



**Gatewatch**  
Winter 2016  
Vol. XVII No. 1

**Visit our website**  
www.eastgategr.com

**Email us at**  
eastgategr@gmail.com

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See back page for details

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**A Special Thank You To those who supported our 2015 Christmas Lights Contest:**

- ◆ Andrea's Pizza
- ◆ Beacon Hill at Eastgate
- ◆ Blimpie
- ◆ Breton Auto Wash
- ◆ Circle Theatre
- ◆ D&W Fresh Market
- ◆ Eastgate 5k
- ◆ Eastgate Barber & Salon
- ◆ Great Lakes Shipping Co.
- ◆ Modern Hardware
- ◆ Valvoline Instant Oil Change

Nearly \$1,000 in prizes were available for the winners. Thank you for your support!

## ENA Christmas Lights Contest Winners Awarded

*A new event at D&W offered appetizers, hot chocolate, 10% grocery discounts, and a warm place to award our Facebook Christmas Light Contest winners*

Despite the unsavory winter weather, over 60 neighbors came out to the warm confines of the cafe at D&W.

There, they enjoyed tasty spread of appetizers and hot chocolate while connecting with each other. The event was held on January 26 from 6:30-8:00 pm.

The event unfolded as ENA board member Megan Wolenberg approached D&W about possibly donating some gift cards. The ENA board wanted to make the prize packages a bit more significant for the ENA Christmas Lights Contest. D&W took great interest, offering not only \$175 in gift cards, but also venue, hors d'oeuvres, and a grocery discount for all



The ENA awarded the Christmas Lights contest winners at an event at the Starbucks Café at D&W. See Christopher Burri's winning house on page 13

ENA residents.

"We're really pleased with how the event came together," Megan said. "We didn't quite

know what to expect, but it definitely exceeded all of our expectations and we had a great —CONTINUED ON PG 13

## Eastgate Real Estate 2015

It was a hot real estate market in the Grand Rapids area in 2015 and the Eastgate Neighborhood was no exception! Here are some fun facts:

- Forty-eight homes changed hands in 2015.
- Two homes sold twice in 2015. They were both remodeled and put back on the market. One home increased in value \$55,000. The other home saw a \$100,000+ increase.
- The lowest sale price was \$68,000.
- The highest sale price was \$230,000.
- The median sale price was \$152,500.
- The average sale price was \$152,474.
- The average days —CONTINUED ON PG 9

## PNC Bank Closing



On April 15 the PNC Bank branch on the corner of Burton and Breton will close. The site was the home of National City bank before it was ac-

quired by PNC in 2008. The next nearest PNC branch locations are at Breton and 44th Street and on the East Beltline near the malls.

# Beacon Hill Expansion is On Schedule



The North end of Beacon Hill's property

Beacon Hill's building expansion is well underway and is on schedule.

The new wing is located on the north end of the property and include 56 new residential units. The project includes a new Garden Cafe, expanded community and formal gardens, and an auditorium.

Also part of the project is the replacement of the original nursing center building. The updated 29 bed facility will allow Beacon Hill to extend its continuing care services.

Construction will continue throughout the summer with the intention to gain occupancy in late 2016.

# D&W Fresh Market Gives Away Trees At Grand Re-Opening

During its Grand Re-Opening Festivities last November, D&W gave away over 400 trees to both customers and local students.

Schools that participated in the giveaway include:

- Breton Downs
- Grand Rapids Christian Evergreen
- Immaculate Heart of Mary
- Lakeside Elementary
- Our Savior Lutheran
- St. Paul the Apostle



D&W gave away over 400 trees

If you see new evergreen trees in the neighborhood, now you know their probable origins!

# CENTURY FOOD & LIQUOR

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# From the President



Hello, neighbors! My name is Todd Neckers, the 2016 President of the Eastgate Neighborhood Association. My wife Kate and I moved into the neighborhood in 2012 and have subsequently added a daughter (Elia – almost 3) and son (Wells - 8 months) to the ENA. When I'm not busy serving as president, I practice business and estate planning law here in Grand Rapids.

I am very excited to serve you as president, and know that I (and the rest of the board) have big shoes to fill now that our last president, Shana Shroll, has stepped down after many years of service on the board. We will look to carry on her vision for the neighborhood and try to come close to matching her energy and commitment. If you see her, please join me in letting Shana know just how much the neighborhood appreciates her.

2016 is shaping up to be a great year in the ENA. All of the events that you've come to look forward to (Garage Sale Days, Dumpster Day, Trunk or Treat, etc.) will be back for another year, and we have several new events in the works as well. Be sure to keep up on the website ([www.eastgategr.com](http://www.eastgategr.com)) and Facebook page for the latest news. Additionally, we are excited to welcome Kris Stott to our board and look forward to his insight and ideas.

We would love to see you at an upcoming ENA board meeting. The next meetings are scheduled for March 17 at 7:00 pm at Eastminster and May 19 at 7:00 at Fifth Reformed. All neighbors are welcome, especially anyone looking to get more involved in or connected with their local community. If I don't see you there, don't hesitate to stop by and say hi when the snow melts and we're all back out and about again.

—Todd Neckers, ENA President



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 616-706-6439



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2015 - 2016



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3 Year Old	T/Th	8:30-11:00
Young 4's	T/Th/F	10:15-12:45
4 Year Old	M/W/F	8:30-11:00
4 Year Old	M-Th	1:00-3:30
Young 5's	M-Th	1:00-3:30

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# Fresh Thyme Farmers Market set for Grand Opening

*Grand Opening is scheduled for Thursday, February 24 at 7 am*

**Before**



**After**



After more than a year of construction, the Fresh Thyme Farmers Market is scheduled to open. The grocery store is located at the former site of the Michigan Athletic Club on Burton Street.

The grocery chain boasts an inventory of fresh and organic items, from fruits and vegetables to meats to an extensive bulk food selection.

Fresh Thyme was founded in Phoenix, Arizona in 2013 and is the result of a merger of two established grocery chains in the south and west: Sunflower Farmers Market and Sprouts Farmers Market. The company's headquarters are now located just outside of Chicago.

The store does have connections to Meijer, who claim to have financial interests, but no managerial control.

Welcome to the area!

# Eastgate Garden to Eastgate Table

*fresh produce right to your kitchen*

If you have a sunny spot in your yard, consider planting some sweet peas, perhaps a few tomato plants, and some green peppers.

If you don't have that sunny spot, then there are plots available at Fifth Reformed Church's community garden. Ten by twenty foot plots are available this spring.

The spaces have produced abundantly.

"It's about community," said ENA board member Greg Wilkins, who is the facilities manager who oversees the gardens at Fifth Reformed Church. "The gardens are a place where people meet and have access to home grown vegetables. We are very happy with them."



Contact Greg if you are interested in having a plot: [GWilkins@Fifthrc.org](mailto:GWilkins@Fifthrc.org)

The gardens at Beacon Hill are full. However, there may be changes when the building addition is completed. Beacon Hill hopes to construct a commercial-style farm plot dedicated to its kitchen.

The ENA would like to thank both Beacon Hill at Eastgate and Fifth Reformed church for offering space for community gardens.



**Kris Stott**  
Real Estate Agent  
(616) 490-6722  
[kristott@bhhsmi.com](mailto:kristott@bhhsmi.com)

[facebook.com/KrisStottRealtor](https://www.facebook.com/KrisStottRealtor)



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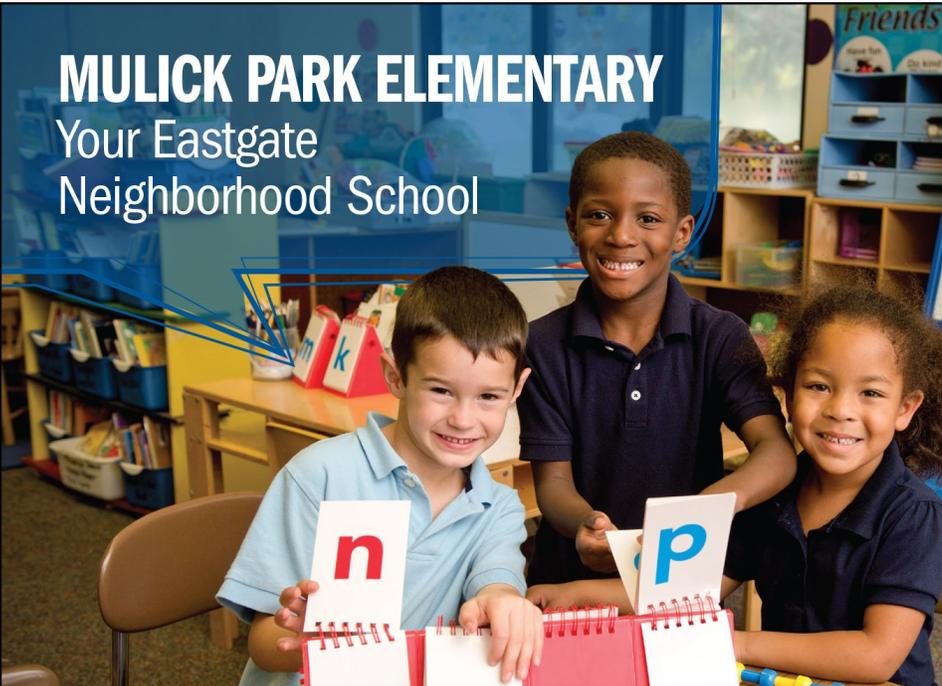
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## Fifth Reformed Church

Growing Disciples  
Who Make Disciples

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Brouwers Agency is located across from the D&W Gas Station

## Brouwers Agency Opens in Eastgate

On October 1, Brouwers Insurance Agency opened in the office building at 1801 Breton Road behind Breton Travel.

The agency is family run by Paul Brouwers and his son Mike. The Brouwers have close ties to the Eastgate neighborhood—Paul grew up on Rosewood near Mulick Park and both attend Plymouth Heights Christian Reformed Church. The agency was opened in 1990 in Middleville and recently

returned to the old neighborhood.

“Our client base has always been here,” Mike said. “We’re excited to be in Eastgate and we’ve been pleased with the reception we’ve had.”

Brouwers Insurance Agency handles home, auto, business, and life insurance.

For more information, see the ad on the page 12 of this *Gatewatch*. Welcome to the neighborhood!

## Trunk or Treat...and a Story of “Bonus Donuts”



Trunk or Treat 2015: The one with all the donuts

Because of the rainy weather, the Trunk or Treat festivities needed to be moved indoors once again.

“I don’t know what we’d do anymore if we actually had it out in the parking lot,” said Greg Wilkins who coordinates the event.

We did have a bit of a mix-up with the donut order this year. Greg ordered 300 donut holes from the

bakery at Forest Hills Foods.

When Greg called to make sure they were ready, the bakery realized an error: they made 300 full size donuts.

The end of the story is that for no extra cost to the neighborhood association, the Trunk or Treat revelers had plenty of donuts.

Thanks again to Fifth Reformed Church for hosting the event!

## Heather Downs Community Pool



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—VISIT [CRIMEMAPPING.COM](http://CRIMEMAPPING.COM)—

We cannot give more up-to-date information than Crimemapping.com. The site is intuitive, where you click on our city, then our neighborhood, then our streets. Check it out!

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## **How to Prepare, Pay, and Stay in College** | Wednesday, March 9

Presented by Jillian Gajtka, Student Choice a partner of Michigan First Credit Union

## **Elder Law** | Tuesday, March 15

Presented by Deborah Lampar, Attorney, Planning for Your Future, PLLC

All seminars are held in the lower level of our Breton branch at 1815 Breton Rd. SE. from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. For additional information or to register, please visit us online at [MichiganFirst.com/Seminars](http://MichiganFirst.com/Seminars) or call Member Services at 800.664.3828 and then press zero.



# The Eastgate Neighborhood Association is ordering t-shirts with our logo!



### ENA T-shirt Order Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Adult and Youth size Tshirts are **\$10**. 2X and 3X are **\$12**. High Quality 100% Cotton.  
See colors on ENA Facebook or [eastgategr.com](http://eastgategr.com)

Colors: Pistachio, Black, Sport Gray with Green Logo (at right)

Additional Youth color: Sapphire Blue with Magenta Logo.

Adult sizes: (quantity) S \_\_\_ M \_\_\_ L \_\_\_ 2X \_\_\_ 3X \_\_\_ Youth sizes: S \_\_\_ M \_\_\_ L \_\_\_

Total payment enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Check #: \_\_\_\_\_



MAKE YOUR CHECK PAYABLE TO **EASTGATE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION** and mail with this form to:  
Eastgate Neighborhood Association, c/o Jonathan Chitwood, 1627 Woodward Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506.  
You will receive an email informing you of pick-up times at 5th Reformed Church.

Eastminster's 2016

# "Hot Dog! Bike Tune Up"

From 10-3 on June 4

It's that time again when bikes need tuning and hot dogs need cooking! June 4, during Eastminster's Jewelry Sale and the ENA garage sale weekend, we'll be in the north-east parking lot, at the corner of Orville and Chamberlain. Save room for ice cream served by the Eastgate Neighborhood Association.

We'll make other dates available as soon as they are determined. We're looking forward to seeing everyone again.

—Eastminster's Bike Repair Team

# Eastgate 5k Date

Thursday September 15 at 6:30

The Eastgate Neighborhood Association, in partnership with Beacon Hill at Eastgate, is again hosting a 5k run-walk.

Consider participating in the mid-week race: Thursday September 15 at 6:30. The winding course stays entirely within the ENA boundaries.

Proceeds from the race

go to both our ENA and to the Beacon Hill Foundation. More information can be accessed through the Beacon Hill website: [beaconhillgr.org](http://beaconhillgr.org)

We are always looking for sponsors, so please consider this local tax deductible cause! Contact Jill at [Jill.Moeller@beaconhillgr.org](mailto:Jill.Moeller@beaconhillgr.org) or 608-8270

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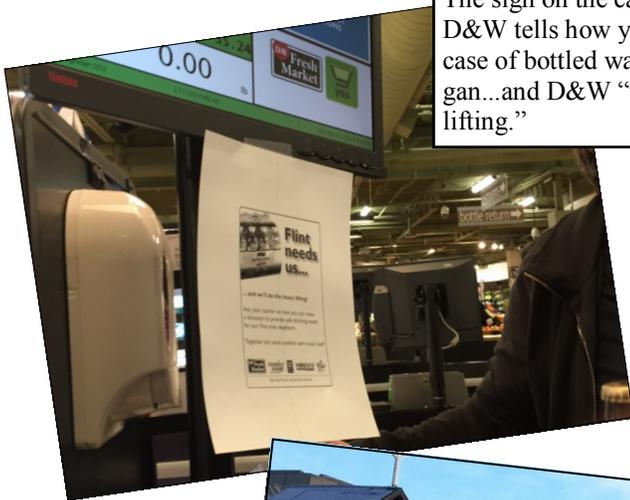
[www.phcrc.org](http://www.phcrc.org)  
243-5638

# In and Around the 'Gate...

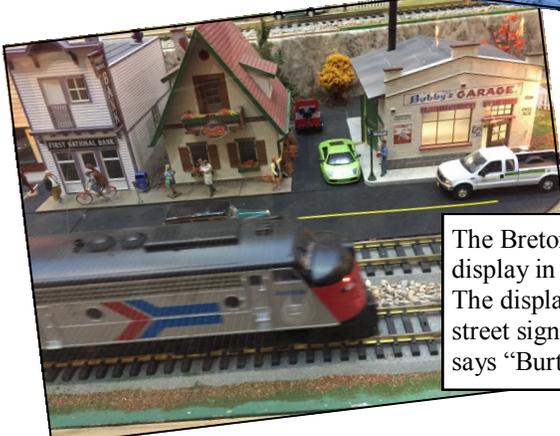
The Beacon Hill Express returned for its annual appearance on the front lawn of Beacon Hill at Eastgate.



The sign on the cash register at D&W tells how you can donate a case of bottled water to Flint Michigan...and D&W "will do the heavy lifting."



The food truck is at Plymouth Heights Christian Reformed Church. The truck comes each month. See the church's website for details.



The Breton Village holiday train display in the center of the mall. The display has such detail that the street sign next to Bobby's Garage says "Burton Street."

## EASTGATE REAL ESTATE UPDATE

—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

on the market was 23 twenty-four homes had an accepted offer within 7 days on the market.

- Seven homes had an accepted offer within 8-15 days on the market.
- Eleven homes had an accepted offer within 16-30 days on the market.
- Only three homes were on the market for more than 120 days.
- Of the fifty transactions, only fifteen involved seller concessions.
- There was only one short sale transaction.
- There were two foreclosure sales.

I think 2016 will be another good year for real estate. Interest rates will probably creep up a little bit but I doubt we will see rates over 5% for a conventional 30 year fixed mortgage.

*The expansion of Beacon Hill, the new Christian middle school, and the new retail activity at Breton / Burton will only help to increase values and showcase Eastgate as a desirable and convenient neighborhood!*

The available inventory will play a huge role. Low inventory can push values up quickly. It's the old supply and demand concept. As of this writing, Eastgate has one house "for sale" and one house with an accepted offer.

The expansion of Beacon Hill, the new Christian middle school, and the new retail activity at Breton / Burton will only help to increase values and showcase Eastgate as a desirable and convenient neighborhood!

The majority of buyers want a move-in ready home and they are willing to pay for it. Even in a sellers' market your house has to shine! The homes that are updated, clean, odor free, well-maintained, nicely landscaped, de-cluttered, and priced according to the competition will sell quickly and for top dollar.

Call, email or text me if you have any specific real estate questions!

*Kelley Rahilly has lived in the Eastgate Neighborhood for 14 years. She is an Associate Broker at Greenridge Realty. You can reach her at 616-706-6439 or [kelleyrahilly@gmail.com](mailto:kelleyrahilly@gmail.com).*

# Circle Theatre Has Something For Every- One This Summer

Take a group of singing Jellicle cats, a blind date gone horribly wrong (or right), and a night of your favorite classic 80's rock songs- and you get Circle Theatre's three musicals of their 2016 summer season.

Circle will be kicking the season off with the classic musical, *Cats*, coming to stage for the first time in a community theatre in West Michigan. This Tony award winner for best musical and one of the longest running shows on Broadway, is a perfect show to bring the whole family (Rated G)!

Circle's second musical of the season is *First Date*, a new musical that premiered on Broadway in 2013. The story follows a blind date between the

nerdy yet charming Aaron, and the edgy and beautiful Casey, who are not at all each other's type. The show is perfect for adults (Rated R) looking for a

funny musical with relatable commentary. It just may spark an interesting conversation after the show about those inevitable, yet funny, first date memories and stories.

The last musical and show of Circle's season is the 2009 Tony nominated Best Musical, *Rock of Ages!* What's a musical without big hair, big rock bands, and making it big in L.A.'s Sunset Strip in 1987. This show (Rated PG-13) will bring audiences back in time with hit 80's rock music from artists like Whitesnake, Journey, Pat Benatar, and REO Speedwagon, and more!

Whether you are looking for a classic, something hilarious and relatable, or something to rock out to, Circle has you covered!

For dates, show times, tickets, and additional information for each of these musicals, and our two plays of the season (*Perfect Wedding* and *Over the River and Through the Woods*), please visit [circletheatre.org](http://circletheatre.org).

—Submitted by Nadija Kadunic  
Circle Theatre Business Intern



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# Preventing Burglary

## 1. Check your locks

The #1 crime preventer. 94% of successful burglars enter through the ground floor. Consider motion lights & deadbolts

## 2. Monitor your neighborhood

Visit [Crimemapping.com](http://Crimemapping.com) Sign up for email alerts

## 3. Make your place look occupied

When absent, consider light timers, parking a car in the driveway, and stopping the mail

## 4. Ditch the hidden key

Better to "hide" the key with a trusted neighbor

## 5. Consider getting an alarm system

A powerful deterrent

## 6. They'll be back

76% of burglars return within 30 days

Every year more than 2.1 million burglaries are reported to law enforcement authorities. These account for 21% of property crimes in the United States. On average, each burglary results in a financial loss of \$1,725.

—adapted from *Preventing Burglary: A guide for Citizens*

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Would like to  
 Thank

**SHANA  
 SHROLL**

*Who graciously served  
 as the president  
 of our neighborhood association.  
 Her effective leadership  
 made our community a better place,  
 and we all are indebted to her.*

Thank you, Shana.

# Eastgate Calendar 2014

*More events will fill this calendar when  
 plans finalize. Stay tuned!*

## February

Gatewatch Delivery

## March

17 ENA Board Meeting. Eastminster Presbyterian Church. 7:00pm

## May

Gatewatch Delivery  
 19 ENA Board Meeting at Fifth Reformed Church 7:00 pm

## June

2-4 Garage Sale Weekend  
 4 ENA Ice Cream Social  
 4 Eastminster Jewelry Sale  
 4 Bike Repair at Eastminster

## July

Gatewatch Delivery  
 21 ENA Board Meeting.  
 Beacon Hill 7:00 pm

## September

15 ENA Board Meeting at Plymouth Heights CRC. 7:00 pm  
 15 Eastgate 5K 6:30 pm

## October

Gatewatch Delivery  
 16 ENA Annual Meeting at Beacon Hill 7:00 pm  
 31 Trunk or Treat at Fifth Reformed Church

## November

8 Election Day

## December

ENA Christmas Lights Contest on Facebook

## ENA CHRISTMAS LIGHTS AWARDS

—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

time! D&W has been a fantastic partner.”

At 7:15 the 2015 ENA Facebook Christmas Lights winners were announced:

- 1st: Christopher Burri
- 2nd: Cory Zemaitis
- 3rd: Laura Danielson
- 4th: Kevin Neumann

The ENA board would like to extend a huge thanks to our sponsors, especially those who partnered with us for the first time: Breton Auto Wash, Circle Theatre, Great Lakes Shipping Co., and Valvoline Instant Oil Change. And a special thanks to D&W for its generous hospitality.

“We received lots of positive feedback from the neighbors,” Megan said. “We hope to do it again next year.”



This year's 2015 ENA Facebook Christmas Lights Contest winner Christopher Burri

# ENA Annual Meeting Report



The ENA annual meeting was held at Fifth Reformed Church last fall. President Shana Shroll called the meeting to order and Greg Wilkins welcomed the attendees to the church where he is the facilities manager.

Treasurer Jonathan Chitwood reported that the ENA finances are healthy, mainly due to the income gleaned from *Gate-watch* advertising and the ENA share of the proceeds from the Eastgate 5K



Captain

Vincent Reilly of the Grand Rapids Police Department gave a safety update, noting the overall crime in the Eastgate Neighborhood is again down.

John Helmholdt of the Grand Rapids Public Schools gave a report on the state of the public schools and bond proposal (which did pass via a city-wide vote in November).

Vice-President Jim Rauwerda offered a presentation on the many projects that are happening in the ENA, and President Shana Schroll provided her “thoughts of an outgoing president.”

*...overall crime in the Eastgate Neighborhood is again down.*

Kris Stott was newly elected to the ENA board, while current board members Tina Cronkhite, Todd Neckers, Jim Rauwerda, Greg Wilkins and Megan Wolenberg were re-elected. Shana Scholl did not run for re-election.

After the meeting the new ENA board met and elected Todd Neckers as president, Jim Rauwerda as vice-president, Paula Englin as Secretary, and Jonathan Chitwood as treasurer.

The board would like to extend a note of gratitude to Shana Shroll, who tirelessly served as present for four years. Thank you.

The minutes and slide presentations for the annual meeting can be accessed on the ENA website at Eastgate.gr.com.

# ENA Board Member Kris Stott Represents Eastgate at City Meeting

On December 15 board member Kris Stott represented the ENA at a meeting with Grand Rapids Police Chief Rahinsky. Representatives from other neighborhoods also attended.

Kris reported that the meeting touched on a variety of items, including the Police Explorer Program. Young people between the ages of 14 and 21 can apply to participate to “explore” the Grand Rapids Police. See the city website for details or direct questions to Officer Frank Barthel at [fbarthel@grcity.us](mailto:fbarthel@grcity.us) or 616-456-3320

The meeting also mentioned hording, which is becoming a concern for fire fighters and safety personnel.

If you know of a possible hording situation, please call the Grand Rapids Police Department at its non-emergency number: 456-3403.

The police chief also encouraged neighbors to meet each other and watch out for each other. Knowing your neighbors is a simple and practical form of security.

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# Remembering Jim Nienhuis

On January 29 Jim Nienhuis passed away at the age of 70.

Jim was a long-time resident of Woodward Street and formerly served on the ENA board.

With his expertise, he helped our organization become a better non-profit. With his energy, he sold ads for this *Gatewatch*, some of which still grace these pages.

While in recent years he moved to a retirement facility and his health declined, we will remember him as a good neighbor and a good friend.



Former board member Jim Nienhuis, right, pictured with then Mayor Heartwell at an ENA meeting in 2009

His son Chris currently serves on the ENA board.

## VISIT US ON THE WEB

The Eastgate  
Neighborhood Association  
Website is at  
[www.eastgategr.com](http://www.eastgategr.com)



**Join us  
on facebook**

**Search  
Eastgate Neighborhood Association  
and be part of the discussion.**

## Host a Block Party!

The ENA reimburses expenses for block parties—up to \$75.00 each—for two block parties per year. Send receipts to our treasurer Jonathan Chitwood at 1627 Woodward.

There doesn't need to be a big plan plan...just take charge and invite your neighbors to get together. Of course, we'd love some photos so we can put them in this *Gatewatch*.

Use the winter weather as an excuse. It's a great way to meet those who live right on your own street.

## *In Short...*

- *Fifth Reformed Church will host its annual Vacation Bible School again this summer. VBS is scheduled for Monday, July 11 through Thursday, July 14 from 9:00-11:30 am.*
- *Shana Shroll is stepping down from her service as the ENA president. If you see Shana in the neighborhood, please thank her!*
- *If you stop in to of our advertisers, please tell them that you saw the ad and that you appreciate their support of the ENA. We do!*
- *Garage Sale Weekend is the weekend after Memorial Day: June 2-4. On that Saturday, Eastminster Presbyterian Church will host its bike repair event and it's annual jewelry sale. AND the ENA will have its ice cream social. Whew. That's a busy day for the ENA.*
- *Join the ENA facebook page. If you want to know what's going on, that's the place to be.*
- *Start training for the Eastgate 5K. It's a great goal, it's a great cause, and it's right here in your neighborhood. Walk it or run it...we encourage all to participate! The event is on September 15, so you have plenty of time to get in shape.*
- *A recap of the happenings in your neighborhood:*
  - Fresh Thyme is opening*
  - Brouwers Agency opened*
  - PNC Bank is closing*
  - Beacon Hill is expanding*
  - D&W had a grand re-opening.**That's a lot of activity for our little ENA!*
- *Channel your inner green thumb. Grab a plot at Fifth Reformed Church's community garden. Contact Greg and he'll set you up: [gwilkins@fifthrc.org](mailto:gwilkins@fifthrc.org). Remember that our local Modern Hardware has all you garden needs—including seeds, soil, and shovels.*
- *Interested in an ENA t-shirt? See page 7.*



Neighborhood  
Association

gatewatch

**JOIN the EASTGATE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION !**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

- New Member**
- Renewing Member**
- Yes! I would like to serve on the ENA Board**
- Return this form with annual dues of \$15 to:**

ENA c/o Jonathan Chitwood, Treasurer  
1627 Woodward  
Grand Rapids, MI

**2015 BOARD**

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Jim Rauwerda, VICE PRESIDENT  
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