

## New Plantings Grace Gill Avenue

It's rare when a project comes together smoothly and quickly but that's what happened with the new Gill Avenue plantings. The FGNO Parks and Beautification team had a vision of creating more sustainable beds that were similar with the beds along Central and Magnolia Avenues. But how could they fund it? The FGNO budget was still recovering from a two-year fundraising drought brought on by the pandemic.

It was a long shot, but a few team members met with the Knoxville Public Service Department in January 2022 in hopes of getting the Department's buy-in and funding to use the same blueprint for Gill Avenue as the Department used for Central and Magnolia. Turns out, the Department agreed that Gill not only was a neighborhood street but also an important route for vehicles and buses traveling north and east, between Hall of Fame and Broadway/Central. A deal was struck: The neighborhood

would be responsible for the gardens design, and the Department would fund the new plantings. Melinda Whetsel and Gordon Coker created a new master design using plant lists and drawings provided by the Department. The design also used lower growing plants that would improve traffic safety in the intersections.

In October 2022, Public Service Horticulture crews installed the new plantings. A surprise gift was the installation of a water spigot and underground vault on Gill to make it easier to water the beds. While the baby plants may not be anything to brag about this winter, come spring and summer, they will grow in fullness to fill out the beds.

We are so appreciative of the Knoxville Public Service Department and especially Chad Werth and Chris Webster, Public Service Director and Horticulture Manager, for the tremendous support they have provided.



Installing the underground vault for water spigot.



**ABOVE** Preparing the garden beds for planting.

**RIGHT** New plants in the ground.



### GOOD INFO TO KNOW

- 1 Always call 911 if a crime is being committed (this is the case no matter who is involved). If you feel someone needs help or intervention, 311 is the community support number. Social workers are working with our police to help in these situations.
- 2 To stay up to date on what's going on with neighbors and in the neighborhood, join the Fourth and Gill listserv. To be added, please contact Jen Mowrer at [jen@mowrerpower.com](mailto:jen@mowrerpower.com).
- 3 If you've recently moved to the neighborhood, we'd love to welcome you! Please let us know by contacting Emma McAfee at [mcafee.emma@gmail.com](mailto:mcafee.emma@gmail.com).

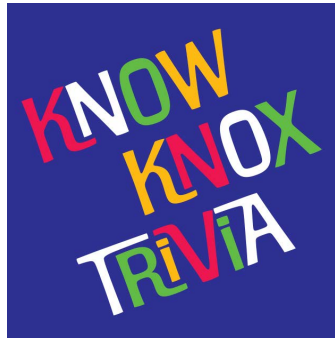


# Fall Happenings

## Know Knox Trivia



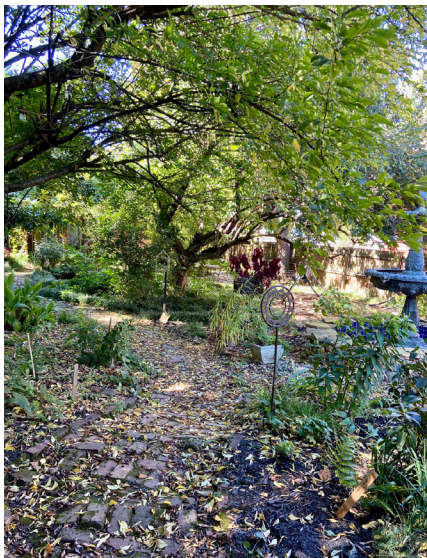
A new event sponsored by the FGNO Social team, Know Knox Trivia paired a game of guessing East Tennessee factoids with cider sipping at the Barrelhouse by Gypsy Circus. Over the month of September, teams met once a week to compete for prizes and have fun. Barrelhouse donated \$330 to FGNO for the event. Many thanks to Dan Howett for creating the game and teaming with Barrelhouse to make it happen.



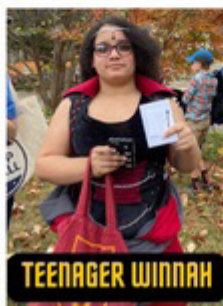
## Spicy Chili & Costumes at Annual Halloween Party

Are Gillbillies into Halloween or what?! Great turnout for the Halloween Chili Cook-off and Costume Contest hosted by Kay Newton at 1006 Luttrell. Congrats to all the chili chefs, contest winners and participants! See if

you can spot yourself in the photos. Following the party was, of course, Trick-or-Treating. We received approximately 350 trick or treaters on the 1000 block of Luttrell and across the neighborhood.



Congratulations to the Nichols at 617 Deery for winning the Fall Golden Shovel. This award has become highly competitive. This garden, tucked away at the end of Deery, is lush and inviting.







**ABOVE** Volunteers planting the pollinator garden at the Broadway US Post Office.

**RIGHT** Non-human neighbors on hand at the Meet Your Neighbors event.



## Broadway Post Office Pollinator Garden

In a moment of enlightened neighborhood beautification and civic consciousness, neighbor and Woolly Bear Jamey Dobbs thought to ask the Postmaster at our local US Post Office on Broadway about planting some flowers outside. The Postmaster's eyes grew wide as he involuntarily yelped, "Yes! And we have water."

Jamey acted upon what so many have noticed: our local Post Office could use a little love. That love was on the way, as the Fourth & Gill Woolly Bears (FGWB) teamed up with the Native Plant Rescue Squad (NPRS) to breathe some vitality into the Post Office grounds with some native plantings. The footprint of a 4' by 25' garden and four circular areas where trees once stood was clearly visible as one parked and made their way into the Post Office. But the trees were long gone, and the garden beds had been colonized by invasive Bermuda grass, crab grass and little bits of litter and gravel.

In September 2022, NPRS and FGWB wrote a grant proposal for a Keep Knoxville Beautiful Beautification grant to plant a pollinator garden at the Post Office. We were awarded the grant in mid-October and got busy with gathering rescue plants and organizing volunteers to help. The grant covered materials like plants, soil and mulch. We also budgeted for emeritus Woolly Bear and native plant gardener extraordinaire, Jessica Tezak, to lead the way on garden design, installation and maintenance.

Besides volunteer help from NPRS and FGWB, a group of UT students from Professor Mike McKinney's Restoration Ecology class selected this pollinator garden as their class volunteer project. With the help of an eager, hard working group of volunteers, the pollinator garden was planted in late November with no less than 15 species of native pollinator plants. The enthusiasm from everyone involved, including the patrons of the Post Office, ended up spilling over and exceeding the parameters of the grant funding. The team also planted four rescue native Carolina Buckthorn trees to complete the Post Office landscape makeover.

Jessica will take care of the garden until October 2023. During that time, Jess, Woolly Bears, NPRS, friends and neighbors will actively seek help for the long-term maintenance of the Post Office Pollinator Garden. Woolly Bears President, Jonathan Cox, offered that as the Post Office delivers packages throughout our neighborhood, so do the pollinators deliver pollen packages throughout the neighborhood.

We will soon have permanent signage installed educating Knoxvilleans about how the plants, bees, butterflies, insects, and people are all working together on this project. The promise of life-sustaining vitality is in place. See you this spring at the Post Office.

## Meet Your Neighbors

On November 4, the Fourth and Gill Woolly Bears sponsored the annual Meet Your Neighbors event at the Birdhouse Neighborhood Center. This event combines art, environmental education and community building to celebrate our natural neighbors---the plants and critters that we share our yards, gardens and wild brush with. The Woolly Bears hope that the event serves as a reminder that our park, yards, trees, and steeples serve as habitat, not only for us but for gray tree frogs, rabbits, purple passion vines, and the endangered monarch. It's becoming increasingly important that our urban spaces provide habitat for wildlife due to the global geographic expanse of our urban environment and coinciding biodiversity loss.

Over 50 attendees viewed some beautiful photos, met a neighbor or two (wild and human) they hadn't seen, and had fun doing it! Thanks to everyone who attended, donated food and drink, and most importantly, submitted their photos. We hope to see you again next year!



# President's Report: 2022 in Review

The Board accomplished a lot in 2022. Looking back, these are the highlights of what we worked on.

- ✿ Architects for a new development on Fourth St. (across from the Birdhouse Neighborhood Center) met to share plans and get feedback for the proposed development.
- ✿ We began inviting our KPD neighborhood Liaison officer, Seth Blaine, to our monthly meetings for regular reports on Crime and Safety. Officer Blaine also joined our neighborhood email listserv to keep up with any problems that arise.
- ✿ We established a Memorandum of Agreement with the Neighborhood Center that outlines how we work together and the responsibilities of each entity.
- ✿ We held an in-person neighborhood meeting in May with refreshments and discussion on neighborhood issues. Neighbors signed up to join committees.
- ✿ We voted to increase the frequency of our print newsletter to come out quarterly. This helps us reach all households in the neighborhood, even those not on the listserv. Thanks to Julie Braude and Celia Lawren for the content and design.
- ✿ The Social Committee continued offering great events including the Porch Hop, Halloween Party, and a new month of Trivia in September.
- ✿ The Tour of Homes had record sales its first year back from the pandemic and included a Brunch and Secret Gardens which were additional draws to the event. This is our single large fundraiser for the neighborhood.
- ✿ Dan Howett helped us create an Endowment with the East Tennessee Foundation for our funds that will help us safely invest and earn money on our funds.
- ✿ Jen Mowrer updated our web presence with a new neighborhood website using more advanced software.
- ✿ We added new Little Libraries to the corner of Lovenia and Luttrell. Stop by and find a good winter read!
- ✿ And notably, many neighbors worked tirelessly to transform the Birdhouse Neighborhood Center and restore the building to a beautiful space. The upstairs offices have been rented, and the downstairs is hosting events. Catherine Abbott was hired to coordinate events at the Center.

## OFFICERS OF THE BOARD

President: Gabrielle Boudreau  
Vice-President: Celia Lawren  
Treasurer: Chris Griffin  
Secretary: Dan Howett

## BOARD/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Communication: Jen Mowrer  
Government Relations, Safety, and Codes: Lacy Mellon  
Neighborhood Center: Open  
Parks and Beautification: Melynda Whetsel  
Social: Julie Braude  
Tour of Homes: Chris Griffin  
Welcome: Emma McAfee  
Cody Farmer

## It's Official! Birdhouse Neighborhood Center

The Fourth and Gill Neighborhood Center underwent many changes in 2022 and one important item of business was the selection of a new name. If it sounds familiar, it is, as the name combines the previous name, Birdhouse, with Neighborhood Center, dropping the Fourth and Gill. Thanks to those who responded to the solicitation for names in November and to those who participated in December's Neighborhood Center retreat, which addressed and decided on the official name, Birdhouse Neighborhood Center.

Make sure to follow the Birdhouse Neighborhood Center on social media.

Instagram: @birdhouseknoxville  
Facebook: @birdhouse.knoxville

Birdhouse Neighborhood Center program coordinator, Catherine Abbott, fgnc.booking@gmail.com



Just off Lovenia, in the alley between Luttrell and Eleanor, is a delightful garden pop-up. It's the handiwork of neighbors Cindy Kenny and Stephanie Tipton who decided to add a little beauty to the alley. Enjoy!



December workshop at the Center.