STARTING A NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION IN SUNNYVALE

WHY START A NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION IN SUNNYVALE?
Neighborhoods are the basic building blocks of community. There are many reasons why neighborhoods may want to organize, some of which are: to get to know your neighbors, to enhance the appearance of the neighborhood, to address a common concern, or to have a stronger voice in government. Generally, organizing your neighborhood will foster communication and interaction between neighbors and will help to boost neighborhood pride. In addition, the City of Sunnyvale offers benefits to registered neighborhood associations, which are outlined in the City's Special Agreement with neighborhood associations.

HOW DO I START A NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION IN SUNNYVALE?
Below are suggested steps that you may wish to follow as you begin to build your neighborhood association:

1. DEVELOP A CORE GROUP of neighbors (5-10 people) who are committed to starting a neighborhood association in your area.

2. SET UP AN ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING of the core group at a comfortable place, such as someone's house, or a nearby park building. Try to do outreach about the meeting to as many neighbors as possible. The initial meeting of the neighbors could result in:

   - An agreement to continue meeting to build neighborhood relationships;
   - A plan for a neighborhood event, such as a block party or an ice cream social;
   - The development of a list of issues that neighborhood residents want to discuss.

3. IDENTIFY THE GENERAL PURPOSE OF YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION. A mission statement explains why a group exists and what it hopes to accomplish. A group can revise and clarify its mission statement when/if it is deemed appropriate.

4. DETERMINE BOUNDARIES FOR YOUR ASSOCIATION. Typically, boundaries are determined by streets, city limits, or natural features along the border of a neighborhood.

5. DEVELOP A STRUCTURE FOR YOUR ASSOCIATION: OFFICERS AND BYLAWS. It is generally a good idea to elect officers – usually a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The association should also create bylaws – the rules governing an organization's internal operations, purpose of organization, membership information, terms of officers, committees, voting procedures, etc.

6. SET UP A MEETING SCHEDULE. A regular meeting schedule can provide great stability to a newly emerging organization. Association officers may wish to meet more frequently to keep updated on neighborhood needs. Meetings can be held at someone's home, at a nearby school multi-purpose room, faculty lounge, or park building.

7. ESTABLISH NEIGHBORHOOD GOALS. These goals help to identify which elements are of a priority to the neighborhood.

8. REGISTER WITH THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES OFFICE. The registration form and information sheet included in your *Starting a Neighborhood Association Information Packet* is designed to assist neighborhoods in maintaining effective communication with the City, defining boundaries, identifying neighborhood issues or concerns, and qualifying for a variety of City services.

   These services include:

   1. Distribution to officers of community meeting flyers, press releases, a public hearing notices.

   2. Placement in the Sunnyvale Neighborhood Association Registry and on the City's official neighborhood association map.

   3. Placement on the City's Web site with links to the neighborhood association web sites.

   4. Assistance in securing City and community speakers for meetings.

   5. Assistance in coordinating meetings with City staff or elected officials on issues of interest or concern to specific neighborhoods.

   6. As City resources allow, free use of available park facilities for meetings and special events. The neighborhood association is required to reserve the facility, pick up/return key to the Community Center, and set up/take down chairs and tables used. (To facilitate neighborhood outreach, the association is encouraged to explore all options for meeting space, including individual homes, schools, churches, and other community locations.

      In exchange for the free use of park building facilities, the association must assist with the distribution of appropriate City information to neighborhood association members. This includes information about upcoming community meetings, events, and other informational items. Distribution of information is accomplished through neighborhood

association newsletters, email groups, or at the neighborhood association's meetings.

7. Opportunities for connecting with organizations that support Sunnyvale neighborhood associations.

8. Opportunities for networking with other Sunnyvale neighborhood associations. A Neighborhood Associations Quarterly Meeting is held every four months for neighborhood leaders, and interested community members, to get together, share common concerns and issues, and learn about current City activities. Neighborhood associations are encouraged to act as facilitators for these meetings, with help from Neighborhood and Community Resources staff.

9. Information on how to start and maintain a neighborhood association.

10. One time $100 start up grants for new neighborhood associations. $25 of the grant must be used to register for and attend the United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County's Annual Conference. The grant funding may also be used toward neighborhood events, starting a newsletter, or other neighborhood association initiation activities. The neighborhood association start up grant involves a simple application, and is administered by Neighborhood and Community Resources staff.

9. HOW TO BUILD SUPPORT FOR YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
   - Plan a block party
   - Organize a neighborhood watch program (City staff from our Public Safety Department are available to assist you with organizing a neighborhood watch program.)
   - Develop a neighborhood newsletter to inform residents about local issues, report on meetings, attract members, and increase community pride
   - Invite guest speakers from the City to present at your meeting (see the Speakers Resource list for topics)
   - Develop a neighborhood emergency preparedness plan (City staff from our Public Safety Department are available to assist.)

10. HOW CAN THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES OFFICE HELP? We can help you strategize with neighbors to identify and prioritize neighborhood goals and objectives, introduce you to more established neighborhood associations for insight into how to sustain a neighborhood group, and support your group's planning effort.

11. OTHER RESOURCES
   - United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County (UNSCC) is a coalition of neighborhood associations which can provide further assistance with

starting and maintaining your association. UNSCC can be reached at (408) 286-8661 or on the Web at *www.unscc.org*

- Community Foundation Silicon Valley (CFSV)'s Neighborhood Grants Program provides funding to neighborhood associations. Funding is available for association activities such as newsletters, block parties, neighborhood improvement projects, and other events. For more information, contact CFSV at (408) 278-2293 or on the Web at *www.cfsv.org*

For more information or assistance with forming a neighborhood association, contact Nathan Truitt, Program Coordinator, at (408) 730-7472 or email *ntruitt@ci.sunnyvale.ca.us*

Visit us on the Web at *Neighborhoods.inSunnyvale.com*