

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CHECK OUT THE NEW BUTTERFLY HABITAT!
NEIGHBORHOOD CELEBRATION
LED BY KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR BLOCK WATCH

Saturday, Sept. 3 from noon to 3 p.m.

Ohio and West Dennick avenues, Youngstown

Youngstown – Visitors are guaranteed to see one giant butterfly at the new Butterfly Habitat on Youngstown’s North Side.

That’s because neighbors and students pulled together over the summer to transform a pair of vacant, overgrown city lots into a bright spot. They cut the grass, raked up leaves, cleaned debris and, with the help of a local landscaper, planted pollinator-friendly perennial flowers and plants in an attractive design. At the center of it all is the outline of a monarch butterfly made entirely of painted and unpainted tires.

The effort was led by Know Your Neighbor Block Watch, a winner of a 2016 Youth Greening Grant from Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation. The grant was funded through the Youth Violence Prevention Center at University of Michigan and intended to create new community gathering spaces while engaging youth in community and leadership development.

As the block watch looked at places to install a butterfly habitat, its leaders consulted Mahoning County Land Bank. A pair of land bank-owned vacant lots at Ohio and West Dennick avenues became the project site. The County Land Bank also invested in the installation, thanks to a greening grant it received from The Raymond John Wean Foundation.

“Even though we wanted to improve the lots, our focus was on the youth,” says Joyce Davidson, president of Know Your Neighbor block watch. “We understand that kids can be a strong asset to any community. We wanted to give kids the opportunity to use their creative abilities to benefit the neighborhood while expanding their knowledge of native plants and butterflies. We also sought to develop good work ethics and to experience the joy of getting a paycheck.” The block watch purchased gift cards with Youth Greening Grant funds and gave them to the young participants.

Now, an unkempt corner has become clean and beautiful. Adults who are new to Know Your Neighbor Block Watch became involved because of this project. Neighbors and passersby witnessed youth doing positive and creative activities.

As time goes on, the block watch believes the butterfly habitat will become a living classroom for students at nearby Harding Elementary School and remain a source of pride in the neighborhood.

- end of release -