



Heritage Herald

July/August 2026

The Newsletter of Heritage Hill

Volume MMXXVI, No. 4

Dragonflies



take flight in Heritage Hill!

The Heritage Herald newsletter of
Heritage Hill Association
252 State St SE, Ste 101
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616-459-8950

Email: heritage@heritagehillweb.org
Website: heritagehillweb.org

Facebook:  @heritagehill

Instagram:  @heritagehillassociation
Hours: 10am-3pm, Mon-Thurs

Contact us to be added to our email alerts on public safety, community engagement, and all things HHA.

HHA's purpose:

- To promote communication, cooperation, and friendship among neighbors
- To help maintain and improve neighborhood property and the physical appearance of our community
- To provide neighbors a way of collectively building a healthy, historically preserved community in which people can live and work in a secure and stable environment
- To identify neighborhood problems and social needs, and to develop and implement solutions
- To initiate neighborhood programs to improve the quality of life
- To develop a spirit of pride and individual obligation to the neighborhood
- To promote and develop a successful multi-racial, and multi-ethnic neighborhood

Staff:

Carly Durham-Bruins, Public Safety Community Organizer

Board of Directors:

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The HHA Board of Directors meets at 7pm on the third Wednesday of most months, in the Community Education Room of the Hauenstein Center, Trinity Health, 200 Jefferson Ave SE. Contact us to confirm meeting details and location in any given month.

HHA provides information and encourages neighbor participation to keep Heritage Hill safe and vital, including working on community issues as they arise. As an association of neighbors, we have a strong voice but no regulatory authority.

The Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) regulates all exterior work and repairs to buildings in Heritage Hill and approval is required before any work begins. HPC: 616-456-3451; rbaker@grcity.org.

Heritage Herald - Circulation @4,000

The *Heritage Herald* is published by the HHA Board of Directors six times a year (bi-monthly). The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Board of Directors. We reserve the right to edit. Address correspondence to the address above.

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Dragonflies Take Flight This July!

Something extraordinary is about to take flight in Heritage Hill, and we hope you will be part of it.

This July, the first **Heritage Hill Dragonfly** forms will arrive, marking the beginning of one of the neighborhood's most exciting community art projects. As part of our ArtPrize installation, hundreds of dragonflies will be transformed into unique works of art and displayed throughout Heritage Hill, creating an immersive outdoor gallery unlike anything our neighborhood has ever seen.

Whether you are an experienced artist, a first-time creator, a family looking for a fun project, or simply someone who loves Heritage Hill, this is your opportunity to leave your mark on our historic neighborhood.

Choose the dragonfly that is right for you:

- ✱ **Large Dragonfly Form - \$35**
- ✱ **Small Dragonfly Form - \$15**

Once you receive your dragonfly, the creativity is yours! Paint it, mosaic it, embellish it, or design it in a style that reflects your personality, your home, or your artistic vision. Every dragonfly will be different, yet together

they will become one spectacular neighborhood-wide installation celebrating creativity, transformation, and community.

When completed, the dragonflies will be displayed on front lawns, porches, gardens, and public-facing spaces throughout Heritage Hill during ArtPrize, inviting thousands of visitors to stroll our beautiful streets and experience the neighborhood in a whole new way.

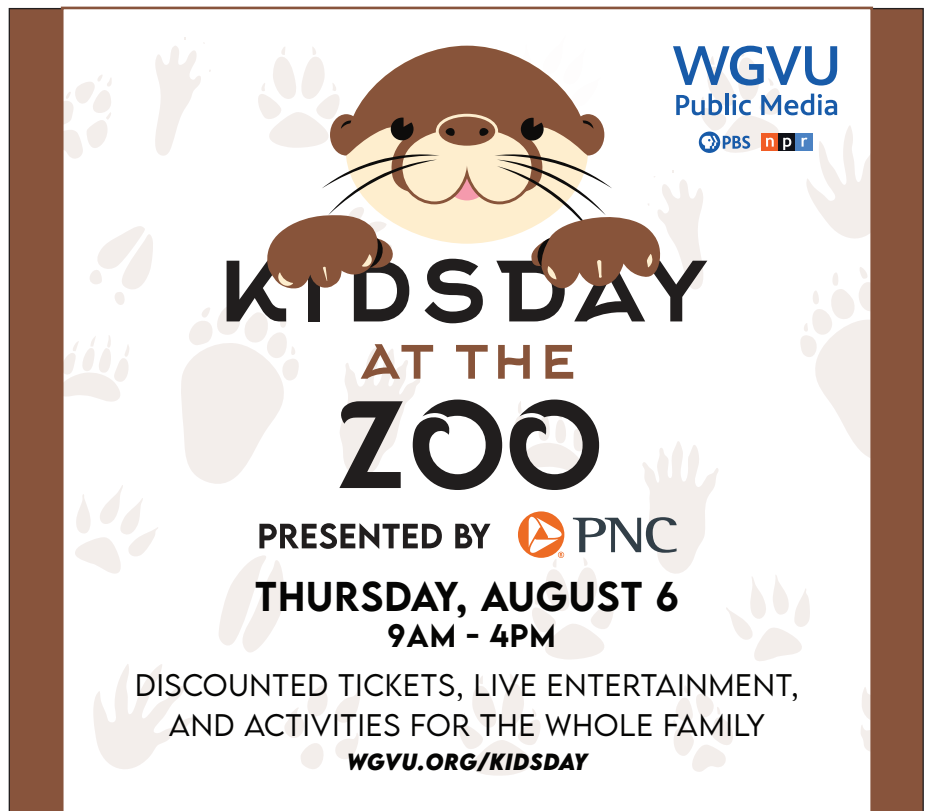
This is more than an art project, it is an opportunity to make history. Together, we will create a landmark installation that celebrates the people, creativity, and spirit that make Heritage Hill so special.

Be part of Heritage Hill ArtPrize history!

Questions reach out to denise@heritagehillweb.org

Purchase your dragonfly today by visiting heritagehillweb.org/dragonflies/

before they are gone. We cannot wait to see your imagination take flight and watch hundreds of dragonflies soar across the neighborhood this fall!



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Tour of Homes 2026 Sets New Standard for Community Impact

The 2026 Heritage Hill Tour of Homes proved to be much more than a weekend of opening beautiful historic homes. It was a celebration of preservation, community partnerships, and giving back.

Thanks to the incredible support of homeowners, volunteers, sponsors, businesses, and thousands of visitors, this year's Tour generated \$94,369.25 while keeping expenses low (\$15,168.76), resulting in an impressive net income of \$79,200.39. These funds will directly support the Heritage Hill Association's mission and support community organizations like Addie's Pantry and Grand Rapids Public Museum, while funding neighborhood programs and future community initiatives.

The inaugural VIP Twilight Tour & Tastes was a success, generating more than \$17,400 in revenue and creating a new opportunity to engage with neighbors and community. This year's Tour welcomed 2,467 visitors, many experiencing Heritage Hill for the very

first time.

Beyond the financial success, the Tour made a meaningful investment in the community. Through the generosity of attendees and supporters, the Heritage Hill Association is proud to have contributed \$10,000 to Addie's Pantry, helping address food insecurity in our community. Last month, Addie's Pantry was able to support over three hundred families. In addition, \$10,000 will be donated to the Grand Rapids Public Museum in recognition of its extraordinary partnership in making the historic Voigt House Mansion available to Home Tour guests.

The economic impact of the Tour extended beyond Heritage Hill. Local restaurants, coffee shops, retailers, and businesses reported one of their busiest weekends. Several business owners have already expressed interest in partnering with Heritage Hill on future events, reinforcing the Tour's role as both a cultural attraction and an economic driver for the area.

Behind the scenes, hundreds of

volunteer hours were invested in planning, marketing, and sponsorship engagement. Volunteers promoted the Tour through more than one hundred Facebook groups, Instagram, media outlets, tourism networks, and historic preservation communities, while local influencers participated in a special Heritage Hill walking tour that helped introduce the neighborhood to thousands of new followers.

The success of the 2026 Tour of Homes demonstrates what is possible when our community comes together with a shared purpose. Every ticket purchased, every volunteer hour, every sponsorship, and every partnership helped preserve our wonderful neighborhood while strengthening connections throughout Grand Rapids.

As planning begins for the 2027 Tour of Homes, we look forward to building on this momentum, expanding community partnerships, growing volunteer engagement, and continuing to showcase our wonderful neighborhood.

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2026 Garden Tour – A Day Of Sun, Friends & Flowers

A perfect summer day, twelve lovely unique gardens and a record number of visitors enjoying the beauty of Heritage Hill - the Garden Tour was a bloomin' success!

We are so grateful to the gardeners for all the effort and care that went into preparing their gardens. Their willingness to share their time and knowledge was appreciated by all those walking through their verdant works of art.

A successful event takes a village, and many neighbors contributed to the project. Central Reformed Church was a welcoming hub, providing a venue for ticket sales, parking, and water. Bartlett generously gave away free trees at the site. Our neighbors at the Child Development Center and Elders'

Helpers offered parking and Meyer May House shared their restrooms. Many volunteers contributed their time working on the planning committee, helping with promotion and publicity, selling tickets, and providing supplies for the garden host party - what a giving community! We are profoundly grateful.

We hope that many of you were able to enjoy this year's tour - it was one to remember. If you are interested in being part of Garden Tour 2027, please contact the HHA office. It is rewarding and fun!

Thank you to our garden hosts:

Char Kruzich, Jim Payne & Kirsten Lundeen
Mary Jo & Steve Yared
Jerry Dreyer

Tammy & Jim Koop
Kate McElwee
Jayson Dahlke-Butler
Leslie VanBecker & Ed Clifford
Alane & Gary Zelinsky
Andy Brookhouse & Paul Cook
Jane & Reid Taylor
Kate & Dan Diedrich
Grand Rapids Public Museum
(Voigt House)

Planning Committee:

Kate Diedrich
Tom & Chris Truesdale
Leslie VanBecker
Julia Hawkins
Rebecca Firlik
Carly Durham-Bruins

Special thanks to HHA board members
Denise Cook, Kim Lucas, and Cathy Bosscher.

Thank you!

We appreciate all of the people who have made this tour possible:

Central Reformed Church
Meyer May House
Grand Rapids Public Museum

Child Discovery Center
Elders Helpers
Boardwalk Subs

Wormies
Our Volunteers
Our generous sponsors

... and especially our gracious hosts for nurturing and sharing our gardens.



GRAND RAPIDS
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Be curious.

Consider running for the Heritage Hill Board in December

Get more involved in the running of the Heritage Hill Association. Board elections will take place at our Annual Party and Membership Meeting in December. For information on the responsibilities and benefits of Board Membership, email heritage@heritagehillweb.org or call 616-459-8951.

To nominate yourself, we need to

receive your name, address and other contact information as well as a statement of up to 100 words on why you wish to serve on the board. Nominations must be received in the office by 3pm, Oct 27th. We will get in touch after receiving your nomination.

Help mold the future of the Heritage Hill Association.

Join Your Community Health And Safety Committee!

We help keep Heritage Hill a safe and healthy place to live and work for homeowners and renters. This summer, the Community Health and Safety Committee (CHSC) is addressing issues immediately impacting health and safety here in the neighborhood including; assisting families dealing with Lead Poisoning and connecting them with other resources around the county; reporting violations of Lead Dust hazard containment laws to keep kids safe; supporting the creation of new public gardens; supporting permitting for residential solar installations and other emergency-preparedness efforts; crime and burglary; and communicating with neighbors about excellent GR city safety initiatives. We also continue working to support the HHA Board's larger goal of reintroducing the old social Block Groups on every block in the neighborhood, to fight the modern epidemic of loneliness, doom scrolling, and isolation. Block parties and BBQs for everybody!

If you're interested in making a difference on any of these very local issues, please email carly@heritagehillweb.org To Join the CHSH! Or simply join us at our monthly meetings, currently the last Wednesday of every month at 12p lunch at the Commons.

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How am I gonna make this work?

If you've said this phrase recently, maybe while looking at your bank account or work/childcare schedule, **you are not alone.** Groceries and gas are more expensive than ever, bills are higher, and a lot of folks are finding it hard just to make it through the month, if not the week.

We're also dealing with a lot of really heavy realities about the world, as well as private struggles that may be making things much harder to handle on our own. This can lead to feelings of depression, anxiety, and more.

In the spirit of supporting our neighbors and our community when times get tough, below is a list of local resources available to use when you need a boost, whether mental, physical or material. This list is not exhaustive, but provides a good jumping-off point.

Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault
Call **Safe Haven** any time at **616-452-6664** - all are welcome, including those supporting people who have survived domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

Food and Household Items
Our very own Central Reformed Church houses **Addie's Food Pantry** for those in need of groceries and personal care items. *Open Tuesdays 1:00-3:00pm.* Call **616-456-1773** or email **office@centralreformedchurch.org** for more information.

Healthcare/Dental
There are multiple low-cost or free clinics for those without insurance, or

who have insurance but cannot afford co-pays:

Catherines Health Center: Offers primary care, as well as ongoing treatment for chronic conditions - and dental care. Call **616-336-8800** to book an appointment, or for more information.

Cherry Street Health Center: Located right at 550 Cherry St, they offer both health and dental care. Call **616-235-7272** to book an appointment, or for more information.

Housing*

Step 1 for those who are unhoused or facing imminent homelessness should be to call the **Housing Assessment Program (HAP) at **616-454-5840**.*

Other housing resources are:

AYA Youth Collective: Located right at 320 State St, they offer housing services and other resources for *youth ages 14-24*. Call **616-406-3945** or email **info@ayayouth.org** for more information.

Dwelling Place: Provides affordable housing for low-income individuals, as well as support services for people seeking housing. Call **616-454-0928** or email **info@dpgr.org** for more information.

LINC UP: Provides affordable housing for low-income individuals, as well as support services for people seeking housing, with a specific focus on racial equity. Call **616-451-9140** or email **info@lincrev.org** for more information.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse
There are many ways to access mental health care:

For mental health emergencies:

- You can call **Network180** at **616-336-3909** at any time.
- You can visit **Pine Rest Psychiatric Urgent Care**, open 8:00am-6:00pm Monday-Friday - call **616-455-9200** for more information.

For less urgent needs:

- **Catherines Health** and **Cherry Health**, listed above, also offer affordable mental health services that include substance abuse counseling.
- **PsychologyToday.com** allows you to search for providers based on your needs, like insurance coverage, location, specialty, etc. Many providers offer sliding scale payments, which means lower fees per session - you just need to ask!

Legal Advice/Assistance

For those seeking legal advice or assistance, there are two main options:

Grand Rapids Bar Association: For a **\$25 fee**, utilize the Lawyer Referral and Information Service to find an attorney that fits your legal needs. After matching with an attorney, you will receive a **free** 30-minute consultation about your case.

Legal Aid of Western Michigan:

Provides legal assistance to low-income individuals, if the case qualifies. Call **616-774-0672** for more information.



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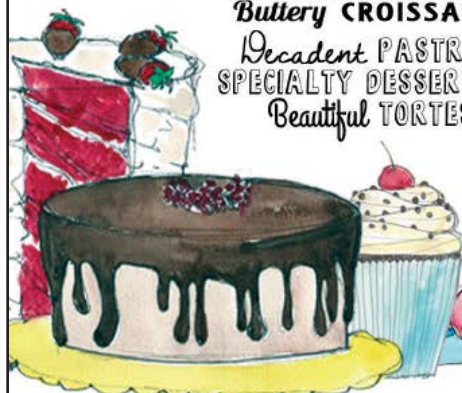
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Cocktails & Curiosities: A Monthly Journey Through Heritage Hill's

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History has a way of coming alive when it's shared over good conversation, handcrafted cocktails, and a room full of curious minds. Through a wonderful partnership between the **Heritage Hill Association** and **Mammoth Distilling Co.**, the monthly **Cocktails & Curiosities** series offers guests an entertaining evening of history, storytelling, and community.

Held at **Mammoth Distilling Co. on Wealthy Street in Grand Rapids**, each program brings together engaging speakers, fascinating local history, cocktail tastings, and delicious food in one of the city's most welcoming gathering spaces. Whether you're a history enthusiast, a Heritage Hill neighbor, or simply looking for a unique night out, Cocktails & Curiosities promises an unforgettable experience.

July – The Ford Home: A House Full of Stories, July 30th 7pm

The series continues in July with special guest **Tim England**, owner of the historic Gerald R Ford Boyhood Home. Tim's presentation is filled with humor, history, and heartfelt memories as he shares what it was really like to own one of Grand Rapids' most

recognizable historic homes.

Hear the remarkable story of purchasing the home when a blue tarp served as the roof—allowing visitors to see the sky from the dining room—and learn how years of dedication transformed the home into the architectural treasure admired today. Tim also shares countless stories of the visitors who travel from around the world to admire the house, the friendships created through opening its doors, and the unique responsibility of preserving a piece of Grand Rapids history. His presentation offers a rare behind-the-scenes look at life inside one of Heritage Hill's most iconic residences.

August – Prohibition Stories & Cocktail Demonstration Aug 27th 7pm

Step back into the Roaring Twenties as we explore the colorful era of Prohibition. Discover the stories of secret speakeasies, bootleggers, law enforcement, and the creative ways people continued to enjoy drinking despite the law. The evening also includes a live cocktail demonstration featuring classic Prohibition-era cocktails, offering guests both a taste of history and a glimpse of the craft behind these timeless drinks.

September – Dragonflies: Victorian Symbolism Oct 1st 7pm

As Heritage Hill prepares for ArtPrize and the neighborhood-wide Dragonflies of Heritage Hill installation, September's presentation explores the rich symbolism of dragonflies during the Victorian era. Often representing transformation, hope, resilience, and new beginnings, dragonflies were a popular design element in Victorian art and architecture.

Guests will also learn about the Heritage Hill Dragonflies project and how hundreds of artistically decorated dragonflies will transform the neighborhood into an outdoor gallery celebrating creativity, community, and the beauty of Heritage Hill.

October – Haunted Heritage Hill Oct 21st 7pm

Just in time for Halloween, local historian **Caroline Cook** returns to share the mysterious stories, legends, and unexplained happenings that have made Heritage Hill one of Grand Rapids' most intriguing historic neighborhoods. From eerie encounters to fascinating historical accounts, this popular presentation is sure to become a seasonal favorite.

November – The Bissell Family and Their Heritage Hill Mansion Nov 12th 7pm

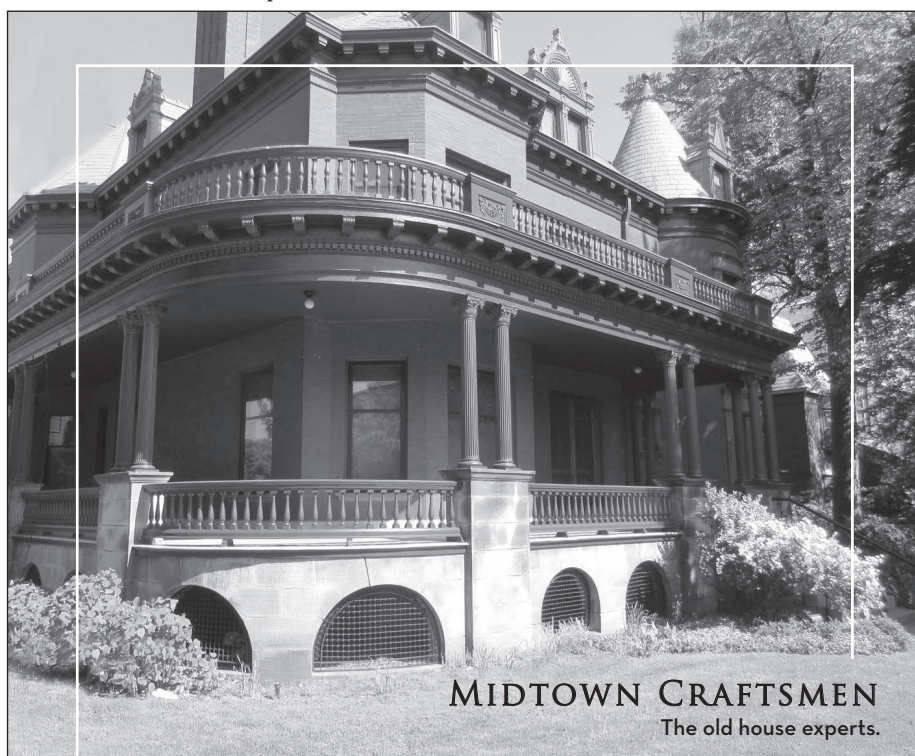
November's presentation explores the legacy of the Bissell family and the magnificent mansion they built in Heritage Hill. Discover the family's impact on Grand Rapids, the history of their remarkable home before it was demolished in the 1950's and what makes this residence one of the lost architectural treasures in Heritage Hill.

December – A Victorian Christmas & Holiday Cocktails Dec 7th 7pm

The series concludes with **Caroline Cook** returning to celebrate the magic of a Victorian Christmas. Learn about holiday traditions, decorations, entertaining, and customs of the Victorian era while exploring the origins of festive holiday cocktails that warmed homes during the Christmas season.

An Evening of History, Hospitality, and Great Company

Each **Cocktails & Curiosities** event includes themed cocktail tastings or



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History

a cocktail along with delicious snacks specially prepared by **Chef Tommy Fitzgerald**.

Thanks to **Mammoth Distilling Co.**, these monthly gatherings provide a welcoming space where history comes alive through storytelling, conversation, and shared experiences. Together, our organizations are creating opportunities for the community to celebrate Grand Rapids' rich heritage while supporting local businesses and preserving the stories that make Heritage Hill so special.

Because each presentation is designed to be an intimate experience, **seating is limited**. Individual lectures are **\$35 per person** or reserve your place for the **entire six-part series for just \$180**, guaranteeing your seat at every presentation.

Raise a glass, make new friends, and discover the remarkable stories that continue to shape one of America's most treasured historic neighborhoods.

Reserve your seats today—this unique series is expected to sell out!



Red Cross CPR AED and First Aid Adult and Infant Training

Would you like to get certified from the Red Cross? The Heritage Hill Association is considering offering this training this fall and want to see how many of our neighbors would like to participate.

This would include 3 hours and 51 minutes of self-paced web-based learning and 2-hour 15 minutes of classroom training. After completion you will be issued a 2-year certification. Please either email us at heritage@heritagehillweb.org or call the office at 616-459-8950 to let us know if you want to participate. We would require a \$20 deposit to hold your spot once we schedule the class which would be refunded after you complete the class. Please let us know if you are interested by 8/31/26.



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At the City of Grand Rapids, we recognize the importance of being good stewards of our land, innovative and forward-thinking in our operations, and fiscally responsible to our residents.

Resident voices during the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan focus groups and interviews made it clear that our local expectation is to build on our existing municipal refuse collection system to include "organics circularity." We intend to collect food scraps and wood/yard waste and return them to the community as compost for growing food.

Our goals include:

- Diverting organics from landfill/incineration
- Providing accessible food scrap drop off locations in all wards of the city.
- Prioritizing City-operated organics collection and processing to build back our urban soil
- Ensuring access to compost for residents and neighborhood gardens to grow food

Our community and City strategic priorities clearly set the expectation of our municipality to provide access to diversion of food/wood/yard waste, process it as compost, and return it to neighborhood gardens, backyard family gardens, and organizations supporting food access in the City of Grand Rapids. By the end of 2026, we intend to achieve organics circularity!

Renew Grand Rapids will benefit our community by providing a food scrap drop-off option, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from landfills, and delivering nutrient-rich soil directly to our residents.

How can you help?

- Sign up to be part of the residential food scrap collection pilot
- Help spread the word and get your Grand Rapids neighbors HYPED to join the food scrap collection pilot!
- Join a community engagement event to help select sites for food scrap collection container and sites for compost distribution.
- Sign-up for updates through PublicInput



Heritage Hill Emergency Preparedness & Resilience Survey

Neighbors, you can help make Heritage Hill better prepared for emergencies through taking a short survey. You can take the survey at: bit.ly/HeritageHillResilienceSurvey (or scan below).

On June 11th, the Heritage Hill Environmental Club partnered with the City of Grand Rapids Office of Emergency Management to host an Emergency Preparedness Information & Listening Session at Cornerstone Church.

As a follow-up to that event, we are running a survey that should take 7 to 10 minutes of your time. Through your input, we hope to better understand:

- The social cohesion in our neighborhood, which is a key factor in community resilience;
- The levels of personal emergency preparedness in our neighborhood;
- How and to what extent our residents have experience or expertise in emergency response; and
- The type of support most needed by our community when localized crises strike.

Please respond to [the survey](https://bit.ly/HeritageHillResilienceSurvey) whether or not you attended the June 11th event. We'd like to get broad feedback from Heritage Hill neighbors.



The Heritage Hill Association publishes available apartments.

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Heritage Hill Apartment Rental
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Update From Mobile GR

Lyon Street Two-Way Conversion Study Update

The City of Grand Rapids and the Mobile GR Department continue to evaluate the potential conversion of a portion of Lyon Street to two-way traffic as part of the broader transportation analysis associated with the Corewell expansion.

At this time, the study is focused solely on Lyon Street. After further analysis, the City is no longer currently pursuing a two-way conversion of Fountain Street.

The remaining evaluation is centered on two potential options for Lyon Street:

- Converting Lyon Street to two-way traffic from Division Avenue to College Avenue, or
- Converting Lyon Street to two-way traffic from Division Avenue to Lafayette Avenue.

These are the only two alternatives currently under consideration. City staff are continuing to analyze traffic operations, safety, access, and the potential impacts associated with each option before making a final recommendation.

We anticipate having a final

recommendation within the next two months. Once that work is complete, City staff look forward to sharing the results and continuing the conversation with the Heritage Hill neighborhood.

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Calling All Actors, Storytellers & History Lovers!

Have you ever wanted to bring history to life? Here's your chance!

The Heritage Hill Association is excited to launch our **new Haunted History Tour**, and we're looking for enthusiastic volunteers to help make this unforgettable experience a reality.

Whether you're an experienced actor or someone who simply enjoys dressing up, meeting new people, and having fun, we'd love to have you join our cast. Throughout the tour, volunteers will portray historic residents, colorful characters, and legendary figures while sharing fascinating—and sometimes mysterious—stories from Heritage Hill's rich past.

This is a wonderful opportunity to:

- Meet your fellow neighbors and support our organization.
- Share the incredible history of our neighborhoods.
- Dress in costume and perform in a fun, welcoming environment.
- Be part of an exciting new Heritage Hill tradition.

No professional acting experience is necessary. We'll provide the stories, guidance, and support—you bring your enthusiasm and willingness to have a great time!

If you've ever wanted to become part of Heritage Hill's history while helping create a memorable experience for our visitors, we'd love to have you join us.

Interested in joining the Haunted History Tour cast?

Please contact **Denise Cook** denise@heritagehillweb.org to learn more and sign up. Whether you can participate in one evening or throughout the season, your help will make this exciting new event a success.

Come help us bring the legends, mysteries, and history of Heritage Hill to life!

Narcan is now available in the Heritage Hill offices

Narcan(naloxone) is safe for patients of all ages, from infants to older adults—even pets! It works by blocking opioid receptors in the brain, and it will not cause harm or adverse reactions if administered to someone who has not consumed opioids. Veterinarians commonly use naloxone for pets, particularly dogs that have accidentally ingested human medication or illicit opioids.

It is applied as a nasal spray and is covered under the Good Samaritan Law. It is a medication used to reverse opioid overdoses. It's important to remember that addiction is a disease, and individuals who struggle with it deserve compassion and support. Naloxone is a life-saving medication that can give individuals a second chance at recovery. Although most professional first responders and emergency departments carry naloxone, they may not arrive in time to reverse an opioid overdose. Anyone can carry naloxone, give it to someone having an overdose, and potentially save a life. Each kit contains two doses, as it may be repeated if the first dose isn't effective. Stop in to HHA (252 State St. SE, 10 AM to 3 PM Mon-Thurs) and pick up a kit for yourself and your loved ones.

Best stored between 59 - 77 degrees. Avoid extremely hot environments over 104 degrees or freezing temperatures below 5 degrees.



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Heritage Hill Association Offices are Moving!

The current building housing the HHA offices is slated for demolition by its owners, Trinity Health. We have secured a new office at Central Reformed Church, 10 College Ave. NE, at the corner of College and Fulton.

Our move will begin on August 1, and we will completely vacate 252 State St. SE before August 31, 2026. Office hours will continue to be 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Monday-Thursday, and the phone will be staffed during those times. We will provide an update once computer and phone services have fully transitioned.

Upcoming Events:

*It's an exciting season
in Heritage Hill!*

Our **Heritage Hill Dragonflies** will arrive on **July 14**, giving neighbors, artists, families, and businesses the opportunity to purchase and decorate their own dragonfly as part of our community-wide ArtPrize project.

Cocktails & Curiosities continues on **July 30** with stories from the owner of the Gerald R. Ford Boyhood Home, followed by **Prohibition** on **August 27** and **Dragonflies: Victorian Symbolism** on **October 1**, all at 7:00 PM at Mammoth Distilling Co.

Celebrate **National Night Out** on **August 4** at Pleasant Park, attend the **Heritage Hill Association Board Meeting** on **August 19**, enjoy **Movie in the Park** on **September 12** (rain date September 13), participate in **Dumpster Day** on **October 17**, and don't miss the **Heritage Hill Halloween Parade** on **October 31**.

The **Herald** September/October content deadline is **September 8**, **Board Nominations** are due by **October 27**, and **Dinners for Eight** returns in late November with its sign-up deadline and kick-off party.

For complete event details, tickets, and Dragonfly information, visit **HeritageHillWeb.org**.

A photograph of two students, a young woman and a young man, standing in front of a whiteboard. The woman is pointing at the whiteboard, and the man is looking at it. They appear to be in a classroom or meeting setting.

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8

Plaster Creek Family Park
Insect Extravaganza
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SCAN TO LEARN
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E-Newsletter News

HHA has an e-newsletter! Most e-blast topics will now be sent in an easy to read newsletter via email from "Heritage Hill Association Newsletter" If you are signed up for e-blasts, you should be on the list for the newsletter. **Let us know if you are not seeing it and be sure to check your SPAM or Trash folders.** Please let us know if you live in Heritage Hill and would like to start receiving our newsletter by emailing your request to heritage@heritagehillweb.org. We cover public safety topics (emergency preparedness, weather alerts, and crime), community engagement (events happening in Heritage Hill and community gatherings) and city news. Feel free to send us items to add to our newsletter or ask questions. We are here to help and love innovative ideas!

Block Events for Kids

Neighbors around Heritage Hill are coming up with some cool ways to keep kids busy and engaged this summer! We have heard of some really exciting running/ biking clubs around the block with snacks afterward one evening a week! We have also heard of some arts and crafts and book clubs on Morris SE. If you have any clubs you want to let

neighbors know about or would like to start one on your block and need help getting started, please let us know at carly@heritagehillweb.org. We would love to help you find or organize something on your street! Thanks to all our neighbors for keeping an eye on kids and engaging with them. We have compiled a summer resource list for activities for kids. Let us know if you have things to add or would like a copy!

Crime in Heritage Hill

A recent rash of property damage on the 500 block of Morris Ave SE ended a long and quiet stretch with little crime reported. We received reports of 4 cars with tire damage from knife slashes and one stolen catalytic converter in the same location and time frame. Please be diligent in watching for suspicious activity on your street and report it to GRPD and let HHA know by email or phone.

Reporting crimes, no matter how small, helps GRPD recognize trends and know where to place officers.

Reporting issues to HHA staff helps get that info out to Captain Brad Bush, our area police captain as well as our community officer, Pat Martin. They rely on neighbors like you to let them know what is happening in the area

and give them the information they need to look at trends. Often, these issues tend to occur in multiple places and help give vital puzzle pieces that lead to crimes being solved. If you are able, please report all crimes. Many are able to be reported online and whether you report online or by calling the GRPD Non-Emergency (616) 456-3400, it only takes a few moments. Thank you for helping make our city safer.

Heat Safety

As extreme temperatures set in this summer, HHA and the Kent County Health Department want to remind residents to use extra caution during extreme heat forecasts. Heat-related issues can be reduced by:

- **Stay hydrated.** Drink water throughout the day, even if you're not thirsty.
- **Avoid being outside during the hottest part of the day.** Schedule outdoor activities in the morning or evening when temperatures are typically cooler.
- **Dress appropriately.** Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing.
- **Take breaks in cool spaces.** Rest indoors in air-conditioned buildings or shaded areas whenever possible. A list of cooling shelters is available, courtesy of the Grand Rapids Coalition to End Homelessness. Residents are encouraged to call ahead to confirm hours and availability.
- **Never leave children, older adults, or pets in parked vehicles.** Temperatures inside a parked vehicle can become deadly in just minutes, even with the windows cracked.
- **Check on family members, neighbors, and older adults.** Take a moment to reach out by phone, text, or a quick visit to make sure those close to you are staying cool, hydrated, and informed.

Protecting Pets From Heat

Kent County Health reminds residents that pets and other animals can suffer from heat-related illness just like people, and they rely on us to keep them safe. During periods of extreme heat, it's important to adjust routines



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and take steps to protect their health, including:

- **Bring pets indoors whenever possible.** Many animals are not equipped to handle prolonged exposure to hot temperatures.
- **Provide shade and cool water.** Ensure pets have access to shaded areas and fresh, cool drinking water at all times. If they use a doghouse, move it into the shade. Consider setting up a small pool filled with cool water or using cooling mats indoors to help lower their body temperature. If you're on a walk, bring a portable water bowl to keep pets hydrated.
- **Avoid hot surfaces.** Before walking your pet, check the pavement with the back of your hand. If it's too hot for your hand, it's too hot for their paws. Walk pets during the cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or late evening.
- **Never leave pets in parked vehicles.** Even for a short time, leaving pets in a parked vehicle can lead to heatstroke. The temperature inside can rise rapidly and become fatal, even with the windows cracked.
- **Know the signs of overheating.** Watch for symptoms such as excessive panting, drooling, weakness, and difficulty breathing. If you suspect your pet is overheating, cool them down with water and seek veterinary care as soon as possible.
- **Keep your pets well-groomed.** Regular grooming can help keep pets cool. While you can trim longer hair, avoid shaving your dog completely, as their fur provides insulation against heat.

Mosquito Related Illnesses & Prevention

Two mosquito related illnesses have been found in Kent County through regular testing during June, 2026. **Jamestown Canyon Virus and West Nile Virus were both found in Kent County zip codes recently.** Officials are urging residents to take simple preventive steps to protect themselves and reduce the risk of mosquito bites as well as watching for flu-like symptoms (fever, headache, fatigue) and neurological diseases which

are very rare but can be a result of Jamestown Canyon Virus. (Most people experience NO symptoms at all). The best way to protect yourself and your family against mosquito-borne viruses is by remembering to:

- **Use insect repellent with 10-35% DEET,** and always follow label directions.
- **Wear long sleeves and pants** to limit skin exposure.
- **Avoid outdoor activity during dawn and dusk** when mosquitoes are most active.
- **Eliminate standing water around your home**—refresh bird baths, wading pools, pet bowls, and empty small containers regularly.
- **Keep screens and gutters in good repair** to prevent mosquitoes from entering your home.

The Kent County Health Department is offering **FREE mosquito pucks (while supplies last) from our main Environmental Health Desk (700 Fuller NE).** When placed in standing water, pucks target and kill mosquito larvae before they become biting adults and are completely safe for humans, pets, and wildlife (frogs, birds etc.). Pick up yours today!

"You Are Not Alone" Elderly Volunteer Program

Could you or an elderly loved one benefit from having a volunteer stop over to check in? Sign them up for the "You Are Not Alone" program through GRPD's Community Services. Volunteers visit elderly seniors who could use someone to check in on them and visit if requested for one or two times per week and will notify emergency contacts if something is amiss. Volunteers will be wearing identifiable clothing and driving a neighborhood service vehicle. Visit Grandrapidsmi.gov/police/you-are-not-alone-application to learn more and apply.

Pleasant Park Activities

- **Hip Hop Barre**, presented by GR Parks and Recreation, is held each Thursday in Pleasant Park @ 5:30-6:15 PM. No sign up required, feel free to drop in and check it out!
- **National Night Out** will also be back at Pleasant Park on Tuesday, August 4, 2026 from 6 PM to 8 PM. We hope you can join us!
- **Movie in the Park** returns this year with Hocus Pocus on September 12, 2026 (September 13, Rain Date) @ 7 PM. Hope to see you there!

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Board Notes

Discussion at the April 15, 2026 Heritage Hill Association Board Meeting included:

President's Report: K. Lucas announced that Heritage Hill Association has been awarded a \$57,700 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The Board approved the City of Grand Rapids' required resolution and signature authorizations, designating Board officers to execute grant agreements and related documents and authorizing K. Lucas and D. Cook to approve payment requests and expenditure reports associated with the grant. K. Lucas, D. Cook, and C. Bosscher will oversee grant administration to ensure full utilization of the funding while implementing processes to track and document grant-related activities and expenditures. With grant funding now available, the Board discussed evaluating longer-term staffing needs and organizational capacity to help guide future staffing decisions.

The Board reviewed office operations following recent staffing changes, including volunteer-led office clean-up efforts, office repairs, and continued organization of the office. K. Lucas also reported that several vendor accounts had been reviewed, resulting in account credits from WAM Printing and Trinity Health. The office cleaning service was brought current and discontinued following Executive Committee approval as part of ongoing efforts to manage operating expenses. The Board also approved revised office hours of Monday–Thursday, 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

The Board voted to cancel its July Board meeting, consistent with the Association's typical summer meeting schedule.

D. Cook introduced plans for a neighborhood-wide ArtPrize community art installation featuring approximately 300 dragonflies displayed throughout Heritage Hill. The Board discussed potential funding strategies for the project, including grant opportunities and participant deposits, as planning continues. **Treasurer's Report:**

C. Bosscher reported that the Association currently maintains approximately \$117,000 in bank balances. Marcus Rich has assumed payroll tax responsibilities, Eventbrite is now remitting ticket proceeds on a biweekly basis, and the Association remains in a strong financial position.

Committee Reports:

Home Tour: D. Cook reported that Home Tour preparations continue to exceed expectations. Ticket sales are pacing well ahead of projections, with 542 General Admission, 22 VIP, and 11 Cocktails & Curiosities tickets sold as of the April Board meeting.

Marketing efforts continue through expanded social media campaigns, partnerships with local media and community influencers, outreach to architecture, historic preservation, and tourism organizations, and collaboration with neighborhood businesses. The committee also shared that Experience Grand Rapids is actively promoting the Home Tour, while the Michigan Historical Society is featuring the event in exchange for Heritage Hill providing walking tours during the Society's September conference in Grand Rapids.

The committee reported approximately \$7,000 in sponsorship commitments while continuing outreach to additional sponsors. Planning also continues for VIP Night, including a silent auction featuring nearly a dozen donated experiences and items.

D. Cook shared that 255 Paris Avenue SE will serve as a preservation education site during the Home Tour, staffed by current and former Historic Preservation Committee members to provide information on historic preservation, lead abatement, and preservation best practices.

The Board approved up to \$300 for commemorative Home Tour stickers to be sold during the event.

Land Use: W. Norlin updated the Board on the Land Use Committee's initial meetings with Corewell Health regarding its proposed expansion project adjacent to Heritage Hill. Recognizing the potential significance

of the project, he recommended early Board involvement to ensure HHA remains informed and engaged throughout the planning process.

The Board emphasized the importance of early engagement while opportunities remain to influence the project. As Corewell has invited HHA to participate in early project discussions, the committee will identify and communicate potential neighborhood impacts, anticipated resident concerns, and Heritage Hill priorities as plans evolve while continuing to keep the Board informed. To strengthen Board participation and representation from the north end of Heritage Hill, K. Heneveld requested that Matthew Heneveld be added to the committee, and J. Meeks also volunteered to participate in future meetings.

Office Operations: While the Board evaluates longer-term staffing needs, office operations continue through Board member and volunteer support, including the return of Carly Durham-Bruins to assist with office operations and community engagement, while continuing neighborhood programming and grant administration.

Community Engagement The Board reviewed upcoming neighborhood events, including Spring Cleanup (April 18–26), Heritage Hill Happy Hour (May 6), Cocktails & Curiosities (May 13), Neighborhood Yard Sale (June 6), Garden Tour (June 20), and Dumpster Day (October 17).

There was no Board meeting held in May 2026 due to final preparations for the 2026 Heritage Hill Home Tour.



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2026 DATES TO REMEMBER

July 11, 2026 @ 6 PM

Shakespeare in the Park presented
by Pigeon Creek
Pleasant Park (400 Pleasant SE)

Thursday, July 30, 2026 @ 7 PM

Cocktails and Curiosities:
Gerald R. Ford Boyhood Home
Owner Presents
Mammoth Distilling (710 Wealthy SE)

Tuesday, August 4, 2026 @ 6 pm

National Night Out
Pleasant Park (400 Pleasant SE)

Wednesday, August 15, 2026 @ 7PM

All Heritage Hill Association meetings
are open to neighbors.
HHA Board Meeting
Community Education
Conference Room
Hauenstein Center, 220 Cherry St. SE

Thursday, August 27, 2026 @ 7 PM

Cocktails & Curiosities: Prohibition
Mammoth Distilling (710 Wealthy SE)

Saturday, September 12, 2026 @ 7:30 PM

Rain Date: September 13, 2026
@ 7:30 PM
Movie in the Park
Pleasant Park (400 Pleasant SE)

Tuesday, September 8, 2026

Herald Content & Ads Deadline-
September/ October Issue

Thursday, October 1, 2026 @ 7 PM

Cocktails & Curiosities: Dragonflies:
Victorian Symbolism
Mammoth Distilling (710 Wealthy SE)

Saturday, October 17, 2026 @ 8:30 AM

Dumpster Day
*GRCC Parking lot (location off
Prospect SE, N. of Fulton)*

October 27, 2026 @ 3 PM

Deadline for Board Nominations

Saturday, October 31, 2026 @ 5:30 PM

Halloween Parade
Pleasant Park (400 Pleasant SE)

Late November, 2026-TBD

Dinners for Eight: Sign Up Deadline &
Large Group Kick-off Party

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