Russell Choice Neighborhood Planning Initiative

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Russell is on the fast track to becoming a certified Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) thanks to the efforts underway through Russell’s Choice Neighborhood Initiative planning process. Once that certification is in place, the Russell neighborhood will receive several benefits including targeted Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and more flexibility with how funding can be used in the neighborhood. These funds will be programmed for needs prioritized through the Choice planning process, including efforts to spur economic development and improve housing. This in turn could help stimulate more investment in the neighborhood.

The NRSA plan was developed through the Choice planning process, which has provided neighborhood stakeholders, including residents, businesses, and faith-based organizations, with the opportunity to learn more about each other’s aspirations for Russell and how their individual interests often complement one another or can be combined to achieve greater results within the community. Momentum is definitely continuing to build toward a shared vision for Russell.

Resident Spotlight: Ebonique Burns

Ebonique Burns, a mother of three and a long-time resident of the Russell and Shawnee neighborhoods, is always looking for ways to be involved in the community and to improve the Russell neighborhood. So it comes as no surprise that when there was an opportunity to participate in the Russell Neighborhood Institute, she jumped at the chance.

“I loved learning more about the resources that exist within the city and neighborhood that can help to bring about the type of changes we want to make this a better place for all of us,” said Burns who completed the program in January. “Change won’t happen if we just turn the other way. We all have to be actively involved and committed to working together.”

The Russell Neighborhood Institute, a seven week program designed to connect participants with resources and partners who could assist in moving participants’ ideas into action. Class members met once a week and worked on a number of short and long-term projects to help improve their community.

Burns says that she was motivated to participate in the training after she returned to Louisville and saw the decline that was taking place throughout the area. Because she comes from a close-knit family and many of her relatives live within walking distance, she decided to become involved in activities that are improving Russell and helping children succeed, rather than moving to another neighborhood.

From serving on the Site Based Decision Making and Parent Teacher Association at Roosevelt Perry Elementary, to volunteering for the Louisville Urban League’s Chess program, Burns says her passion is working on initiatives that are focused on the performing arts and that help youth within the neighborhood.

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February 16, 2017

Ease Into Your Weekend with Free Yoga at the Baxter Community Center

Interested in stretching out tired or tense muscles, improving your brain function, strengthening your bones, relieving chronic pain and/or increasing your ability to cope with stress – then check out the new yoga classes in Russell. Classes are taught by Kentucky Yoga Initiative (KYI), a local nonprofit working to make yoga accessible to people throughout the city. These free classes are open to the public and are designed to accommodate all skill levels, whether this is your first time attending a yoga class or you are a seasoned yoga student. Yoga classes are held at the Baxter Community Center, 1125 Cedar Street every Friday evening from 5:30-6:30pm. Mats are available for your use and participants should wear comfortable clothing.

KYI also holds free yoga classes at Shelby, Shawnee and Portland Community Centers. Russell is the newest neighborhood that KYI has expanded classes to because of the strong voices and active leaders in Russell who are seeking ways to improve the lives of community members.

A Joint Meeting of All CNI Task Forces

Please join us on April 20th from 10 a.m. to noon at the Kentucky Center for African American Heritage, 1701 W. Muhammad Ali Boulevard for a joint meeting of all CNI Task Forces. Russell residents are also encouraged to attend this event, as well as the general public. The group will be prioritizing goals and strategies to be included in the draft Russell Transformation Plan that will be submitted to HUD on July 15th. Throughout the planning process community residents and our partners have come up with many wonderful ideas that help capture Russell’s rich past, while cultivating its future and strengthening its nearly 3,800 families. Now is the time to come help us select the ideas that will have the most impact and best benefit the Russell community.

Resident Spotlight: Ebonique Burns

A Conversation with Russell’s Youth

Twelve energetic teens gathered together on March 31st at Central High School to talk about their vision for the Russell Neighborhood. They enjoyed pizza with Neighborhood Outreach Workers while discussing their favorite types of programs and summer activities, and the efforts underway to help transform their neighborhood. “Reuse, Recycle, Refurbish” is one of the many branding ideas that the group developed to help promote their neighborhood’s unique features. The teens’ branding ideas, along with other improvements they’d like to see in the Russell community, were put together in a Word Cloud featured above.

Repair Affair

Repair Affair is seeking volunteer teams to help elderly and disabled homeowners with repairs. Repair Affair jobs range from simple yard work and exterior painting, to more complicated carpentry, plumbing and electrical. Repair Affair can match any team with a homeowner in need. Find out how you can help change a homeowner’s life in just one day by contacting Jacie Morgan at jaciem@ndhc.org or 502-719-7153.

Want to know more about the CNI planning process? Contact Lhill@lmha1.org to share your newsletter suggestions.

Coming Next Month

Photos from the Love Louisville Trees Russell Planting Day and highlights from the April 16th Vision Russell Events