

Our Vision for Sheboygan,
is a community of safe and vibrant neighborhoods.



A place for community

Neighborhood group turning schoolhouse into area meeting place

BY BOB PETRIE
Sheboygan Press staff

A small schoolhouse that's been a part of Sheboygan's long history is slowly being renovated into a community center to help make a brighter future in one of the city's oldest and toughest neighborhoods.

Work — and there's a lot of it to do — continues on turning the Little Red Schoolhouse, 1116 Huron Ave., into a gathering place that members of the Gateway Neighborhood Association firmly believe will be the centerpiece to resurrect the vitality of the surrounding community.

"We want to build the foundation to the past and get people out, bring people out, start them talking, get the community back together, thus the community center," said the Rev. Jerry Link, of the River of Life Outreach Ministries, who is helping to spearhead the renovation effort of the former school.

Link, along with his wife, the Rev. Julie Link, holds regular church services and other activities in the schoolhouse under a lease agreement with the City of Sheboygan. But the two have been working with other business, city, church and community leaders on trying to fix up the 1888 building so it can be used for all sorts of community activities.

"We're going to be having business meetings in here, have entrepreneur classes, we're setting all this up," Jerry Link said. "Right now, the focus is on renovation, we've had people stepping up ... I'm absolutely excited."

The church hosted the Gateway Neighborhood Association's first-ever fundraiser on Saturday at the Little Red Schoolhouse, a potluck attended by about 50 people, who feasted on foods ranging from pizza to tamales to Swedish meatballs, roast turkey and chili. Folks attending bought raffle tickets and chose their favorite dishes for prizes, and the money raised will go to help pay for association sponsored community cleanups and banners for light poles around the Gateway area. The neighborhood is bordered by Ninth and 14th streets, and Ontario and Superior avenues.

The Gateway Association, well into its first year, is the city's first of what officials hope will be many neighborhood associations throughout Sheboygan. Plans are in the works for a south-side association, and one near Cooper School, along with



Clockwise from lower left, the Rev. Julie Link; the Rev. Jerry Link, both of the River of Life ministry; Tom Faley, president of the Gateway Neighborhood Association and Jennifer Sampson, a Gateway Association board member, stand in front of the Little Red Schoolhouse building on Saturday. The Links, along with several groups, are spearheading an effort to renovate the historic schoolhouse into a neighborhood community center. Photo by Bob Petrie/The Sheboygan Press

Volunteers needed

To help with the renovation of the Little Red Schoolhouse, contact the Rev. Jerry Link at (920) 287-1838

the Ellis historic district on the east city of the city.

"Every neighborhood in the city should have a neighborhood association," Mayor Bob Ryan said. "It gives continuity to the neighborhood, it gives identity to the neighborhood, it gives the people in the neighborhood a place to go to with concerns with the neighborhood."

So far, association members say the effort to lift up the neighborhood is moving in the right direction. Police are saying crime is trending down, and outdoor activity, such as people getting out of their homes for neighborhood walks is increasing.

"We've been doing building inspections, the area's cleaned up, the yards are cleaned up, the facades of residences are looking

nicer and I think it's just safer," said Officer Dean Wendlandt of the Sheboygan Police Department, who has worked primarily in the area during his 30-year career.

Link said he's done some historical research on the building, and wants to restore it to its original floor plan, which includes a large central room for community use. He's gotten help from a lot of folks willing to donate their time on the project — a contractor is removing lead-based paint from the building, and the St. Luke's United Methodist Church has agreed to adopt and renovate one of the rooms. He's also heard from people who used to attend classes in the old school and want to see it return to a good use in the community.

"There's a lot of these ties to the past, and we're seeing more and more of them," Link said.

Jennifer Sampson, a member of the association's board of directors, said the school was va-

See Community/A2

Community Partners

Love Your City
Sheboygan Countywide
Crime Stoppers
United Way
Iglesia Restaurando al Caido
St. Peter Lutheran Church

Government Partners

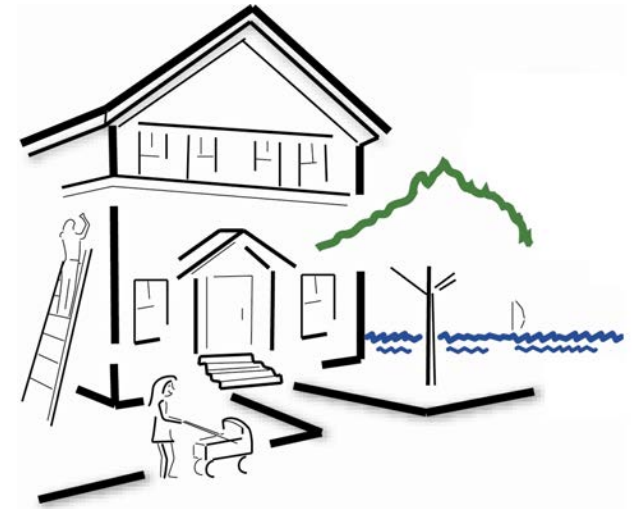
City Development Dept.
Sheboygan Police Dept.
City Attorney's Office
Department of Public Works
Sheboygan City Sheriff's Dept.
City Building Inspection Dept.

Neighborhood Ass'n

Gateway Neighborhood Ass'n
Ellis Historic Neighborhood Ass'n

Organizing Groups

Cooper-Cleveland
King Park
Memorial
East Side
Erie Hill
North Flats
Sheridan Park
River Bend
South Calumet



A Non-Profit Organization

Sheboygan Neighborhood Pride

A community resource empowering citizens to work together to improve their neighborhoods, reduce crime and enhance the quality of life in the community.

For a full list of SNP Board Members
and Community Advisors, visit us at:
SheboyganNeighborhoodPride.info

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DONATIONS & CONTRIBUTIONS: Sheboygan Neighborhood Pride (SNP) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and acts as the fiscal agent for the Sheboygan Neighborhood Associations. Any contributions by check should be made payable to Sheboygan Neighborhood Pride. Designation for a specific Neighborhood Association may be made in the memo line.

The History

Sheboygan Neighborhood Pride was established in 2003 as an umbrella organization working with community groups and the city planning and police departments. As a grass-roots effort, SNP initially focused heavily on eliminating drug houses through a new community policing philosophy, then evolved to assist with developing neighborhood associations as a way to improve conditions in the neighborhoods and inspire a sense of ownership among residents.



The Need

Residents perceive that crime is a major problem in Sheboygan. Strong neighborhoods reduce crime (and the perception of crime), strengthen businesses and property values, and neighbors gain a sense of unity and purpose within their neighborhood. Grassroots activity is the best way to improve and support a neighborhood. We plan to create organizations that work from the bottom up, rather than top down.

We are...

Empowering Community Members:

- Teaching skills to identify issues and create solutions
- Identifying and developing local leadership to increase participation and generate enthusiasm in neighborhoods

Building Relationships:

- Acting as a liaison connecting people to available services and potential partners and helping them navigate the governmental process

How You Can Help???

Get to Know Your Neighbors!
Sponsor a block party in your neighborhood to get to know people.

Get Active!
Join a neighborhood association or start by identifying needed improvements.

Lend a Helping Hand!
Offer to carpool, watch your neighbor's house while on vacation, etc.

Look Out For Leaders!
We need energetic people to lead more improvement efforts.

Contribute!
We need new talents, areas of expertise and energy on our board.

Achievements

SNP established the **City's first recognized Neighborhood Association in the Gateway Neighborhood**, a neighborhood identified as one of the most troubled in the city. Crime went down, residents became enthusiastic and attended several neighborhood events, and the City increased investment. Bottom line, the quality of life has improved for residents in the Gateway Neighborhood.

The Police Department has assigned neighborhood **officers to the Gateway Neighborhood**, who have shown their commitment to the neighborhood by participating in community meetings and events while creating a visible presence in public spaces. One result of this greater police presence is a 35% increase in traffic stops in the Gateway Neighborhood from 2009 to 2010, leading to a greater trust of the police and the belief that they are genuinely concerned about safety in this neighborhood. This has encouraged investment by business owners and residents.

Success Story

"As an out of town investor, we have found SNP to be a great central resource with the knowledge, partnerships, and influence to get things done. We were previously discouraged with the level of crime in Sheboygan in 2008 but have now begun to see a lot of positive things happening to turn that around. Through cooperative efforts of SNP, neighbors, businesses, nonprofit groups, churches and government, we have seen crime come down and quality of properties look better, attended some great neighborhood parties, and made some new friends in both the private and public sector. Things are looking so much more peaceful that we even invested in the heart of the Gateway Neighborhood at a premium return. Thanks SNP!"

- A Gateway Landlord