



Midtown Moments

Dedicated To Quality Living In The Center City
Midtown Neighborhood Association
PO Box 214 Springfield, MO 65801
www.midtown-springfield-mo.com

Volume 18 Number 4 August/September 2006

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MIDTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD NIGHT OUT

&

BOYD BACK TO SCHOOL SOCIAL!!

Friday, August 25th 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Meet your neighbors, learn about safety and crime prevention, and enjoy FREE food and drinks, good music and fun for the whole family at Neighborhood Night Out in the park.

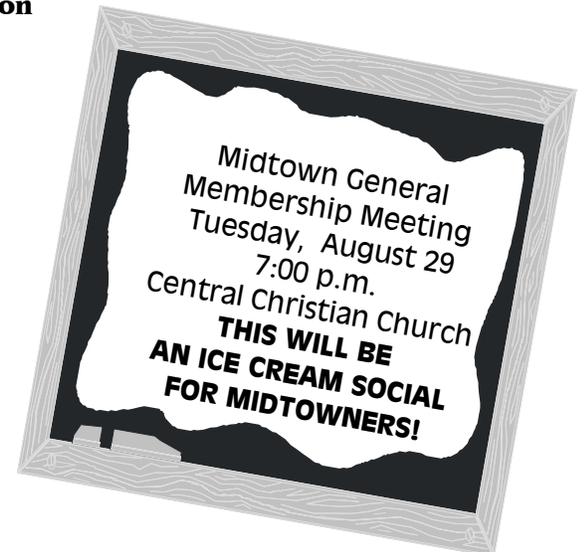
Boyd Elementary families will start at the school from 5-6 p.m. to meet the teachers, join PTA, hear exciting information about programs this year and then head on up to Washington Park for the special neighborhood-wide event.

Authentic Mexican music provided by Resplandor Musical will kick off the event, followed by musical selections from the Washington Avenue Baptist Church Male Chorus and then record spins by DJ Majic Juan. Later in the evening there will be a karaoke contest with prizes (you might be surprised at the entries)!!

Other activities will include Hand in Hand Ministry's 3 V's program and a giant inflatable

Many THANKS to the following businesses for providing donations and prizes:

The Medicine Shoppe The Style
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All Pets Supplies Enterprise
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The Moxie Theatre The Green On-
ion



Midtown Neighborhood Association Mission Statement

To promote and preserve the character and quality of living in the Midtown Neighborhood, including Springfield's largest nationally registered historic district.

President's Message



Hello,

Many thanks to all the volunteers that help with the July Fourth parade (very wet) and the Park Day parade (very hot).

Thanks also to Norma Duncan for the wonderful history lesson at the July MNA meeting. Please take time to go by take a look at the red brick structure at 918 E. Calhoun. Work will begin soon on a new neighborhood center that will incorporate the old structure into an expanded community facility. For those that missed the July meeting, Norma has provided the story in this copy of the newsletter.

It has been nice to see such big crowds at the first two summer concerts in Washington Park. The final concert will be August 27th. Come out and join your neighbors for the music and the fun.

See you in the neighborhood,

Steve Wiemer

Final Concert in the Park Features New Creole Jazz Band

The final concert in the summer series in Washington Park will take place Sunday, August 27 from 6:00-8:00 pm. This concert will feature the New Creole Jazz Band and should prove to be a wonderful finale for this year's concerts.

Bring a lawn chair and food and join others from Midtown and beyond as bands play throughout the evening at the park. Refreshments will be served and donations accepted.

For questions, contact Jim Downing at 865-5953.

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MURNEY ASSOCIATES 823-2300

**A History of the Bartley-Decatur Neighborhood Center
(Formerly the Colored Welfare Home and Kiddie Kove Day Care Center)
918 East Calhoun
By Norma S. Duncan**

I have been invited to share the history of this building as I have experienced it and my history of Mrs. Bartley and Mrs. Decatur. I am African-American, a native of Springfield, Missouri, born in 1939. This building was in use before then, established to serve the black community as a hospital, clinic, nursing home, veterans home, and finally a day care center. The black community referred to it as the Colored Welfare Home.

My second cousin, the late Mrs. Ernestine Rector, told me long before her death at 84 in October 2001, that her mother, the late Irene Mitchell, was trained there as a mid-wife and in convalescent care.

From 1966 to 1975 when I was married to my second husband, the late Billy Duncan, his house at 1225 N. Texas was adjacent to this building, then called the Calhoun Community Center. The front of our house faced Texas Street and our back yard was next to the front of the building at the corner of Texas and Calhoun Streets. It became a day care center in 1973 when Kiddie Kove was moved there from a house on North Summit and given that name.

When I moved to Sherman Street in 1977 after our divorce, urban renewal began to change this area from a neighborhood of many black families living in houses they either rented or owned to duplexes, apartments, and small businesses. Many black families moved to various parts of the city while a great many older blacks passed away. Our house on Texas was replaced by a big apartment complex.

My youngest son, Bruce Duncan, now 34 years old, and my nephew, David Bland, 35, who lives in Kentucky, went to Kiddie Kove as preschoolers. My neighbor, Mrs. Alice Bagley, 94, and a nursing home resident, was an unpaid volunteer there for 14 years, serving daily. She often remarked how David would stand and stomp his foot in anger when his dad came to pick him up at Kiddie Kove. He didn't want to leave!

Kiddie Kove had a very dedicated group of people running it, some paid, and others like Mrs. Bagley, unpaid. White and black people served together on the Board. One time Mrs. Bagley and a white member, Carl Thompson, who was connected with Drury College, were preparing the financial report. They were one penny short and they worked and worked until they found the missing penny.

Kiddie Kove Day Care Center was founded by the late Mrs. Roberta Bartley, a teacher, and very prominent member of the black community. When Mrs. Bartley conceived the idea of starting a black day care center for working parents, she had the able assistance of Drury College, Evangel College, the Junior League of Springfield, and other groups both public and private. Mrs. Bartley gave fifty-eight years of her life, not just as a teacher and mentor of black children, but all children. Yet, she had no children. She was a life-long member of Washington Avenue Baptist Church, and with her sister, Mrs. Olive J. Decatur, also a respected teacher and member of Washington Avenue Baptist, one of Springfield's oldest black churches, they became icons who people admired and respected. I am so delighted that this building will be named for them, it's black history preserved, and its purpose be to serve all.

Mrs. Bartley was my third grade teacher at Lincoln School, then the only school for black children from grades one to twelve. The building on the OTC College Campus at 815 North Sherman that you know now as Lincoln Hall was our black school building. Mrs. Bartley and Mrs. Decatur taught generations of black youngsters at Lincoln on Sherman, and the previous Lincoln School on Washington Avenue, sometimes referred to as "old Lincoln." My mother, the late Juanita Bland, graduated in the first graduation class of Lincoln on Sherman in 1931 and later taught with both ladies at that same school.

I started elementary school at Lincoln in 1945 and my mother who taught part-time, joined the Lincoln faculty as a full-time fifth grade instructor in 1949 after the retirement of Miss Adah Fullbright, one of the greatest of black teachers. When the public schools integrated in 1954, I went to Central High School which was the only high school in the city until Parkview High opened in 1956, my junior year. My mother was assigned as a teacher to Pipkin Junior High School along with Mrs. Decatur, who was later assigned to Parkview High. Mother did not drive and Mrs. Decatur would take her back and forth to school. This arrangement worked out very well until Mrs. Decatur went to Parkview and mother learned to drive.

Mrs. Bartley was absorbed into the wide range Springfield Public School System along with other black teachers after Lincoln was kept open for the 1954-55 school years and dissolved as a black school the following year. As smart and capable as the black teachers were, they were assigned to assist white teachers and they had to rotate teaching assignments

from one end of the city to the other, often eating lunch in their cars, and carpooling to get from one school to another. They proved themselves extremely capable. It wasn't long until they successfully brought their situation to the school board as a group and requested changes in their status to full time regular teachers with their own classrooms and permanent positions which had been well earned.

To illustrate how black and white lives intersected, Mrs. Bartley taught me in grade school at Lincoln and also taught one of my white co-workers at Kraft Foods, Dave Williams, in junior high. Both of us were laboratory technicians. When I was faced with the dilemma of caring for sick, aged parents and work, Dave and I switched jobs and he trained me to replace him on the night shift with the permission of management while he took my job on the day shift. Dave's memory of Mrs. Bartley was the day she asked him to stop talking in study hall and he continued to talk. You did not disobey Mrs. Bartley for long and a whack with a book ended his chatter. He got whacked with a book and we in third grade got whacked with her 12 inch ruler that she kept on her desk. I am 67 years old and I still remember one line of a long poem she made us memorize. "If you can't go over or under, go around." As I got older I realized this was a metaphor for the obstacles in life and how to deal with them. Mrs. Bartley was great at planning field trips and events for the Lincoln children to display their talents to the community. We got to recite that poem on the radio as a group.

Mrs. Bartley was retired from teaching when she started Kiddie Kove day Care Center in 1972. She taught school for 45 years and only missed one day. She was at Kiddie Kove every day or nearly so. Things were changing in Springfield for black people in rapid waves. After years of working in white homes, cooking meals, cleaning and caring for white children, cleaning office buildings day and night, black people were streaming out of those positions into factories with shifts around the clock. Mrs. Bartley's focus in life was first and foremost, the children. She saw many of her former students needing a day care center where their children would be loved, cared for, protected, and taught by someone they knew and trusted at a price they could afford. Kiddie Kove simply teemed with happy, healthy, black children. With its wonderful director, the late Mrs. Mary Jane McPherson, a caring staff, and the ever present Mrs. Bartley, it was an asset to the local colleges who used Kiddie Kove as a training center for their students to participate in and learn about early childhood development.

When I moved to my present address of 1221 N. Sherman in 1997, Mrs. Olive Decatur lived only two houses from me. As Mrs. Decatur's health declined, Mrs. Bartley gave up her home in the 1100 block of Sherman and moved in with her sister, giving up her beloved Kiddie Kove to care for her. Mrs. Decatur was a regal, stately, and gracious lady, who graduated from the old Lincoln School on North Washington in 1917. Only three people were graduated that year. She attended Wilberforce College in Ohio, one of the first black colleges in the United States. With her great beauty, perfect diction, ability to lead and get others to follow, she served on every kind of church, social, and civic group. One of these groups was the Interracial Council, a group of black and white leaders who met quietly and privately to keep good relations between the races and solve problems before they got out of hand or were even made public.

There was hardly a group in Washington Avenue Baptist Church that Mrs. Bartley and Mrs. Decatur did not lead, guide, or counsel. They belonged to a group of Lincoln School Women Teachers called the Literary Calm Chat Club who would select a book to read and discuss at their meetings and then donate that book to the Lincoln School Library, which served the black community as well as the Lincoln students. They were the first sponsors along with Southwest Missouri State University of the late Dr. Katherine Lederer's collection of Springfield Black History, "Many Thousand Gone," in 1982.

Mrs. Bartley had the longest teaching career of all the black teachers of her time. I remember when she was old and sick, but still up and around. She was having some problems keeping Kiddie Kove going. The neighborhood was changing and money to run the day care center was getting harder to come by. It was supported by United Way then, and she asked me to go with her to speak to them about getting more funds since I and my children had directly benefited from its existence. She said to me, "You know, I ought to give up Kiddie Kove, but I know the children need me. I can't let them down." When Mrs. Bartley left Kiddie Kove and others had to run it, they soon found out they had their work cut out for them. What Mrs. Bartley made look so easy and effortless, wasn't.

Mrs. Bartley and Mrs. Decatur knew how to mold and shape children into fine young men and women. They were the go-betweens who put themselves out in front to ask for what was needed and knew how to get it. They volunteered their time and their talents long past their prime. They gave much time to white group fund raising by collecting for the Red Cross, March of Dimes, Easter Seals, Polio, and the Community Chest, which preceded United Way. They were masters at fund raising and efficient managers of those funds.

There is a hymn sung in one of the black churches where I once belonged. The words are like this. "If I can help somebody as I travel on my way, then my living will not be in vain." These two ladies led their lives in the manner of those words. Naming and creating this center in their honor preserves and continues their service to the community.



LEAD & LEARN: Networking/Training Events for Neighborhoods



Please join us for our monthly Lead & Learn event:
Monday, August 28th, 6:00-8:00 p.m. Temple Baptist Church, 845 S. Fort St.

This month's program, "In Her Shoes", will highlight the effects of domestic violence in our neighborhoods and provide an interactive simulation that demonstrates why victims don't "just leave" abusive situations. Lead & Learn is a program of Community Partnership's Caring Communities Initiative. Look for your invitation in the mail or call Mindy at (417) 888-2020 by Friday, 8/25 to reserve a spot!

DINNER AND CHILD CARE PROVIDED



The Urban Neighborhoods Alliance is offering a 3% APR interest rate loan for homeowners within the UNA footprint for the rehabilitation of their homes. The minimum amount of this loan is \$2,500 and the maximum amount is \$25,000.

With this low-interest loan, residents can: paint the interior or exterior of their house; add new siding; repair or replace a roof; repair or replace a porch; add air conditioning or replace a furnace; make electrical or plumbing improvements; replace carpeting; and/or install insulation. Other repairs or improvements are eligible. Loan funds may not be used to refinance any existing debt. The loan disbursement will be made directly to the resident and the contractor. The borrower must own and occupy the residence and must be within the UNA boundaries including the Midtown neighborhood..

For more information, call Bob Horton, Executive Director of the Urban Neighborhoods Alliance, at 865-4774.



Midtowne Dental Center
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TELEPHONE: 869-6351



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BOB DIXON

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MAJORITY CAUCUS CHAIRMAN

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Midtown Neighborhood Association
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Midtown August/September Church Activities

Benton Avenue AME Church
(864-8815)

Central Christian Church
(869-7241)

Sunday Worship Services 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School Follows At 10:45 a.m.
Beginning March 5th Additional Service @
11:00 am

Sunday School Follows At 10:45 a.m.
Beginning March 1—Wed Night Bible Study—5:00 pm
Family Dinner—6:00 pm
Kids & Middle School Program—6:30 pm

Crimson House Ministries
1616 N. Robberson

Wednesday 6:00 p.m.
Sunday 6:00 p.m.

Sacred Heart Catholic Church
(869-3646) NEW SCHEDULE BEGINS 9/2-3

Tuesday-Friday Weekday Services 8:00 a.m.
Saturday Vigil 4:00 p.m.
Sunday Services 10:00 a.m.
PSR Classes 11:15 am-12:15 pm
Spanish Mass Sunday 12:30 p.m. & 6:00 pm



Queen Of All Saints Catholic Church
(862-0994)

Sunday Service 5:00 p.m.

St. John's Episcopal Church
(869-6351)

Sunday Services 8:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday Mass @ 6:00 pm
Thursday 12:00 noon.-Healing Services

Solid Rock International
(866-1040)

Sunday School Begins At 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Services At 10:45 a.m.
Wednesday Evening Services 7:00 p.m.

Timmins Temple Church of God & Christ
(831-1484)

Regular Sunday Services

Washington Avenue Baptist
(866-2750)

Sunday School begins At 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Services Follow At 10:45 a.m.
Wednesday Night Activities 6:30 p.m.
Bible Study & "Children Hanging With Jesus"