



Across the Back Fence

May 2008

News For Neighbors From The City of Mesa Neighborhood Services Department

Alston House Ribbon Cutting



It is a small house loaded with local historical significance. Built in the 1920's, it was both home and office of Dr. Lucius Alston, the first African-American Doctor to practice in Mesa. During an era of segregation, Dr. Alston and his wife Velma, a nurse, treated members of the African-American, Hispanic, and American Indian communities. The City of Mesa acquired the house in 2007 from Valley of the Sun Habitat for Humanity in a swap of land parcels. When the Alston House project is completed, the house will be leased to the Mesa Association of Hispanic Citizens and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Celebration Committee for office and community space.

The City of Mesa, the Mesa Association of Hispanic Citizens (MAHC), and Dr. Martin Luther King (MLK) Jr. Celebration Committee are hosting a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Alston House, 453 N. Pima in Mesa AZ on Friday, May 9, 2008, beginning at 8:30 a.m. The ceremony will recognize the rehabilitation phase of the Alston House project and the National Register of Historic Places Nomination.

Funding for the Rehabilitation project is from multiple sources, including a grant from the Historic Preservation Heritage Fund, funded by the Arizona Lottery and administered by the Arizona State Parks Board. Money was also provided from a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and private donations. Mesa Councilmember Tom Rawles will speak at the ribbon cutting ceremony, along with representatives from Mesa Association of Hispanic Citizens, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Committee, Arizona Lottery, and Arizona State Parks. A floor and site plan will be available for the public to see.

For more information on the Alston House, contact Ernestine Tesarek with City of Mesa Neighborhood Services at (480) 644-3020.

Mesa's Volunteers Donate \$5M in 2007

Everyday, the City of Mesa benefits from residents who share their time and talents to make a difference in our community. Last week was National Volunteer Week and the City celebrated by recognizing some of its most valuable assets, its volunteers.

In 2007, volunteers donated 269,551 hours of their time to the City of Mesa. This saved the City over \$5 million. These numbers are an increase of 31,636 hours and almost \$380,000 from the 2006 totals.

"I can't say enough about how valuable volunteers are to our organization," Assistant City Manager Debbi Dollar said. "In the face of budget cuts and other financial challenges, the volunteers have really stepped up and helped the city stretch its limited resources. Their contributions are significant."

City of Mesa volunteers participate in a wide range of programs in many different departments. For example a volunteer at Parks, Recreation and Commercial Facilities can help with the



Doug Shippey
Library Volunteer 25 years

summer aquatics program, youth sports or park maintenance; a volunteer with Neighborhood Services can help a local resident in need of some yard work; while a volunteer at Mesa Arts Center can be trained as a classroom assistant, usher, tour guide and gallery aide.

"Our City of Mesa volunteers play a vital role in helping our city focus on customer centered government," Volunteer Management Group Chair Sheila

Byrne said. "We appreciate and thank each and every volunteer for their service to our community."

For information about becoming a City of Mesa volunteer, search our volunteer opportunities at www.cityofmesa.org to find an area that interests you.

New Volunteer Nuisance Sign Removal Program

The goal is to eliminate the illegal signs that you see along roads and on utility poles. Mesa City Council has approved creation of the Mesa Volunteer Nuisance Sign Removal Program to combat illegal nuisance or “bandit” advertising signs.

“The Mesa Volunteer Nuisance Sign Removal Program will provide an opportunity for Mesa residents to assist Code Compliance in the removal of nuisance advertising signs from the public right-of-way in an effort to beautify Mesa neighborhoods,” Mesa Code Compliance Director Mike Renshaw said.



The one-year pilot project creates two types of sign removal programs. One is the Registered Neighborhood Nuisance Sign Program. It would be managed by Code Compliance and operate in a manner similar to the Mesa Volunteer Code Team. Volunteers who live in a registered neighborhood would attend a mandatory two-hour training session. Residents would adopt one or more intersections near their neighborhoods and periodically remove signs from those areas. The other program, also managed by Code Compliance, would allow volunteers to participate in single-day “sign sweep” events. An abbreviated training session would be provided to volunteers the day of the event. With both programs, the City of Mesa Solid Waste Management Division would recycle signs that are removed.

In addition to improving the general appearance of many intersections, the Mesa Volunteer Nuisance Sign Removal Program also benefits the City financially. The use of trained volunteers will allow Code Compliance officers to spend fewer hours removing nuisance signs from their area. During the 06/07 fiscal year, Code Compliance staff used approximately 640 hours removing nuisance signs, representing \$25,000 in direct personnel costs.

For more information on the Mesa Volunteer Nuisance Sign Removal Program, contact Mesa Code Compliance Director Mike Renshaw at (480) 644-4706.

Who Ya Gonna Call

The Neighborhood Outreach Office was created to revitalize and support our neighborhoods, and offer resources that allows Mesa residents to organize, improve, and become a much stronger neighborhood.

Your Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator is available to provide you with that one-on-one assistance in organizing your neighborhood. Whatever stage of organization your neighborhood is in, the Neighborhood Outreach Office is available to assist in your efforts.

If you have concerns regarding your neighborhood and not sure who to contact, simply contact the Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator in your area or visit www.cityofmesa.org/neighbor for more information.

Outreach Coordinators

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Jo Ellen McNamara
District 4 & 5
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You are invited to
**Neighborhoods
Arizona! 2008**
“Preserving Your Neighborhood
in a Challenging Economy”

May 17, 2008
Chandler Center for the Arts
250 North Arizona Avenue
Chandler AZ

For more information contact
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