

West Willow & Habitat Activities 2020

January

We continue to support the New West Willow Neighborhood Association (NWWNA) with their plans to rebuild the Community Resource Center. With input from the community we prepared a survey asking residents what the ideal community center would look like (size, number of floors, physical aspect etc.) and what type of programming it would offer. This survey is available in paper format and will also be offered online, and the answers will help with funding applications and overall direction of the project. We are so excited to have the members of INFORMS and the Ford Fellows lending their support and expertise to this project.



The West Willow Tool Lending Library had its first tool checked out – a jigsaw that a resident needed for a home improvement project! As the weather improves, the Library will be open regular hours, and we are helping to promote the hours, search for additional volunteers to take shifts, and train volunteers on the software use.

February

We continue to support the New West Willow Neighborhood Association (NWWNA) with their plans to rebuild the Community Resource Center. On January 23, we attended a meeting led by the NWWNA to start discussions around a financial plan and how a new center would be supported.

*****COVID-19 pandemic started*****

April

In partnership with the New West Willow Neighborhood Association and Journey of Faith Christian Church, we have converted the Little Free Library at the West Willow Community Resource Center to a Free Food Pantry and stocked it with non-perishable food and household items. We also added resource materials for residents to pick up that show how to stay safe during this pandemic. Journey of Faith Christian Church has provided funding to purchase additional supplies, and residents have agreed to check on the pantry and refill it when it runs low.



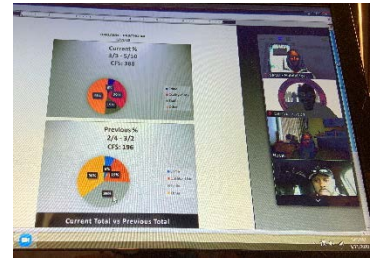
Sarah & Jo Ann McCollum, NWWNA President and new Habitat board member!



Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners is providing household and sanitation items to COVID-19 affected communities, and West Willow and Sugarbrook are both distributing items to residents. Sugarbrook is distributing at Grace Fellowship Church, and West Willow is dropping items off at residents' homes. The West Willow Tool Lending Library is being used for storage and prep. We will be contacting our HOP and HIP families in West Willow to see if they are in need of these supplies.

May

We worked with neighborhood leaders, Ypsilanti Township, and the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office to bring three neighborhood watch/association meetings online through Zoom meetings. An average of 28 people attended each meeting, and folks would like to continue in this manner until it is able to safely resume in-person meetings.



We continue to stock food, household items, and COVID-19 resources in the Free Food Pantry at the West Willow Community Resource Center. Journey of Faith Christian Church has provided funds to purchase items, and residents have been adding items. We have also been helping out at weekly West Willow distributions days. Washtenaw County has purchased cleaning and safety supplies for 48197/48198 neighborhoods, residents and community partner agencies are packaging those items, and Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office along with Washtenaw County My Brothers Keeper are handing them out in a drive-thru manner. At the same time, Ypsilanti Community Schools has a weekly breakfast and lunch food distribution for families with school-aged children. Over 250 cars come through each week for these much needed items. The Tool Lending Library and pavilion that we helped build are being used for storage and packaging. It's a wonderful site to see!



Residents & Community Partners packaging up cleaning and safety supplies



Sheriff's mobile command unit hands out the supplies as cars line up down Tyler Road



Tool Lending Library is saving lives!



YCS Food Distribution



Free Food Pantry

June

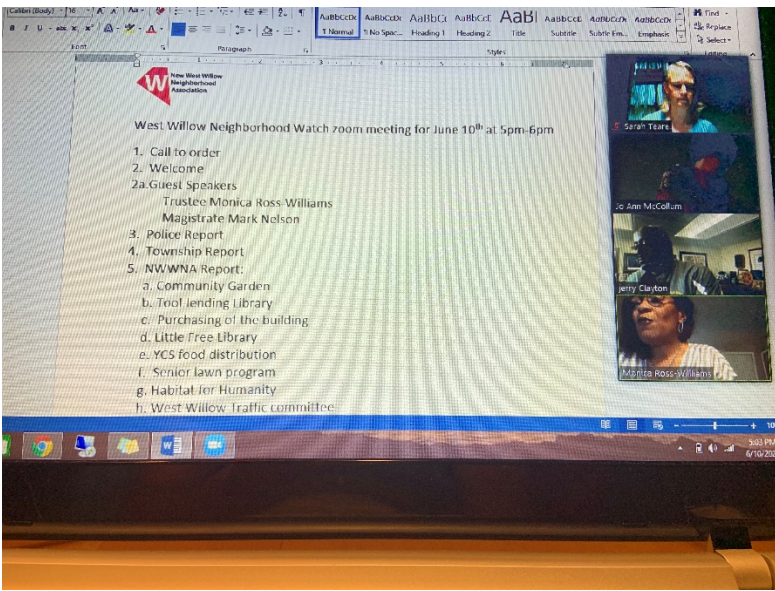
We helped promote the neighborhood watch/association meetings in West Willow and to stock food, household items, and COVID-19 resources in the Free Food Pantry at the West Willow Community Resource Center and help out at supply and food distribution days.



West Willow Little Free Pantry



Storage of Food/Items in Tool Lending Library Office



Neighborhood Watch/Association Zoom Meetings



West Willow Cleaning Supply Distribution



Ypsilanti Community Schools Food Distribution in West Willow & Cleaning Supply Organizing



The new signs for the Tool Lending Library are up!

July

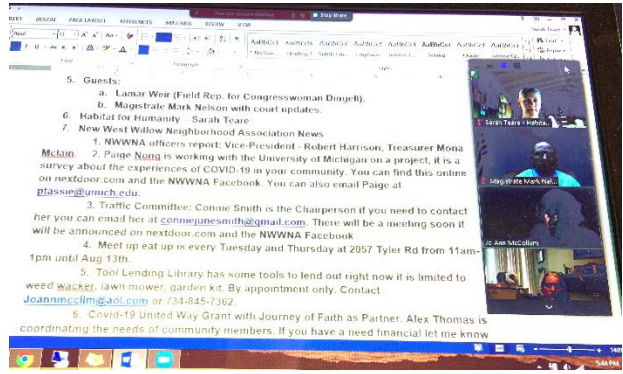
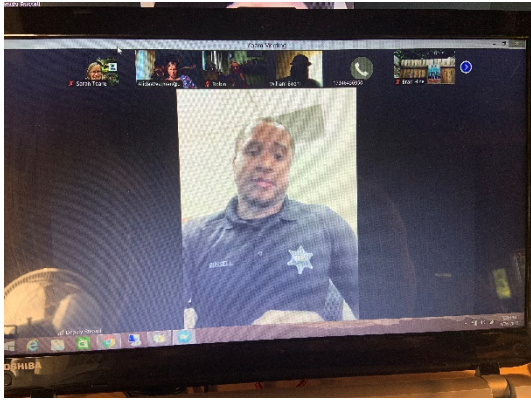
We have been creating flyers to promote the Neighborhood Association Zoom meetings, attending the meetings to share information about Habitat's programs and to lend support to community leaders. In July we hosted the meeting on our Zoom platform.

We participated in the final cleaning supply distribution in West Willow on June 18, 2020. The response to these events was enormous and showed the great need for these items in the community.

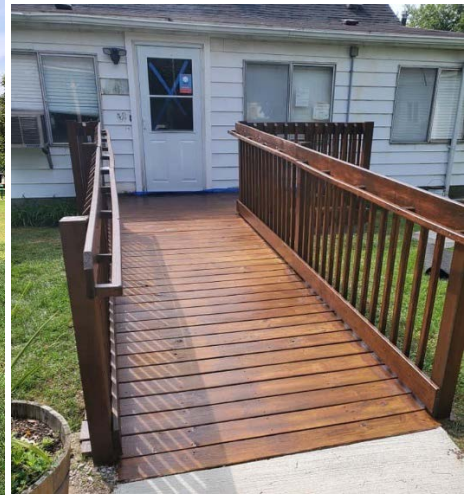


August & September

We continue to support and host Zoom neighborhood watch and association meetings in partnership with residents, Ypsilanti Township, and the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office.

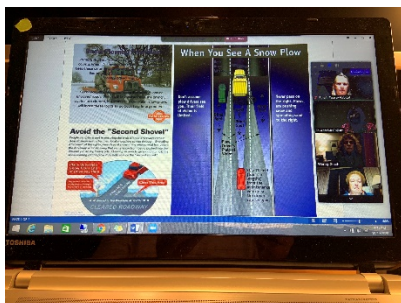


On Saturday September 12, our UM School of Social Work Intern Aaron led a group of five volunteers in the West Willow community. Volunteers cleaned up trash at West Willow Park, and trimmed trees and bushes at the Community Resource Center, the park, and Whitehead Memorial Church next door. They also finished staining the entrance ramp to the Community Resource Center, and cleaned and organized areas inside the community center. New West Willow Neighborhood Association President Jo Ann McCollum said, "The volunteers helping to clean the center that day allowed me to have dedicated time to focus on important Association business activities. Residents have also expressed that seeing the CRC being taken care of during this time makes them feel more secure in the neighborhood and connected to community activities."



October

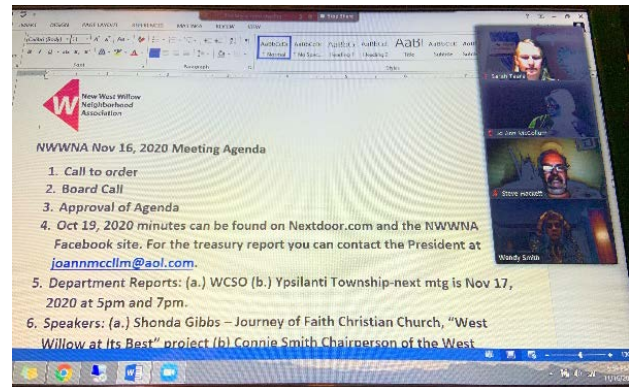
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Greg Kontur will be working with us and the New West Willow Neighborhood Association on joint projects. Greg is a freshman in Eastern Michigan University's Community Work Study Program, and we hope to have him working with us for the entire school year, and possibly beyond. He will work on clerical items, assistance with social media posts highlighting past and future work in West Willow, outreach to residents to promote Habitat & NWWNA programs and neighborhood events, and compiling a comprehensive contact database for the neighborhood.

November

Zoom continues to be our main communication method. We share information about all Habitat programs on monthly Ypsilanti Township Neighborhood Watch meetings.



Greg Kontur is working with us and the New West Willow Neighborhood Association on joint projects through Eastern Michigan University's Community Work Study Program. He has already completed some administrative tasks for NWWNA and is now researching best programs/systems to create a comprehensive contact database for the neighborhood.



Jo Ann & Greg at the NWWNA Community Resource Center



Beautiful view of the NWWNA site with pavilion, garden, Tool Lending Library

On Saturday October 25 we had a great time in the beautiful weather at the West Willow Trunk or Treat event passing out candy and pumpkins. Thank you to the ReStore for allowing us to take some pumpkins that had been donated to the store!





One of our super-volunteers Keleigh donated snacks and water for the Little Free Food Pantry in West Willow. The pantry continues to have high use.

