



Village East Update

Summer 2018

published by the Village East Neighborhood Association for its residents and friends

Connect with your neighbors on VillageEastAurora.org, [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/VillageEastAurora), and [Nextdoor](https://www.nextdoor.com)

Summer in the Village

Come join the 2018 **Village East Picnic** on Saturday, September 8, from 1 to 4 pm at Village East Park. Frozen dessert, lawn games, and face painting fun will be provided. Bring your own blankets, lawn chairs, and snacks. Come enjoy a relaxed chance to



socialize with your Village East neighbors! If you have a social group or club, please bring a sign-up page for neighbors to connect, and renew your annual dues of \$15 so we can plan more fun neighborhood activities. Hope to see you there! ☼

UPCOMING EVENTS!

Look for our distinctive yellow signs around Village East informing you of activities. The announcement signs are posted about a week in advance.

Saturday, September 8
VENA Picnic!

Saturday, September 15
Neighborhood Cleanup

Tuesday, October 16
**Annual VENA Meeting
and Canterbury Park
discussion at the
Ecotech Institute**

Year-round
Adopt-A-Street Cleanup

VENA Monthly Meetings are open to all residents the third Tuesday in JAN, APR, JUL, and OCT, at 7 pm, usually at Fire Station 11, 2291 S. Joliet St. Come by and check it out!

Neighborhood Cleanup

We will have a garbage truck on the south side of E. Arkansas Ave. at S. Oakland St. for this year's cleanup. We had a great turnout the last few years and anticipate another successful cleanup. **All Village East residents can use the truck without fees.** You may bring your unwanted items for disposal on **Saturday, September 15** from 8 am to 12 pm or until the truck is full, WHICH EVER COMES FIRST. Please don't bring liquid paint, solvents, motor oil, tires, concrete, rocks, sod, computers, computer monitors, TVs, or large tree branches and shrubs. Paint, in cans with lids removed, that is dry or has had kitty litter added to the liquid and has solidified is acceptable. Branches and shrubs should be cut into 3-ft lengths. Thanks for your cooperation! ☼



Annual Village East Neighborhood Association Meeting

The annual VENA meeting will be held on **Tuesday, October 16**, at the **Ecotech Institute, 1400 S Abilene St.** The Canterbury Park presentation starts at 6 pm, and the VENA meeting and elections for the VENA board will begin at 7 pm. With Parks and Recreation representatives there to discuss the upcoming renovation of Canterbury Park (see page 6 for more information) and the anticipation of discovering new neighborhood leaders, it should prove to be an exciting meeting. Anyone interested in becoming a VENA Board member need only to show up to this meeting to get your name on the ballot. We look forward to seeing you there! ☼

A Letter from the Presidents

GO TEAM VENA!

It's been 10 months since the Annual VENA Meeting and Board of Director Elections, and the one accomplishment that stands out is the innate ability of Village East (VE) to work as a TEAM. In a strategic move to meet the needs of the neighborhood, VENA moved away from the norm during the October meeting by electing two (2) co-presidents: Robin Bruce, a 16-year resident of Village East, and Jack Dougherty, a 17-year resident of Village East. With knowledge of VE's history mixed with an understanding of the necessity and process of progress, they have brushed off the path to make way for the talents and bright ideas of VENA's Board members, committee members, VE residents (neighbors), and neighboring businesses to carry the victory torch for the winning TEAM that is Village East! So in the spirit of camaraderie, here are a few of the TEAMS that have kept Village East one of the best neighborhoods around.

TEAM of Board Members

In addition to the two presidents, there are 9 additional Board members who selflessly volunteer hours upon hours of time and talents serving the Village East neighborhood. Without their several months to several decades of dedicated service, VENA would not exist, and our neighborhood would not be the valued player it is in the City of Aurora arena. Thanks are in order to Ann Dougherty (Secretary), Beverly Farmer, Dora Hamilton, Steve Huffman, Linda Metsger (Treasurer), Arnie Schultz (City Referrals), Greg Toler (Vice President), Cort Weaver, and Mike Wolford for all they do to keep Village East a winning team.

TEAM(s) of Neighbors

Feeling a sense of urgency after the low turnout at the annual meeting, a small group of neighbors had an old-fashioned house meeting for the purpose of getting the word out about community involvement, restoring community pride, and increasing community participation. In the process, it was realized that Village East already had several TEAMS accessing not-yet-discovered key players in our neighborhood, including a walking group and an empty nest group (see page 4).

What other hidden talents residing in Village East could be scouted? A heartfelt plea to the neighborhood via NextDoor got the ball rolling, and the power of word-of-mouth unearthed a multitude of gold nuggets. The VENA meeting turnout increased not only in size but in willing participants. One neighbor not only reached out to VENA to see where she could get involved, but even used her entire lunch break to attend the most recent VENA meeting! Swoosh!

TEAM of Committee Chairs

The strides made by these neighbors prove that you don't have to be a Board member to make a difference, just a good neighbor. Like any great booster club, these neighbors were already supporting the neighborhood on their own to by doing things like keeping the major neighborhood thoroughways clean or welcoming new residents to the neighborhood with home-baked goodies. VENA recognized their talents, and we are honored that they agreed to represent the neighborhood as committee chairpersons. Kudos to these 7 VENA committee chairpersons: Christina Anderson (Adopt-A-Street), Megan Berens (Newsletter), Beverly Farmer (Welcome Committee), Steve Huffman (Yard of the Month), Jessica Ideus (Website), Melissa Legg (Beautification Grant, Community Outreach), and Heidi Schoomaker (Community Outreach).

TEAM of Local Public Servants

Although the crime rate in our area remains one of the lowest in the District, a report on NextDoor about an insidious situation involving criminal activity at Canterbury Park and its wear and tear the past 5 years on the morale of surrounding neighbors caught the attention of one of the VENA Board members, who then contacted City Councilman Charlie Richardson, who swiftly got the ball rolling. Within 2 months, this 5-year problem is nearly resolved thanks to the earnest efforts of Aurora Police Department's new District 1 Police Commander Harry Glidden (since he took the blame, he can also have the credit) and his dedicated TEAM of PAR officers who cleaned up the park and, in collaboration with Councilman Richardson, have engaged Parks and Recreation, the Traffic Division, and a few other departments to join as team players (see

Presidents' Letter, cont.

page 5). We'd be remiss in not giving a shout out to the Havana Business Improvement District's Executive Director, Gayle Jetchick, and all the hard work she has done in successfully addressing the issue of homelessness within our city. While introducing her protégé Chance Horiuchi (who's definitely on the "one to watch" list) at the first Canterbury meeting, Gayle announced plans to retire soon. VENA is grateful for her years of dedicated service and the improvements to Havana that have positively impacted the VE neighborhood. This MVP will truly be missed. Special thanks also to Margee Cannon, our City Neighborhood Liaison, for her tireless support of our neighborhood and great coaching tips on how to get the best benefit from neighborhood opportunities, as well as to the City of Aurora, who awarded us a beautification grant again this year to keep the rest of the neighborhood looking good.

TEAM of Local Businesses Owners

Before the City of Aurora stepped in with its Beautification Grant, two local business owners by the names of Jeff Levato and Dave Guentert did not hesitate to come to the rescue to help keep Village East neat and tidy. We thank them for their efforts and willingness to lend a helping hand.

Then there are the owners of the Taco Star located at 1760 S. Havana Street, right between O'Reilly's and Big O Tires. When our regular meeting place of Village East Elementary School was unavailable unexpectedly, the Taco Star owners (who are also newer Village East residents) and their staff went above and beyond to assure VENA could have a successful July meeting, including rearranging the restaurant several times and even raising a super heavy picnic table above their heads! The food there is flavorful, prices are reasonable, and they are definitely an asset to the neighborhood. Special thanks to Sandra Castro for making sure VENA was well accommodated.

TEAM Neighborhood

As a Village East resident, you're already a very important member of a great neighborhood, and at just \$15 annually, you could be a member of a fantastic TEAM of neighbors working as a collective for the good of our neighborhood. Already a member? Thanks so much for your dedicated support! We wouldn't be as successful without you. Please let us know where we can use your talents so that we can continue to grow the Village East neighborhood TEAM to be the best TEAM ever! Thanks again! ☼

Robin Bruce
Jack Dougherty

Co-Presidents

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Won't you be my neighbor?

Whether you're new to the neighborhood or have been here for years, there are lots of opportunities to meet your neighbors. Here are a few groups that meet up around Village East. To add yours, send a description to Megan (meg.berens@gmail.com) or bring a sign-up sheet to the picnic!

Play Group

Looking to meet other families in the neighborhood? Come join us for play dates, holiday parties, and morning donuts in the park! Families of all sorts and varieties are welcome! Contact Megan (meg.berens@gmail.com) or look for the Play Group on Nextdoor.

Neighborhood Walk

Do you want to meet your neighbors, exercise, converse, and play? Then join us on Wednesday mornings at 9 a.m. for the Village East Neighborhood Walk! We meet at the Neighborhood Walk sign at S. Oakland St and E. Arkansas Ave. We walk Utah Park and stop at the playground after for the kids to play! Come with or without kids! Do all or part of the walk! Humans only, so please leave pets at home. Have questions? Call or text Shawnda Bloat @ (303)884-7006.

Clean-Up Crew

Want to help make the neighborhood clean and pretty? Volunteers are needed to sign up to help weekly or monthly for major roads dividing Village East, including Moline, Peoria, Florida, Jewell, or your local walking route near home. Together we can make the neighborhood safer, cleaner, and more beautiful. Thank you to all you wonderful neighbors who have already dedicated time and energy to neighborhood cleanup, you are appreciated! To get involved, contact Cleanup Coordinator Christina Anderson at bluebirdflyfree83@gmail.com or sign up at the picnic.

Empty Nesters Club

Hello neighbors! I would like to introduce you to Empty Nesters! We are a group of people who get together a few times a month to experience lunch in different Aurora restaurants. Although everyone is invited, this group typically is composed of retired persons and persons whose children have moved out, and we live in the surrounding area. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Janet at jjjcorfam@gmail.com.

Village East Neighborhood Walk



Wednesday @ 9 a.m.
PIC•COLLAGE

Aurora Update

Arnie Schultz is the Referral Contact for VENA. As such, he receives notification from the city planners regarding any new development within a one-mile radius of any of the boundaries of Village East. Arnie responds to any and all of these development applications because all of them can have a positive or negative impact on Village East and the surrounding areas of the city. The current development applications are for a cell phone tower on S. Havana St. and E. Warren Ave. and an expansion of the Island Volleyball Complex at S. Geneva St. and E. Warren Ave. The City Planner and Arnie are in agreement that the application for the cell phone tower is not acceptable and that the expansion of the volleyball complex is. There are numerous criteria for approval or denial of a development application, and we are fortunate that Arnie has been doing this for a very long time and his opinions are respected by the planning staff and the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Within Village East, the construction of four new single-family detached homes on S. Kenton St. and E. Idaho Pl. (just south of Canterbury Park) has recently been approved. Arnie has heard that the developer of those homes plans to submit an application to build townhomes on the east side of S. Joliet St. from E. Idaho Pl. south to a line about even with the south end of Target's parking lot. The developer who converted the former city building into the Bella Vita senior living apartments has thought of building another senior living tower on the vacant property that he owns on the northeast corner of S. Joliet St. and E. Florida Ave. If and when any of these two developments are submitted to the city, we will let the residents of Village East know and inform them of any meetings that occur related to this.

This is a service Village East gets to participate in only because we are registered with the city. Help keep us strong by supporting VENA by paying your dues. Thank you! ☼



Canterbury Park Development

Plans are under way to renovate Canterbury Park (on Joliet St. and Arkansas Ave. behind the Gardens on Havana). The main purpose of Canterbury Park, just like Utah Park and Expo Park, is to serve as a detention pond for water following heavy rains. Canterbury Park captures runoff from the south. There has been a lot of infill development since the park was first built, including the homes on S. Kenton St. from Florida to near the park. Four more homes are being built on the west side of S. Kenton St. closer to the park. There is talk of townhouses being built on the east side of S. Joliet St. from Target's south parking lot on the west side of S. Joliet St. to just south of the park. There is also the possibility of something being built on the east side of S. Joliet St. from Florida to across the street from the Target's south parking lot. The land for the townhouses is owned by the people building the four new houses, and the land across S. Joliet St. from Bella Vita is owned by Omni Development, who converted the former City Building into Bella Vita.

The runoff from Utah Park flows north in Westerly Creek to Canterbury Park then north to Expo Park. Utah Park was built in the first half of the 1970s when Prairie Middle School and Overland High School were built and none of the homes around Utah Park existed. The detention pond at Utah Park underwent major enlargement about 10 years ago. The Expo Park detention ponds were more than doubled in size about 25 or 30 years ago after the homes in that area were built. So it's now time for the detention pond at Canterbury Park to be enlarged. The detention pond comes under Aurora Water.

The playground in Canterbury Park featured a Cinderella Pumpkin Carriage in the 1970s and 1980s until it was replaced with what is currently there. The playground comes under the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department. The playground is in the detention pond and does not meet ADA requirements because the slope to get to the playground is too steep.

At the Village East Neighborhood Association's Annual Meeting on October 16, we will learn more about the plans for the detention pond, and the neighborhood's input on what should be in the new playground, which will be at street level, will be asked for. There may be two neighborhood meetings with the Parks Department on the playground. If you have ideas or questions, please join us at the meeting.

Canterbury Park discussion: October 16, at the Ecotech Institute (1400 S Abilene St.) at 6–7 pm. ☞



Park Safety

During early summer, VENA, Councilman Richardson, and District Police collaborated to solve a problem at local Canterbury Park near the Gardens on Havana. Prompted by a citizen-identified problem of illegal activity occurring in the park, and apparent lack of attention to the citizen complaints, your VENA board and members worked to direct the City's attention to the problem.

Councilman Richardson was a huge help in orchestrating the resources of Police, Parks, and other city agencies to solve the problem. Special thanks are also owed to District 1 Commander Harry Glidden and his PAR officer team, Lt. Mike Hanifin, Sgt. Tom Graham, and Officer Gene Colwell, who engaged all the different departments (parks, traffic, etc.) to do their part, walked the park with VENA board members, talked to neighbors, and held special meetings just for concerned residents (including a follow-up meeting

on August 21), as well as taking the extra time to show up to a regular VENA meeting. We can't thank them enough for taking this issue seriously.

Police and Councilman Richardson are also working on addressing a motorcycle racing issue on our neighborhood streets and in school parking lots.

Your VENA organization's members work best when we work together to gain City help to solve safety or well-being issues. We are fortunate to have an engaged and caring representative in Councilman Richardson, and to have Police who are interested in our community.

For any safety concerns or questions, feel free to contact our wonderful PAR officer, Officer Gene Colwell, at (303) 739-1831 or ecolwell@auroragov.org.

Yard of the Month

The **Yard of the Month** committee selects winners by looking for displays showing pride of ownership through such attributes as xeriscaping, well-groomed landscapes that adhere to all watering restrictions, and blooming gardens that change color at different times of the year, as well as complimentary hardscaping and charming accents. We appreciate everyone's effort to keep Village East looking good. Winners receive a \$25 gift card. Anyone living in Village East may nominate a neighbor's or their own yard. To serve on the 2019 Yard of the Month committee or to nominate a yard, please contact Steve Huffman at 303-369-6863 or shuff110@comcast.net. Thank you, and congratulations to our most recent winners! ☘



The **June Yard of the Month** belongs to Tim and Stacy at [12079 E. Utah Place](#). They have lived in Village East since 2015. They moved here because they liked being close to Utah Park, the schools, and their neighbors. The house is nicely xeriscaped. They did all the work themselves and wanted the yard to be low maintenance. But it's still a battle to keep up with the weeds. The house took a lot of work as well.

Both Tim and Stacy work in telecommunications. Stacey is a data analysis tech and Tim is a network manager. They have a 5-year-old son who helps outside with his dad. Their yard contains roses (already there), ice plants, snap dragons, buffalo grass, oat grass, silver mounds, and creeping juniper.

The **July Yard of the Month** is 1444 S. Lima Street. The owners, Ed and Jan Hommes, moved to Village East 5 years ago from Little Turtle Condominiums. Their family has grown with 4 children and 11 grandchildren, and they needed more space for them to visit. All the yard work is shared by both Ed and Jan. Johnny Peevy does the lawn mowing and fertilization. The Hommeses have removed many junipers and replaced them with flower beds and paved the courtyard. The side yard is a Hosta garden and sitting space. It was just dead grass previously.

Jan has recently retired from Clayton Early Learning in the Headstart program. Ed is a Chaplain at Denver Health. He was a parish minister for 20 years and went back to the Denver Seminary to become a Chaplain.



The **August Yard of the Month** belongs to Herman and Pamela Goggins at 1730 S. Ironston Street. They have lived in Village East since 1984. Both of their children were raised in Village East and attended Ponderosa, Prairie, and Overland Schools. Their grandson lives nearby and visits them regularly. Pamela has been a flight attendant with United Air for 40 years. Herman is retired from Youth Corrections, where he worked for 30 years as a Correction Officer in the schools. They have an adopted dog named Shadow who showed up on Christmas Eve three years ago. They have been members of the Mount Olive Church for 35 years.

The yard is very nice with many colorful flowering plants, and the lawn is always nicely trimmed. They have a nice patio next to the lawn. Their neighbors love to meet at their patio just to hangout. Pamela takes care of the flower gardens, and Herman takes care of the Lawn.



Help Us Contact You...

It's easy for all VE residents (owners AND RENTERS) to stay informed. We just need your preferred:

- ☐ Mailing name _____
- ☐ Mailing address _____
- ☐ E-mail address _____
- ☐ A check for \$15 dues made out to "VENA" (sorry, no credit cards)

Please print out and CLEARLY complete this page, include check, and mail to:

VENA Membership
1155 S. Havana St. #11-373
Aurora, CO 80012

*Newsletter e-mail reminders provided upon request. E-mail addresses NOT used for any other purpose. **Contact the Treasurer (below) with any contact info updates.** We're trying for 100% participation among neighbors. Please send in TODAY. Thanks for your support of Village East!*

Bookmark Our Website: www.VillageEastAurora.org

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/VENAColorado>

Connect on Nextdoor: <https://nextdoor.com/neighborhood/villageeastco--aurora--co/>

VENA Board of Directors

Robin Bruce, Co-President, 303-751-3033

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Greg Toler, Vice President, 303-755-4256

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To submit articles for the *Village East Update* newsletter, please contact Village East Update Newsletter Editor Megan Berens at meg.berens@gmail.com, (480)818-7559.