

National Night Out Brings Neighbors and Safety Issues Together

By Carolyn Ristau

Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Garfield – The National Night Out event at the Nelson Mandela Peace Park on Aug. 6, co-hosted by the Garfield Community Action Team (GCAT) and the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC), was a success. Turnout was higher than expected, with more than 40 neighbors, most with their children or grandchildren, coming to the park during the two-hour event.

Free ice cream and porch light bulbs were provided, along with information on how residents can keep their homes and neighborhoods safe. Unfortunately, due to the high turn-out, the ice cream and light bulbs ran out before the end of the evening.

Assemble, a community space for arts

and technology on Penn Avenue, set up a table for kids' crafts. Several children made wind chimes using small metal buckets and recycled materials like bottle caps. Others made butterflies out of Styrofoam shapes or created pictures using the Styrofoam pieces. Four firefighters from Fire Station No. 6 in Lawrenceville came with their truck. They gave tours of the fire engine, and children and adults were invited to get their picture taken while sitting in the front seat of the truck.

The goal of National Night Out is to bring the community together and share information on how neighbors can help to keep the city safe. The Mayor's Office, Bureau of Fire, and Bureau of Police



ABOVE: Members of Fire Station No. 6 gave neighborhood children and adults the chance to sit in the front seat of their fire truck at Garfield's National Nith Out celebration. Photo by Erin Oldynski

provided information about the city's safety resources for community members.

A Smoke Detector Program is run by the Pittsburgh Fire Bureau to supply and install smoke detectors for any City resident who requests one. Requests can be made by calling 412-255-2863.

Another program offers free installation of security and safety hardware to City of Pittsburgh residents who meet certain income guidelines. This Neighborhood Safety Program is offered through Pittsburgh Community Services, Inc (PCSI), and the City of Pittsburgh and provides deadbolt locks, smoke detectors, door peepholes, house numbers, carbon monoxide detectors, and lifelites. For more information and to schedule an appointment, call PCSI at 412-392-6467.

The Community Safety Website is a tool for the City of Pittsburgh Bureau of Police to share information with the public. Information on the different zones, alerts, and the police blotter are accessible to anyone on the website. There is a "Submit a Tip" link where citizens can offer tips to police about potential crimes, safety concerns and other matters, with the option of remaining anonymous. There is also an option to sign up to receive email alerts for City-Wide Alerts, Zone Specific Alerts, Business Alerts and/or Block-watch Group Alerts. For more information and to start receiving alerts, visit communitysafety.pittsburghpa.gov.

The City also provides resources for residents to start or maintain a neighborhood Block Watch. Mayor Luke Ravenstahl's Block Watch in a Box

provides information and resource tools. Residents can request a kit at pittsburghpa.gov/publicsafety.

Additional resources are the Allegheny County Emergency Services line (911) for reporting emergencies, Mayor Luke Ravenstahl's Response Line (311) for non-emergencies, the Allegheny County Health Department (412-578-8390), and the Mailbox Graffiti reporting line (412-359-7845).

Emergency reasons to call 911 include: a crime occurring right now; life-threatening situations; injuries requiring medical attention; smoke detectors or carbon monoxide detectors sounding; fire or smoke coming from a building; or any other emergency situation.

When calling 911, stay calm and speak clearly, answer all questions the operator asks, explain the situation completely and describe your surroundings and follow all directions the operator gives you.

Non-emergency reasons to call 311 include: ongoing suspected drug activity; graffiti; potholes; high weeds and code violations; traffic issues; information on how to receive a smoke detector and when to change the batteries; information on City events and services; and any non-emergency with which you need help.

When calling 311, speak clearly, explain the problem and provide the exact location, answer all questions asked by the operator, ask for a tracking number and write it down and call back using the tracking number for follow-up.

"These are great resources for our community," said Aggie Brose, the BGC's deputy director. ♦



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