

North Side neighborhood initiative advances, area volunteers needed

By Brenda Wilder

Residents and businesses located on the north side of Clinton are progressing their neighborhood initiative to connect community residents, meet community needs and tap into community resources. One member of the team project, Northside Baptist Church, considers itself a "church of the neighborhood" and believes that every person can contribute individual gifts to the effort and be involved with passion.

Organizers say the land area involved in the initiative is the most densely populated area of Clinton, and it is somewhat rectangular in shape. The outline boundaries include Pinehaven Drive, Magnolia Road, Old Vicksburg Road and Arrow Drive. Organizers have held meetings with residents, community business partners and City leaders, who have all expressed interest and support for the initiative. The interest led the group to begin working on neighborhood projects together.

Participants in the initiative would like to tap into the Clinton slogan, "You Belong Here," to create a unique, branded area in which the city can take pride, advertise, and draw

new residents.

The first initiative project was the improvement of the Kids Towne Playground, a venture which involved large numbers of volunteers. Residents say they were excited to have attention drawn to the needs of the town they love and are proud in which to live. Organizers say that projects such as this contribute to binding the community together in strong bonds, and the group plans to have many more.

At the group's quarterly meeting, held recently at the Quisenberry Library, the discussion centered around the topics of Kid's Towne cleanup, concept of the initiative, name and branding for the initiative, and a collaborative event with Clinton elementary-age students.

The group decided to assemble volunteers to partner with Clinton Park Elementary School on Wednesday, May 22, for their first-grade field day. Needs for the event include forty volunteers between 8 a.m. and noon, twenty sets of corn-hole boards, four canopy tents, snacks and sixteen cases of water. Monetary donations will also be accepted. Volunteers and donations are being coordinated

through Rev. Courtney Stamey, pastor of Northside Baptist Church. Corn-hole boards can be dropped off at the church early in the week and picked up on the afternoon of May 22.

Participants in the neighborhood initiative can be residents of other Clinton communities, with the only requirement being a caring attitude. People of all ages and abilities are welcome, especially those who are gifted in clean-up projects, making phone calls, establishing a social media presence, and making one-on-one connections.

Future initiative goals are to encourage connections with neighbors, improve area cleanliness, develop partnerships with businesses who need assistance, advance partnerships with schools on Arrow Drive and meeting their needs, and organizing a leadership team. A temporary name for the group is "North Side Neighborhood Initiative," but nominations for a permanent name are being welcomed from the community.

To donate or volunteer for the Clinton Park field day event, or for more information about the neighborhood initiative, call 601-924-2634.

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NJCAA softball tournament

events such as this. Clintonians should be proud," continued Hetrick. "And it is imperative that we solicit events like this to Clinton. As citizens, we should support these events ourselves by attending them and welcoming the participants, their fans and their families to the area. And, as voters and taxpayers, we need to make the upkeep, improvement and expansion of Traceway Park a top priority for the future."

Clinton has hosted the tournament since 2012, and has a contract to host until 2020.

Prior to the start of the tournament, NJCAA players and Clinton's Challenger League will have a mashup at Traceway on Monday, May 20, at 6



p.m. The Challenger League is a program of Clinton's Therapeutic Recreation Department that consists of sports with adapted rules and equipment.

An opening banquet will be held on May 21 for tournament participants, and play will begin at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 22. Later that evening, a Home Run Derby will take place at 5:30 p.m., followed by a social at 6 p.m. and fireworks at dark (approximately 8 p.m.). Games will continue on Thursday and Friday, with the championship games set for Saturday.

All activities except the opening banquet are open to the public. Tickets are \$12 per day, or \$35 for a four-day tournament pass. Groups of ten or more can purchase tickets for \$10.

City businesses and residents have the opportunity to show support and gain exposure with sponsorships and advertisements in the game program and on the fields. Each participant receives a copy of the event program, in which an advertiser can sponsor at various levels.

For more information or to learn more about the event or sponsorship opportunities, contact the City of Clinton Parks and Recreation Department at 601-924-6082.

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