County Commission
 - Keep Evansville Beautiful (KEB)
 - Property Owners Management Association (POMA) and many more

In Order to Join UNOE, You Must

- Complete a UNOE registration form.
- Attach a current copy of your Neighborhood Association's by-laws and boundary map.
- Pay yearly dues – currently \$25.00 per year.

Additional information and Membership documents and are available to download at the web address below or email office@unoevansville.org to request an electronic copy emailed to you. If you need the forms mailed, contact the office at the email address above or call 812-428-4243.

www.unoevansville.org/membership/