



A TRIP TO THE PUMPKIN PATCH, THANKS TO DAVENPORT AND NORTH SCOTT ROTARY CLUBS

Presence



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2017 REPORT

## Two Generations @ Treat House

By Christina Ridgway

I moved to the neighborhood shortly after my mom and dad got a divorce. I was 9 years old. I quickly became friends with the neighbor kids across the street. We went to the same school and walked home together. That's when they told me about the "Treat House." We went there after school, and as long as I had my homework finished and went to school, I was able to pick a treat. There were always a few choices, but my favorite was Dunkaroos.

Soon the Treat House became so much more than just an afterschool treat.

Project Renewal was a positive stable environment for many of us who didn't always have that at home. The kids who went there were mostly from the surrounding neighborhoods. We all became pretty close. We went to the movies and plays or out to dinner. I will never forget one summer when we went to camp. It was the best week ever. The Treat House (Project Renewal) was a place that kept us on track in school and in life. It really bonded many of us. I was very blessed to have Project Renewal and Ann and Carl and the many volunteers in my life for as long as I did.

Years later I started a family of my own and when they became school-age it was hard to find a good afterschool program that we could afford. One day while I was talking to

Ann about how much I'd love for the kids to be able to go Project Renewal. Ann talked to another parent and between the three of us, we figured out a carpool schedule.

Here we are, five years later and my daughter still goes there and loves every minute of it. It's made me so happy that she's going to have similar memories growing up as I did. She's going to build relationships that last a lifetime. She gets to know all kinds of kids from all kinds of backgrounds. Her being a part of where I came from and being in such a structured, positive, encouraging environment helps me raise her into the person I know she can and will be.



### Project Renewal's goals

Be a positive presence for the children and families in our low-income neighborhood.

Affect change in a community by being part of that community. Since 1974 Project Renewal staff have lived and worked at 5th and Warren streets, providing a safe & supportive place for kids.

Use our funding wisely. Of Project Renewal's grant and donation income, 92% goes directly to day-to-day operations.

### What your donation supports

Treat House - open after school and summer, offering kids a safe & nurturing environment.

Educational, recreational, & social opportunities kids would not otherwise experience.

Maintenance on two homes and a park. Support for one full-time, one part-time, and four summer staff, and many volunteers.

# Meg's friends

By Tara Haiston, RD

I became an official board member of Project renewal in 2016. A great friend of mine had the honor as serving as the president of the Board of Directors for Project Renewal until her death. Her name was Meg Halligan. She was a walking example of civic mindedness and paying back to the community.

In the little over a year that I have served, I have witnessed the amazing work that this organization does at a close level. Ann, Carl, and all the staff and volunteers make a difference in our community AND they change lives!

When I met all of the other board members, I was struck with their passion for this organization and the expertise that they all uniquely bring to the board. I was at a loss for how I could contribute to this organization. Then opportunity struck.

I was fortunate enough to have a wonderful group of Meg's friends and family decide to have a fundraiser in Meg's honor (see list, bottom right). This was truly a situation that "took a village" to get accomplished! We raised over \$10,000 for Project Renewal. It was one of the biggest highlights of my year.



Becka Frandsen (left) and Tara Haiston (right) at the 2017 Fit Fest.

## Program Highlights 2017

**Elementary school students traveled the world with Flat Stanley.** Flat Stanley is a fictional young boy flattened by a bulletin board. He takes advantage of his new flatness to go on adventures around the world. Stanley's books help teach important lessons about geography and history, plus they are just plain fun. The kids created their own flat people and sent them out to explore.

**Middle and high school students explored through TripAdvisor.** Kids partnered to review a local QCA attraction, research it, write up their findings, and share it with the rest of the group. Some of the trips included: Lock & Dam 15, Modern Woodmen Park, Vander Veer Botanical Park and Conservatory with statues along Main Street that lead up to fountain at Vander Veer, Iowa 80 Trucking Museum, Credit Island, and the Freight House & Farmer's Market.

**A team of PR youth formed an Ultimate Frisbee crew.** Volunteer Amy Kersten organized and recruited college-age volunteers to help teach and coach the kids. Fourteen kids participated throughout the summer.

**Exelon nuclear power plant's college interns coordinated a philanthropy project.** Project Renewal had the honor of being their fundraiser beneficiary.

## FIT FEST 2017

Friendliness radiated through our neighborhood on that April morning as was evident by all the smiles and laughter. Compliments resounded about the volunteer support and what a fantastic, fun, family event this year's Fit Fest was. Highlighted was the fact that families were having fun, together. Many people appreciate Fit Fest for the opportunity to try an activity that is new or they were curious about, and that they can be active at their own pace.

Project Renewal's Fit Fest is an obstacle course consisting of 10 challenges to perform and complete with a partner. The obstacles are a physical activity or sport drill with options for people of all abilities to participate. Examples included disc golf, cross-fit, Tae Kwon Do, volleyball, and soccer. Additional fun activities in Sr. Concetta Park for everyone were: Zumba, archery, batter up, and golf putting. Medals were awarded in each category for first and second place.

**2017 Fit Fest Sponsors:** St. Ambrose University, Palmer College Of Chiropractic, Lank Construction, Group O, Russell Construction, Redstone Content Solutions, Astra Furniture Clearance Center, Edward Jones, WHBF, KLJB, KWQC, Sampson Fence Ltd., City of Davenport, Rock Valley Physical Therapy, Mississippi Valley Surgery Center, Greatest Grains, Advantage Advertising, Sodexo, Aramark, Ruhl Commercial, Anderson Lower Whitlow P.C., Hale Printing & Vinyl Graphics, River Cities Sound, Happy Joe's, Molyneaux Insurance, Medic Emergency Medical Services, HyVee, Carroll Family – in memory of Nancy, Halligan Family – in memory of Meg.

**Door prize donations:** Sippi's American Grill, Whitey's Ice Cream, Tommy's Café, Chocolate Manor, Quad Cities Food Hub, Fresh Deli, Oh So Sweet by Tiphonie, Greatest Grains, Running Wild, Burke Cleaners, Gold Coast-Hamburg Historic District.

## MEG HALLIGAN DONORS

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# Setting kids up to succeed, make good choices

By Ann McGlynn

*Editor's note: This article appeared in St. Paul Lutheran Church's Journey magazine.*



It's pretty quiet at the Treat House on this Friday afternoon. It's about 2:20 p.m., and Ann Schwickerath is sitting in the living room chatting with visitors. There's a knock on the door – the sign that the quiet is about to come to an energetic end.

"Hi! My name is Alejandro," the first kiddo in the door says as he shakes the hand of one of the visitors. He is followed by a couple of others, then a few minutes later, a couple of others, and then a few more – until about 30 kids fill the house at 5th and Warren streets in Davenport. "How was your day?" Ann asks one of the kids in the afterschool and summer program she's led with Carl Callaway, for nearly 25 years. "Stars all week!" she exclaims while checking a school planner. "Howdy, pal!" Ann says to yet another as he comes inside, sheds his coat, and sets down his backpack.

The kids counter with questions like "Can I go do homework?" and "Can I get a treat?" The organization is officially called Project Renewal, but everyone knows it as the Treat House. There's no sign outside of the two houses and park that make up the campus – because no sign is needed. Ann and Carl live in one of the houses. The free-of-charge program is centered in the other house, with a computer lab, study space, shelves of games, and a well-stocked pantry and refrigerator. With about 50 kids on the roster

at any given time, the afterschool program runs from 2:30-5:30 p.m. and the summer program at Sister Concetta Park from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

"We're a family here," says Ann. "We watch out for each other. We help each other out."

Sister Concetta Bendicente came to Davenport from Chicago to serve from her order, the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ. She moved in to the neighborhood just west of downtown Davenport, near St. Mary's Church. Sister Concetta often spent time walking through the area. One day, she encountered a group of kids along Fifth Street. They were crying and scared – their grandfather was having a seizure and they thought he was dying.

Sister Concetta set her sights on a condemned house at Fifth and Warren streets. She led the effort to fix it up, and to be a positive presence in the neighborhood, caring for the elderly, homeless, and children. This was in the mid-1970s, when social service agencies were few and far between. Over time, the focus shifted to children. They turned the empty lot across the street into a park.

The name changed to Project Renewal. The once-condemned house is where Ann and Carl live. The park is Sister Concetta Park. And more recently, the organization purchased an empty house next door to expand its program.

The goal? Educating, building self-esteem, and affirming each child for his or her individual worth. Time there focuses on non-violent conflict resolution skills, interpersonal relationships, constructive use of time, and appropriate social behaviors.

Volunteers are an important part of Project Renewal. Regulars, like Amy and Dixie, huddle in small groups in the upstairs loft to listen to kids read aloud, or help as they finish their math homework for the day.

Project Renewal also serves as a learning place for people interested in working in under-resourced communities. For example, a partnership with Notre Dame brings students to Fifth and Warren streets every year. Last summer, kids in the Treat House summer program took swimming lessons, were a part of a weekly Thursday night cookout, volunteered for the Bix at Six practice runs, and participated in the city's park & rec programs.

With the house filled with chatter, games, homework, and computer time now, Ann and Carl say goodbye to their visitors. It's a bright and sunny day, and the kids are about to head out to play at the park. "Some of our families are overcoming past or present obstacles or abuses," Ann said. "We're hoping to set them up to succeed, to make good decisions, to make good choices." But most importantly, Ann said, "We're just a neighbor."

## ***How can you be a part?***

Come to our annual open board meeting. It will be held on Tuesday, January 23, 6:30 p.m., at 510 Warren Street, Davenport.

Become a liaison for your church.

Volunteer during the afterschool or summer youth program.

Mentor a high school student to be career and/or college ready.

There are many possibilities!

Call 563-324-0800 or email [projectrenewal@revealed.net](mailto:projectrenewal@revealed.net)

# Thank you!

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