



NRSA UPDATE

**Lincoln and Columbus Neighborhoods
January — May 2009**

Bringing Money Back to Kenosha

According to the Internal Revenue Service, every year millions of dollars (over 6 million in 2006) that rightfully belongs to the residents of Kenosha goes unclaimed. This year the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program sought to change those statistics and bring some of that money back to the Kenosha economy.

The United Way of Kenosha County wrote and administered the federal grant for this program as one part of their economic development and stability initiative. In addition, a full-time site coordinator, and many Carthage and UW-Parkside students and faculty worked hand-in-hand directly with clients to make this venture a success. Through a partnership with the Kenosha County Job Center, the VITA program was

able to be housed at one central location throughout the tax season, instead of the multiple sites that confused people in the previous years.

Tax preparation services were open to the public at the Job Center on Tuesday evenings from 6-9 and Saturday mornings from 9:30 –12:30. By the first week of April, 481 households had been served through the VITA program. This saved Kenosha residents approximately \$126,396 in tax preparation fees, and brought \$448,969 into Kenosha's economy through tax refund money. Preliminary plans have already been made for the 2010 tax season.



Sen. Feingold Visits NRSA Neighborhood

As part of his statewide tour of listening sessions, Wisconsin Senator Russ Feingold visited the Brass Community School on March 16th. Senator Feingold chose BCS as his venue based on a student's recommendation that was mentioned to him by his sister, Rabbi Dena Feingold. Rabbi Feingold is one of several valuable community literacy tutors at BCS, and one day her student partner asked when her brother would be coming to visit the school. Rabbi Feingold passed the question along to the senator, and he responded by scheduling this particular stop on his listening tour.

During the session, Senator Feingold carefully and thoughtfully answered questions brought forth by the adult community members, as well as students of

the Brass Community School 4th & 5th grade classes. Healthcare, corporate bailouts, the stimulus package, the automotive industry struggles, gun control, general fiscal responsibility were among the main topics of discussion. The general stress of the times was seen on the faces and heard in the voices of many adult speakers.

All in all, the listening session was helpful to constituents, and provided a great learning opportunity for the students! It all happened because one little girl was bold enough to ask the Senator to come. The students, principal, alderman, and residents were proud of Miss. Takisha Price for giving the Lincoln Neighborhood and Brass Community School so much positive media coverage!



Uptown BID Being Revived

Kenosha's Uptown area has many assets, but is often known only for its challenges. Recognizing this, several business and property owners, as well as other community stakeholders, have begun an initiative to revive and reorganize an Uptown Business Improvement District. For several months they have been gathering information and coming to consensus regarding the needs of the area, the proposed boundaries, and the proposed purposes and bylaws of the organization. The potential in this collaboration is almost boundless!

City officials, especially the mayor and the department of planning and development, have been very supportive of the revitalization efforts. Kenosha County UW-Extension's Community Resource Development Educator has offered her strategic planning expertise to assist the group in moving forward.

With a few strong and committed property and business owners, these plans will flourish and a path will be forged toward a new and improved Uptown for all of Kenosha to enjoy.

**For more information,
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Leap Into Learning

During the month of February, families of the Brass Community School with children in grades K—2 had the opportunity to participate in a great program called “Leap Into Learning.” For three consecutive Monday nights 20—35 people per night had dinner provided for them in the school cafeteria, and then enjoyed an evening of books and activities provided by Marsha Dawson, storyteller and Brass School Library Media Specialist.

During the interactive story-time, Mrs. Dawson gave parents tips about how to select books for their children and how to read them in a way that provides the best learning experiences. After story-time, families had time to work on craft projects and /or reading homework activities.

Because of the events’ popularity, plans are being made to repeat it in the coming school year.



Neighborhood Watch & LNCA Unite

The Neighborhood Watch program in Lincoln Neighborhood has been very strong and active in 2009. In conjunction with the Lincoln Neighborhood Community Alliance, they have held meetings and communicated important neighborhood information to residents.

In March they held their meeting at the Brass Community School. Crime prevention officer Ron Francis was there to talk to residents about

neighborhood safety and recent safety issues. Alderman Marks, Mr. _ of Neighborhood Housing Services, and Ms. Thea Cox of the Fire Prevention Bureau joined him in presenting helpful information to residents regarding codes, neighborhood activities, and free safety programs. Residents were very grateful for the information, and for the free raffle prizes donated by area businesses!



Eggs in the Park

On April 11th approximately 230 people gathered at the Lincoln Park Oribiletti Center to celebrate the beginning of spring at the Lincoln Neighborhood Community Alliance’s 5th annual Eggs in the Park. Thousands of candy-filled eggs were distributed in the park for children to find and enjoy.

The youngest group of children (ages 2 through 4) was unsure of what to do when faced with all of the colorful options in front of them. Parents and older siblings had to coach them on how to fill their bags and baskets.

The second group of children, ages 5 to 7, knew exactly what to do. They were off and running from the moment “go” was shouted. Approximately 800 eggs were found in less than five minutes!

The oldest group of children, ages 8 to 10, had enthusiasm that was hard to contain. Their eggs were widely distributed around the park, but they, too, were able to wrestle most of the 800 eggs away from the squirrels in very short order!

The Fire Prevention Bureau added an educational component to this year’s event by bringing free fire prevention materials for all of the families, signing families up to have free smoke detectors installed in their homes, and bringing numerous fire prevention Easter baskets filled with goodies for the raffle.

The Fellowship Church also helped to make the event successful with their 4th year of sponsorship by providing most of the more than 2,000 candy-filled eggs and many volunteers.

Neighborhood Watch groups did a lot of publicity for the event by passing out flyers and inviting neighborhood residents.

All in all, Easter Eggs, the Easter Bunny, crafts, candy, snacks, games, community organizations, super families, and **NO SNOW** all worked together to make the 5th annual Eggs in the Park a great success!

