



NEIGHBORHOOD ink

A newsletter of Neighborhoods Incorporated of Hammond Indiana

January 2012

Volume 5 ~ Issue 1

East Chicago is Looking Good!

East Chicago ~ On Tuesday, December 20th, contestants in the Fall Spruce Up and Winter Decorating Contests gathered at the East Chicago Main Library for an awards ceremony to reward their efforts. Participants were treated to hot chocolate and sweets as they got to know one another and talked about their projects.

Sponsored by the Foundations of East Chicago, the Fall Spruce Up contestants competed for cash rewards up to \$500 for making home improvements to the exterior of their properties. Residents painted, planted and decorated their homes. Some even had benches installed from NI's "Please, Have A Seat!" program to complement their improvements and encourage neighborliness. To date, 38 of these benches have been installed all over the city, thanks to funding from Foundations of East Chicago.

The winners of the 2011 Fall Spruce Up Contest are:

- 1st: **Stephanie Williams, 3901 Carey**
- 2nd: **Julia Nazario, 4902 Drummond**
- 3rd: **Teresa & Joe Berlanga, 4355 E. Guadalupe Circle**

For the Winter Holiday Decorating Contest, participants put their "spirit of the season" to good use by decorating their properties with lights, inflatables and other holiday lawn ornaments, making their block more festive and welcoming in the process.

The winners of the 2011 Winter Holiday Decorating Contest are:

- 1st: **Ruby Perry, 4130 Hawthorne**
- 2nd: **Estelle & Warren Williams, 4017 McCook**
- 3rd: **Ida Hill, 4425 W. Guadalupe Circle**



3901 Carey



4130 Hawthorne

Operation Restoration: Success!

East Chicago ~ Funded by Foundations of East Chicago, Operation Restoration assisted East Chicago residents in two phases this year.

On November 22 and 29, volunteers from First Baptist Church in Hammond donated their labor in the cold and rain to assist elderly/disabled residents in East Chicago clean out their homes of unwanted items or help with light repairs and yardwork in the Sunnyside and Washington Park areas of the Harbor.

Mr. Isaac Johnson couldn't stop thanking the workers. "I could never have done this myself," he said. "God bless you for helping me out."

Several tons of debris were removed and some unused items were donated to a local non-profit. Metal items were taken by a scrapper to be sold and recycled for future use.



Mr. Johnson examines his garage before the cleanup.



"Finally! Enough space to park my car in here!" he says in appreciation to the volunteers.

Phase II of Operation Restoration was of critical importance when East Chicago residents found themselves without water on Sunday, December 11, due to a break in a water main. This crisis continued for the next two days, leaving nearly 30,000 residents without one of their most basic needs. NI immediately stopped what they were working on and over the course of the day contacted 195 residents on their customer list to offer them the opportunity to come to the office and take up to 10 gallons of fresh water with them.

Very quickly NI's office started bustling with activity. Close to 50 East Chicagoans took advantage of the offer and took over 250 gallons of much-needed water back to their homes. Residents were grateful that NI stepped up to the plate and was able to provide them with what they needed during this emergency. Precinct committeewoman Christine Russell also assisted NI by cheerfully volunteering to make phone calls while in the office to retrieve water for neighbors that were homebound.



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