

**Neighbors Inc.
Officers & Board Members
2005-2006**

Officers:

Rosemary Reed — President
Chris Turner—Vice President
Gloria Sulton—Secretary
Dollie Turner—Treasurer

Elected Board Members:

Doris Collie
Rachel Kennedy
Gloria Sulton
Dollie Turner
Denise Woods
Julia Maxwell
Maria Washington

Ex-Officio Members (former Presidents):

Jean Bennett
Ramona Greene
Joseph Hairston
Loretta Neumann

NI meets on the second Tuesday of every other month. Contact Sue at 202.722.1042 or susan.learmonth@gmail.com for more information.

Join Neighbors, Inc.! Membership is open to anyone living in the neighborhoods of Manor Park, Takoma DC, Shepherd Park and Brightwood.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

New Member _____ Renewing Member _____

(\$25/family or \$20/individual)

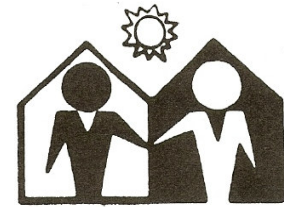
Contributing Member _____ (\$100)

Make checks payable to North Washington Neighbors, Inc. and mail to 1309 Floral Street, NW, 20012

1309 Floral Street, NW Washington, DC 20012



NEIGHBORS INK



NEIGHBORS INK

North Washington Neighbors Inc.

Tel: 202.722.1042

In-town, Integrated and Interesting

Do you love living in a neighborhood where many people of different ethnic backgrounds can attend school together, live side by side and enjoy the social interaction of friends of all backgrounds? We live in a neighborhood that is unique in Washington and the nation. It is in-town, integrated and interesting. It's wonderful, isn't it?

But it didn't happen easily. It happened because an organization, North Washington Neighbors, Inc., was founded by a group of determined neighborhood activists committed to integration and fair housing. Shepherd Park, Takoma DC, Brightwood and Manor Park -- from the District line at Eastern Avenue to Kennedy Street NW to Rock Creek Park -- those were the boundaries of the organization.

The activists were people who had helped work with a similar group in South East DC. Armed with the help and the advice of SE Neighbors, Inc. they formed the organization that focused the attention of city officials and the local press on our community and demonstrated how hard it was to fight the forces that aimed to destroy their neighborhoods.

When schools were desegregated in Washington, DC in 1954, there was a flight to the suburbs. The flight was encouraged by unscrupulous real estate agents who attempted to grab houses at rock bottom prices by falsely warning residents that their real estate values would decline or that schools would be

degraded. The methods were many but often included renting small houses to large families and telling neighbors the families had purchased the house.

Putting "SOLD" signs on houses on a block (that's one reason that Neighbors, Inc. successfully worked for an ordinance to prevent "sold" signs from going up after real estate sales.) They also knocked on doors, entered houses and offered owners cash to sell their homes.

Neighbors, Inc. responded with a two-pronged program. Using active committees they found reputable real estate agents who would sell to all home buyers--Black and white--without discrimination. They made sure that white couples were not "steered" away from the neighborhood. They reached out to members of the new Kennedy Administration and the diplomatic community to interest them in the neighborhood.

They held housing tours to introduce people to the neighborhood. They worked tirelessly to support local school programs. They created nationally renowned events like the Annual Art and Book Festival which used to be held at Coolidge High School. And they started the annual Valentine's Dance with it's "Love Your Neighbor" theme. These events stimulated media interest, excitement and a constant stream of willing buyers to the community.

There was a time when Neighbors, Inc. had a staff and foundation grants to help keep its programs alive and its members active. As time went on the original founders aged, died, and moved on. Integration seemed to become more commonplace, the threat of resegregation less a threat, the value of real estate never stopped rising. The city opened access to secondary schools throughout the District of Columbia, lessening the pressure to keep resident focused on neighborhood schools. It all re-

sulted in less engagement in Neighbors, Inc. by area residents. There were organizations like Citizens Associations and the ANC Commissions that demanded time and attention. And, over time the national commitment to integration weakened even though it didn't weaken in the Neighbors, Inc. communities.

Wonderfully, the children of some of the most active people in the organization are returning to the neighborhood as adults. New families are engaged in the schools, the DC Youth Orchestra, neighborhood safety and environmental clean-ups. There's hope for a revitalized Georgia Avenue, concern over the future of Walter Reed Army Hospital. There's some hope that the changes in Silver Spring will spill over to the District of Columbia and with the new businesses on Georgia Avenue will enhance our neighborhood still further. There's much work to be done and a wonderful organizational history to build on.

We may never again have the "movement" fervor that motivated and drove us in the sixties and thereafter, but we will always have the dream we share: The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr's dream that our children will play together, grow together, live together and work together for a better America. We have the opportunity to honor his dream and vision by living it every day.



Many thanks to Ruth Jordan for her contributions to this article.