

## Neighborhood Service Exchange Starting in Everett, South Salt Creek

In September 2004, Health Partners Initiative began a grassroots volunteer program in Everett and South Salt Creek neighborhoods, Neighborhood Service Exchange (NSE).

NSE is a service credit program which links neighbor-to-neighbor for volunteer help with occasional tasks and errands. Participants may provide services or receive service or both! For each hour of service donated by volunteers, an hour of service credit is earned. This credit may be used at a later time or donated back to the program for others in need.

All services have equal value. A

computer database is used to track services and credits. Volunteer services are matched to individual needs. Volunteers are encouraged to utilize their individual talents, interests and creativity as members of the NSE.

The resident expert network within NSE are volunteers who take leadership in helping their neighbors find community support in times of need. They connect families and individuals with available community resources. These leaders take the time to listen, offer help and problem solve. Health Partners trains resident experts about information and referral.

For more information, or to get a

membership application, for NSE or the resident expert network, contact the NSE Office at 434-5490.

Health Partners Initiative exists to create a healthier Lincoln and Lancaster County. For more information on Health Partners, call 441-8144 or go to [www.healthpartnersinitiative.org](http://www.healthpartnersinitiative.org). (YM)

*Mayor Seng helped kick off the Neighborhood Service Exchange Project at Cooper Park last July. The Mayor is pictured with members of the Wamstad-Evans family.*



## NCEA Honors Larry Hudkins for Meritorious Service



*Larry Hudkins accepts this year's "Meritorious Service by an Individual" award from the NCEA.*

Nebraska Cooperative Extension Association (NCEA) recently awarded Lancaster County Commissioner Larry Hudkins with "Meritorious Service by an Individual." Each year, at its annual conference, NCEA recognizes individuals and organizations for their outstanding contributions to the people of Nebraska.

Larry Hudkins has served on the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners since 1987 and is current Vice Chairman. He also serves on the Lincoln-Lancaster County Board of Health and Lincoln-Lancaster Public Building Commission.

A farmer, Hudkins is very involved with agriculture on the local, state, national and international levels. He has provided leadership to the following organizations: Lancaster County Farm Bureau, Nebraska Foundation for Agricultural Awareness, Nebraska Young Farmers & Ranchers, Nebraska Cattlemen, Nebraska Ag Builders, Nebraska AgRelations Council and the Leadership Education/Action Development (LEAD) program.

He and his wife, Carol, live near Malcolm, Nebraska. Both are solid supporters of Cooperative Extension and the 4-H youth development program.

The 2004 NCEA Conference was held Nov. 16-18 in Kearney, Nebraska. Since Hudkins was unable to attend, Lancaster County Extension Educators and NCEA members Lorene Bartos and Tom Dorn presented the award to Hudkins at the Dec. 7th Lancaster County Board meeting.

"It is a pleasure to accept this award from the state extension association," Hudkins said. "Extension has always been near and dear to our hearts — Carol and I are both former 4-H members. It's been my pleasure to serve at several extension review boards. One of the reasons I'm particularly interested in extension is the good work you do that a lot of people do not realize. For instance, EFNEP (Expanded Food & Nutrition Program) — when we look at nutrition education for people who have limited funds and how they can get the most out of their money."

Hudkins continued, "What I really appreciate about Lancaster County Extension is the tremendous amount of knowledge which is available, free to anybody in Lancaster County or the state of Nebraska, particularly to our youth. Nearly 20,000 kids are enrolled in 4-H in Lancaster County in one form or another. When you look at the small amount of money we put into that program, and what we have to put into juvenile rehabilitation if we have to go that route. It's either pay now or pay later, so I think it's a good investment. Thank you, I appreciate this honor very much."

NCEA is a statewide, professional organization representing extension professionals of University of Nebraska's Cooperative Extension. Its goals are to assist in establishing and maintaining high standards for extension work.

Helen Mitrofanova  
Extension Educator

*Editor's Note: "How to Organize a Neighborhood Association" was published in the Nov./Dec. 2004 Neblin which is online at [lancaster.unl.edu](http://lancaster.unl.edu).*

### Meetings

Nobody likes to attend meetings that are a waste of time. Meetings which seem to be endless and accomplish little or nothing leave people extremely frustrated.

As a neighborhood leader, you have the opportunity and responsibility to make meetings effective, productive and even pleasant. You need to make people feel the time they devote to meetings is time well spent.

The following is a guide for successful and effective meetings:

1. Decide on a convenient time and date to meet by consulting with your core group and neighbors.
2. Develop a well-planned agenda, which includes: topics for discussion; presenter or discussion leader for each topic; time allotment for each topic.
3. Invite a neutral facilitator to sensitive meetings.
4. Meeting information needs to be circulated to everyone before the meeting. Make sure to include: meeting objectives; meeting agenda; location/date/time; background information; assigned items for preparation.
5. Determine a method of follow-up to remind the neighborhood volunteers. This may be done by phone calls, letters and flyers.
6. Set up the room for the meeting in advance. Tables and chairs should be in place.
7. Display any handouts near the entrance.
8. Meeting notes must be recorded and made part of the organization's meeting information archives.
9. During the meeting:
  - a) greet members and make them feel welcome, even late members when appropriate;
  - b) serve light refreshments, they make good icebreakers and people feel comfortable;
  - c) start on time and end on time;

- d) review the agenda and set priorities for the meeting;
  - e) stick to the agenda.
10. After the meeting, the minutes must be distributed to all members.

### Committees

Organizations accomplish their objectives through the dedicated work of committees. The committees are the heart of a successful neighborhood association. The task of the committees is to consider and respond to issues presented from the community. The types of committees depend on the overall purpose and structure of your neighborhood association.

Committees also allow residents to work together to plan events and other activities that build the community. The committee structure should be fun and is meant as a way for residents to get to know each other and develop community working relationships.

There are generally two major categories:

#### NEIGHBORHOOD AFFAIRS

Examples:

- Housing conditions
- Police-neighborhood relations
- Economic development
- Neighborhood maintenance
- Community services and resources
- Traffic safety
- Youth development/kids clubs

#### INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Examples:

- Fundraising/finance
- Meeting arrangements
- Communications/publicity
- Bylaws
- Social events
- Welcome/membership

To maintain active, productive and motivated members on the committees:

- Encourage members to participate in the association and the committee planning process; help members find a place in the organization — find a task for each person to do, no matter how small, as they feel they are contributing.
- Define and discuss the goals and objectives of the committees; provide people with some structure.
- Give recognition to members and committees on their contributions to the neighborhood association.

## How to Maintain a Neighborhood Association

- Help members develop communication skills; encourage long-time members to mentor new members.
- Make meetings and committee work as productive as possible; no one wants to feel they are wasting time.

### Communication Tools

Whether trying to reach potential members, funders or the general public many neighborhood associations fail to develop a communication strategy that will help them to reach their audience.

Communication is a key to success in neighborhoods on many different levels. Do not keep your great work a secret; spread the word. This will help others in the neighborhood join the association and take part in making a difference.

There are different ways to communicate with your neighborhood:

- Neighborhood association newsletter
  - Weekly area newspapers
  - Schools, churches and club newsletters
  - Door-to-door handouts
  - Person-to-person by phone among friends and neighbors
  - Neighborhood survey by mail, phone and door-to-door
  - Bulletins, notices, pamphlets, posters and flyers placed with permission in schools, laundromats, libraries, supermarkets, local restaurants, stores and waiting rooms in dentist/doctor's offices
  - A neighborhood Web page
  - Booths at local events
  - Speakers at business groups, service clubs, youth groups, schools and churches
  - Lawn signs
  - Letters
  - Telephone tree
  - E-mail
  - Cooperative efforts with adjoining neighborhoods
- Have fun! The work of a neighborhood association should not be drudgery — much of what you need to do is to build the social fabric of your neighborhood — this should include many parties and get-togethers! Have events that appeal to all, particularly children.

*Source: "How to Build a Neighborhood Association," [www.ci.renton.wa.us/ednsp/neighborhood.htm](http://www.ci.renton.wa.us/ednsp/neighborhood.htm); "Neighborhood Guidebook," [www.cityofwenatche.com/acrofiles/NeighborhoodGuidebook.pdf](http://www.cityofwenatche.com/acrofiles/NeighborhoodGuidebook.pdf)*