



# Our Neighborhood

Winter 2013

## Remembering Jerome E. Miller



On Sept. 30, the city of Phoenix received word that retired Deputy City Manager Jerome E. Miller passed away. For those of you who didn't know him, Jerome spent 17 years as a city employee before retiring earlier this year. Most of

those years were spent as a director for the Neighborhood Services Department.

Jerome's passing was a devastating loss for many of our staff and city employees throughout the organization. To many, he was a mentor, leader, confidant, cheerleader and friend. He set the bar for exemplary public service and those who knew him are now better public servants because of his leadership.

He made a point to show support of employees and the community he loved by attending as many events as possible. During a recent clean-up event, we unveiled a design for a tool trailer with a special dedication to Jerome. Jerome wasn't one who liked attention, but this is the very least we could do for all to remember him at future community clean-up events.

For those who came to his celebration of life to pay their respects, we thank you. If you weren't able to attend, you can watch the ceremony online at [phoenix.gov/11](http://phoenix.gov/11), under "Specials."

I personally want to thank Jerome for his years of leadership, friendship, guidance and dedication to the city we both love. Jerome, you will always be missed and never forgotten.

Chris Hallett  
Director, Neighborhood Services Department



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## Neighborhood College's Neighborhoodology

The past year has been a busy one for NSD's neighborhood specialists with the launch of Neighborhood College's Neighborhoodology.

The Neighborhoodology program is for existing neighborhood organizations listed with the city that are looking to revitalize their leadership. Participants will enhance capacity through a more interactive, hands-on experience designed to increase their knowledge of civic engagement and community building. This track is specifically designed to offer active neighborhood associations and block watch groups a greater level of detail and information to assist them in working in their communities and with the city.

Neighborhoodology consists of approximately 10 hours of core classroom instruction, hands-on activities and required electives that must be completed over a nine-month period culminating in a capstone community project.

Neighborhoodology kicked off earlier this year with a pilot of four established neighborhood organizations. There are currently four additional organizations participating in the program. By the



*Residents participated in Neighborhoodology earlier this year.*

end of this year, more than 30 community leaders from eight neighborhood organizations will have successfully participated in Neighborhood College's Neighborhoodology.

For more information, contact Michael Pinder at 602-534-4444 or by email at [michael.pinder@phoenix.gov](mailto:michael.pinder@phoenix.gov).

## Homeownership program helps buyers overcome market obstacles

A lack of homes listed for sale, interest rates on the rise and saving for a down payment and closing costs are just a few of the obstacles buyers may encounter in today's housing market.

Aiding homebuyers in their path to homeownership is the city of Phoenix Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), which offers homebuyer assistance on newly remodeled homes. NSP still has homes available and more will be available to eligible homebuyers in the months to come. What does that mean to anyone interested in purchasing a home in the city of Phoenix? It means they have the opportunity to receive \$15,000 to help cover the down payment and closing costs on the purchase of a Move-In Ready home, without the bidding wars.

"Prior to learning about the city's homeownership assistance program, we were outbid on 21 homes. Some of the offers we made were blind offers, and even so we could not buy a home," said recent NSP homebuyer Erika Rodriguez-Nieves. Now, Erika and her family live in a beautifully remodeled single-family home in west Phoenix, where they originally hoped to buy.

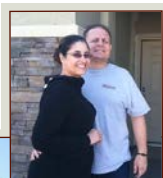
NSP has worked to improve Phoenix neighborhoods since 2009 by providing opportunities and incentives for homebuyers and filling homes vacated due to foreclosure. Since then, it has helped 513 families accomplish homeownership, brought 320 foreclosed vacant homes back into productive use, and provided homebuyer education to more than 2,150 buyers.

Many of these accomplishments were made possible through the acquisition and renovation that brought these formerly abandoned vacant homes back to livable standards. Through this process all Move-In Ready homes

received energy efficient upgrades, enhanced curb appeal and improved design finishes. Additional benefits to homebuyers include a homeowner warranty, pre-purchase education and friendly assistance through the process.

With the influx of homes in the months to come, it is highly recommended that interested buyers get started in the program as soon as possible.

To learn more about the eligibility criteria and where to start, call 602-262-6602 or visit [phoenix.gov/nsphome](http://phoenix.gov/nsphome).



*Erika Rodriguez-Nieves and her family are proud owners of a home purchased through the NSD's Neighborhood Stabilization Program.*



## Farewell Councilmembers Tom Simplot and Michael Johnson

On Jan. 2, 2014, Councilmembers Tom Simplot and Michael Johnson will leave the City Council after 10 and 12 years of dedicated service, respectively. Both were strong supporters of Neighborhood Services and its staff.

Both Councilmembers served on the City Council's Neighborhoods, Housing and Development Subcommittee, which provided guidance and set the course for NSD's programs. Councilman Simplot also served as co-chair of the city's Anti-Graffiti Task Force.

NSD will miss both Councilmembers and we wish them well in their next endeavors.



Tom Simplot  
District 4



Councilman Johnson helps youth during a community clean up.



Michael Johnson  
District 8



Councilman Simplot addresses the crowd at the kickoff of the Graffiti Free Phoenix Wipe It Out! event.

## NSD Kudos

NSD's Neighborhood Stabilization Program was selected for a top honor in the prestigious Valley Forward Environmental Excellence Awards, receiving the first-place Crescordia award in Sustainable Communities category. In addition, the NSP-funded Gordon Estates subdivision was honored with an Award of Merit in the Buildings and Structures – Residential category.

Arizona Forward, in partnership with SRP, presented the 33rd Annual Valley Forward Environmental Excellence Awards in early September. Considered the "Academy Awards" of the environmental community, the event is the oldest competition of its kind in Arizona. This year, there were more than 110 entries.

In addition to the Crescordia, Mandalay Homes, a partner of the city of Phoenix's Neighborhood Stabilization Program, was

recognized with a Housing Innovation Award by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). Mandalay Homes was honored as the grand winner in the Affordable Homes Builder category of the DOE Challenge Home Builder Awards.

The DOE Challenge Home Builder Awards recognize builders that are changing the way homes are designed and constructed and symbolize excellence in home building. Only a select group of the top builders in the country meet the extraordinary levels of excellence and quality specified by Energy Department guidelines. Mandalay Homes was selected as a grand winner among the four Affordable Home Builder awardees. The DOE features Mandalay Homes in a detailed case study that highlights the project's accomplishments, which can be viewed online at [phoenix.gov/nsd/nsp-doe\\_mandalay\\_2013.pdf](http://phoenix.gov/nsd/nsp-doe_mandalay_2013.pdf).



NSD's Jesse Garcia and Chris Christenson accept the Crescordia with NSD Director Chris Hallett (center).



NSD's Jesse Garcia and Mandalay Homes' Dave Everson accept the DOE's Housing Innovation Award.

## Check 'no-burn days' before using your fireplace

A crackling fireplace is tempting this time of year, especially during the holidays, but check to make sure it's OK before lighting a wood-burning fire.

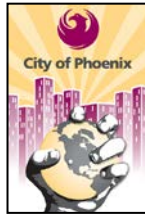
Fall and winter's cooler temperatures can trap air pollution near the ground, which is why Maricopa County may issue no-burn days to help avoid high levels of air pollution. On no-burn days, Valley residents are asked to refrain from wood burning in fireplaces, wood stoves and outdoor fire pits. Violators may be subject to fines.

Natural gas or other clean-burning fire appliances are allowed on no-burn days. If you must burn wood, use only dry, seasoned wood because it is more efficient at heating your home. You also can reduce pollution by not driving after 4 p.m. and combining errands whenever possible.

Help protect the health of our residents – don't burn wood when it is a No Burn Day. To find out if there are wood-burning restrictions, visit [CleanAirMakeMore.com](http://CleanAirMakeMore.com) or call the Maricopa County Burn Line at 602-506-6400.

## Help us fight blight: report it!

The new year is right around the corner and the Neighborhood Services Department wants to take a moment to thank residents for their dedication throughout the past year to keep Phoenix neighborhoods free from blight. NSD appreciates every hour volunteered and staff encourages residents to keep up the hard work! Even if one doesn't have the time to volunteer, there are ways to help.



Reporting blight to the city is one of the easiest things residents can do. Download the free app "MyPhxAz" and report common blight violations (like graffiti, illegal signs, high weeds and more). It's simple to use and a convenient way to report violations.

Residents also may call 602-534-4444 or send an email to [blight@phoenix.gov](mailto:blight@phoenix.gov) along with the address and a photo of the violation. Let's work together to keep our neighborhoods clean and beautiful!

## Be in the know: List your organization

Looking to stay connected with the city about neighborhood cleanups, graffiti removal trainings and other community news? The city's Neighborhood Services Department is updating its listing of neighborhood organizations.

The Neighborhood Notification listing is a vital tool utilized by the city of Phoenix to communicate with neighborhood organizations about city-sponsored events and workshops, grant opportunities, public meetings and initiatives, as well as requests for community input on various projects.

Besides being informed about city issues, neighborhood organizations listed with the city are eligible to borrow neighborhood clean-up tools for free through the department's tool lending program.

Existing organizations on the list can update information online or by calling 602-534-4444. To list a neighborhood organization, download the directory form from [phoenix.gov/NSD](http://phoenix.gov/NSD) and return the completed form via email to [nnet.nsd@phoenix.gov](mailto:nnet.nsd@phoenix.gov) or send it by U.S. mail to Phoenix City Hall, Neighborhood Services Department, 200 W. Washington St., fourth floor, Attention: Neighborhood Notification, Phoenix, AZ 85003. Forms can be mailed upon request.

For questions on how to list your organization, call 602-534-4444.

## Free tax help

The Human Services Department Income Tax Credit (EITC) campaign helps low- and moderate-income working families who earned less than \$51,567 in 2013 with free tax-filing services and an EITC tax credit up to \$6,044.

Individuals and families who qualify also may be able to file for the child tax credit and the education tax credit at the city's free tax preparation sites. Eighteen primary sites, scheduled to open Feb. 1, offer free tax-filing services.

Individuals and families may file their taxes for free online at [myfreetaxes.com/phoenix](http://myfreetaxes.com/phoenix) if they earned less than \$58,000.

For more information about the EITC program, including locations and days of operation, visit [phoenix.gov/eitc](http://phoenix.gov/eitc) or call 1-877-211-8661. For information about EITC valleywide, call the Community Information and Referral hotline at 2-1-1 or visit [211arizona.org](http://211arizona.org).

## CALENDAR

*To RSVP, view class descriptions or for more information on any of the Neighborhood College Workshops offered below, call 602-534-4444 or visit [phoenix.gov/nsd/neighborhoodcollege](http://phoenix.gov/nsd/neighborhoodcollege).*

### JANUARY

- 11 Hands on Paint Sprayer Training**  
8 to 10 a.m. Saturday,  
NSD West Facility,  
3325 W. Flower St.
- 14 ABCs: Assessments, Board Meetings and Collections/Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&R)**  
6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Burton Barr Central Library, 1221 N. Central Ave. More info: 602-495-0380
- 17 Landlord/Tenant Workshop**  
6 to 9 p.m. Thursday,  
Adam Diaz Senior Center,  
4115 W. Thomas Road

### MARCH

- 4 Blight Buster Volunteer Orientation**  
6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday,  
NSD West Facility,  
3325 W. Flower St.
- 11 Social Media and You/Safer Social Networking**  
6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday,  
Burton Barr Central Library,  
1221 N. Central Ave.
- 15 Hands on Paint Sprayer Training**  
8 to 10 a.m. Saturday,  
NSD West Facility,  
3325 W. Flower St.

## Meet our new Blight Buster Volunteers

**C**ongratulations to the following graduates of the Blight Buster Volunteer (BBV) training program: Gregorio Barboza, Benjamin Chavez, Manuel Coss Bustillos, Alex Guerrero, Victoria (Vickie) Jaquez, Sherrie Jones, Rubi Mata-Chavira, Barbara Malcom, Theodore (Ted) Montijo, Virginia Murfin, Victor Rodriguez, Todd

Russ, Efrain Serrano, Janet Serrano, Andrea Vasquez and Sonia Velez. NSD staff looks forward to working with you to help fight blight in our neighborhoods!



*NSD Director Chris Hallett and Deputy Director Erynn Crowley congratulate Virginia Murfin on her completion of the BBV program.*



*Class 10 of the Blight Buster Volunteer Program with NSD's Chris Hallett (far left), Erynn Crowley (front row, far right) and William Hogans (front row center).*

Residents interested in learning more about the BBV program are encouraged to attend an orientation session from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, March 4, at the NSD West Facility, 3325 W. Flower St. To RSVP, call 602-534-4444 or visit [phoenix.gov/nsd/neighborhoodcollege](http://phoenix.gov/nsd/neighborhoodcollege).

## Tips from Energize Phoenix

**T**emperatures are dropping and heaters are being turned on. Here are a few tips to make your home more energy efficient:

- Change your air filter regularly. Check your filter every month, especially during heavy use months (winter and summer). If the filter looks dirty after a month, change it. At a minimum, change the filter every three months. A dirty filter will slow down air flow and make the system work harder to keep you warm – wasting energy. A clean filter also will prevent dust and dirt from building up in the system.

- Tune up your HVAC equipment yearly. Just as a tune-up for your car can improve your gas mileage, a yearly tune-up of your heating and cooling system can improve efficiency and comfort.
- Install a programmable thermostat. A programmable thermostat is ideal for residents who are away from home during set periods of time throughout the week. Through proper use of a pre-programmed setting, a programmable thermostat can save you about \$180 every year in energy costs.



*For more tips, visit our Facebook page at [facebook.com/PhoenixNeighborhood](https://facebook.com/PhoenixNeighborhood) for a series of short videos that highlight simple ways you can save energy (and money)!*

## Neighborhood specialists are here to help

**N**eighborhood specialists serve as city liaisons to residents by answering questions about city programs and services, organizing community meetings and cleanups, and working with other city departments and agencies to provide services. There are eight neighborhood specialists available and willing to help your organization.

To find the specialist assigned to your area, visit [phoenix.gov/nsd](http://phoenix.gov/nsd) and click on "Find your Neighborhood Specialist." Next, type in your address to connect with your assigned representative. You also will receive helpful city information associated with your address, including your Police precinct and City Councilmember.

You'll often see assigned specialists at community meetings, clean ups or other neighborhood events. Many facilitate workshops through Neighborhood College including the Neighborhoodology tract. They know a wealth of information about the city of Phoenix and can assist with answering your questions about various city services.

For more information or to speak with a neighborhood specialist, call 602-534-4444.







## City of Phoenix

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
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Phoenix, Arizona 85003-1611

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### Contact NSD

Neighborhood Services Department . . 602-534-4444  
or . . . . . nsd@phoenix.gov

Code Enforcement  
or Graffiti Busters . . . . . 602-534-4444  
or . . . . . blight@phoenix.gov

Landlord/Tenant Counseling. . . . . 602-534-4444  
or . . . . . landlord.tenant.nsd@phoenix.gov

Neighborhood College. . . . . 602-534-4444  
or . . . . . neighborhood.college@phoenix.gov

Neighborhood Stabilization Program . 602-262-6602  
or. . . . . info@nspphoenix.gov

Shopping Cart Retrieval . . . . . 602-534-4444  
or . . . . . shopping.carts.nsd@phoenix.gov



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### Phoenix City Council

Mayor Greg Stanton . . . . . 602-262-7111  
**mayor.stanton@phoenix.gov**

Bill Gates, District 3  
Vice Mayor . . . . . 602-262-7441  
**council.district.3@phoenix.gov**

Thelda Williams, District 1 . . . . . 602-262-7444  
**council.district.1@phoenix.gov**

Jim Waring, District 2 . . . . . 602-262-7445  
**council.district.2@phoenix.gov**

Tom Simplot, District 4 . . . . . 602-262-7447  
**council.district.4@phoenix.gov**

Daniel Valenzuela, District 5 . . . . . 602-262-7446  
**council.district.5@phoenix.gov**

Sal DiCiccio, District 6 . . . . . 602-262-7491  
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Michael Nowakowski, District 7 . . . . . 602-262-7492  
**council.district.7@phoenix.gov**

Michael Johnson, District 8 . . . . . 602-262-7493  
**council.district.8@phoenix.gov**

**phoenix.gov/NSD**

To receive this information in alternative print/audio formats, contact the  
Neighborhood Services Department, 200 W. Washington St., 4th Floor, Phoenix AZ 85003.  
Voice number 602-534-4444 | TTY 602-495-0685