Kingfield Neighborhood Association

Nicollet Votes: Increasing Voter Turnout in South Minneapolis

This fall, Kingfield Neighborhood Association is partnering with three other neighborhoods that also count Nicollet Avenue as their main street in a project called Nicollet Votes. The goal of the project is to get people excited to vote and to register unregistered voters.

In past nonpresidential elections like the one this fall, the turnout in Nicollet neighborhoods has been as low as 37 percent—lower than even citywide averages. One of the main reasons cited for this was a lack of engagement by neighborhood residents.

In the past, we’ve been able to count on the leadership of our block club presidents. This year, however, we’ve found that many of our block leaders are free during the week, which makes it difficult for them to participate in the project.

To make every effort to ensure that everyone votes, we will be offering a variety of options for block leaders to participate in the project. These include:

- Sign up for one or more of the canvassing dates at the kick-off event or by contacting us at info@kingfield.org or 612.823.5980.
- Be a block leader! Please join us on Friday, October 24, as we celebrate the Kingfield block leaders! You can find information on how to become a block leader here.

We hope that you will consider participating in this project with us. By participating, you will be helping to ensure that our neighborhood has a strong turnout in the upcoming election.

On Monday, September 14th, from noon to 5 PM, the Kingfield and Lyndale neighborhoods will be holding a canvasing event to encourage residents to register and vote. This event will be held at the Kingfield Neighborhood Association office, 3710 University Avenue S.

We encourage all block leaders to consider participating in this project. By doing so, you will be helping to ensure that our neighborhood has a strong turnout in the upcoming election. We hope to see you there!
Meetings will take place at Southwest Senior Center, Volunteers of America-MN, 3612 Bryant Avenue South, beginning in September. For more information, please call (800) 358-2481, or email readysteadyprogram@kfna.org. Please mention if you have transportation concerns.

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We are ready for the change of seasons at Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. Registration for fall classes opened August 4, and brochures are available at the park or online at www.minneapolisparks.org. Football teams have started practicing, but it’s not too late to sign up, and we are always looking for volunteers to help build the athletic programs here at the park. Just stop in and ask for the park director; I will be happy to talk with you about coaching or other volunteer opportunities that fit your interest. Registration for basketball and wrestling ages 6 to 14 will open November 1st—both programs are very popular, so sign up early. Youth open gym and archery classes also continue into the fall.

I’m excited to report the addition of a full-time Youthline Mentor, Heather Suag, who specializes in working with youth ages 11 to 17. We also have opened up a “teen center” in the old warming room and outfitted it with gaming systems, bumper pool, and board games. Heather will hold weekly cooking and crafts classes, and some fitness and self-defense trips. She wants to make the teen center a comfortable place for kids to hang out and call their own. Stop by and see what she has to offer your kids at the park.

For adults, I would like to highlight a series of preservation classes offered by area experts. Not sure what to do with your bountiful backyard harvest? Classes in dehydrating, freezing, pickling and making sauerkraut are just what you need to enjoy your crops all year long. We also continue to offer senior exercise and ceramic classes. I am looking for a few parents to help start up a playtime class for families this winter—a chance for kids under 5 years to use the facility and run off some steam during the colder months with their friends. If you’re connected with young families in the neighborhood and are interested in helping to organize a weekly playgroup, please email me at pejaeger@minneapolisparks.org.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the park.

Sincerely,
Peter Jaeger, Your Park Director

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New Beloved Community Space Unveiled

The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park “unveiled” a newly landscaped and renovated space at its Beloved Community Event on August 23. This is the area surrounding the sculpture Freedom Form II, the soul of the park, aligned along Nicollet Avenue just south of the park building.

In 1968, after the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Minneapolis NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), led by Samuel Rinn, petitioned the Minneapolis Park Board to rename Nicollet Field Park as Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Park. With support from the NAACP in this effort, Park Commissioner Hall, the first African American on the board, led the effort on a board of the name change. On October 9, 1968, the park board approved Commissioner Hall’s motion for the name change. The renamed park underwent significant renovation and was rededicated in a celebration held on June 21, 1970. The Honorable Dr. Ralph J. Blanche, Undersecretary-General of the United Nations and first African American winner of the Nobel Peace Prize (in 1950), was the honored guest speaker. Freedom Form II was donated by world-renowned African American artist Daniel LaRue Johnson and presented to the park at the rededication ceremony.

We, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park Legacy Council, envision this as a place where people can learn, reflect on and contemplate Dr. King’s thoughts and ideas, as well as the values and lessons learned in the continuing struggle for freedom. The area includes a new spiral walkway from Nicollet Avenue to the sculpture, on which three granite benches with laser-cut quotes from Dr. King and a community member’s reaction to these statements. We hope that visitors will reflect on the words of Dr. King and the reactions of our neighbors, and that they take a moment to reflect on their personal connection to these ideas.

The project was a collaboration between the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park Legacy Council, Chicago Fire Arts Center, and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, informed by community dialogue. It was partially funded through a grant from the Metropolitan Regional Arts Commission.

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3-1-1 WORKS

Graffiti has a negative effect on communities. Along with lowering neighborhood appeal, decreasing property values, and driving away prospective homebuyers, it also attracts criminal activity. Worst of all, gang members use graffiti to promote themselves. Covering up gang graffiti takes away this tool from gangs and improves the overall quality of neighborhoods.

The city of Minneapolis receives 500 to 1,000 reports of graffiti monthly, and works diligently to close each case within 20 days. In 2013, of the 8,180 citywide reports, we had 202 incidents of graffiti reported and removed in the Kingfield neighborhood. Fortunately, only 12 of those cases were gang related. Even better, many times the graffiti had been removed within a week, even on state-owned property along 35W.

To report graffiti, call 311 or go online at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/311/. If it is in progress, please call 911. One of the easiest ways to report graffiti is with the 311 app available for Apple and Android smart phones. (It’s not just for reporting graffiti—you also can report potholes, street light trouble, and abandoned vehicles. Tips on how to be a safe and effective block patrol!)

Graffiti hurts everyone—the next time you see it, take a few minutes to report it and help keep Kingfield the beautiful neighborhood we all love.
Does Your Block Have a Facebook Group?

If you’re on Facebook, chances are you’ve joined a Facebook group. Facebook groups are a great way for people of similar interests to connect. Many of you are probably aware of a Facebook group for the Kingfield neighborhood: www.facebook.com/groups/KingfieldNeighborhood. That group currently has over 500 members.

Some Facebook groups are organized around localized blocks in Kingfield. If you currently are part of a Facebook group for your block(s), please email info@kingfield.org with the URL of your group. KFNA is going to compile a private list of Block Facebook groups and share upon request.

If your block doesn’t have a Facebook group, it’s really easy to set one up. Last year, I created a Facebook group for my block of 36XX Pleasant and neighboring 36XX Grand—all of whom gather for our National Night Out block party. I am currently the sole administrator, but I could have chosen another administrator if I needed to opt out. As an administrator, I approve requests to join. A quick private message to the requester vets the neighbor’s residency, and I approve the request to join.

The best thing about a Facebook group is that it allows you to connect with neighbors—and it doesn’t require you to become “Facebook friends” with any of them. You’ll only see content that neighbors choose to share in the group—so you likely won’t be bombarded with baby pictures, memes and cat videos. Facebook groups have three privacy settings: open, closed, or secret. As you’re creating a group for your block, you can explore the differences in these privacy settings and determine which works best for your group (ours is “closed”).

When I created our group, I was already Facebook friends with a dozen or so neighbors, so it was easy to invite them to the group. After that, it was pretty easy to get others to join. I printed flyers with information on the group (including the URL) and spent an hour canvassing, inviting Pleasant and Grand neighbors to join. The stated mission of the group was to better connect neighbors and share good news and bad—social gatherings, crime reports, parking restrictions, etc. The flyer stressed that neighbors didn’t have to accept any Facebook friend requests to join the group. Today our group has 47 members, and I’ve since given the group a custom-named URL that reflects our location. At our National Night Out party, we’ll be encouraging more neighbors to join.

Our group has successfully reunited a lost garage door opener with its rightful owner, delivered updates on crime, organized impromptu potlucks, and most recently, helped keep everyone up-to-date on CenterPoint Energy construction. It’s been a great way for neighbors to connect and share.

Again, KFNA would like to compile a list of all blocks’ Facebook groups. If you start one, please be sure to email info@kingfield.org with the URL and boundaries (i.e. 38XX Blaisdell). If you’re wondering if a Facebook group exists for your block, send KFNA an email and we’ll help connect you to your group, or help you start one. Happy connections, everyone!

— Scott Mueller, Master Advertising Specialist