

MAKING STRONG DEWITT NEIGHBORHOODS

How To Start A Neighborhood Association

Featuring: The DeWittshire Community Club

A Neighborhood Association is a great way to meet your neighbors and to create a stronger sense of community. DeWitt has a few neighborhoods who have organized to build community between neighbors. One such neighborhood is the DeWittshire Community Club. This Association is comprised of 6 streets and 140 houses.

Their volunteer committee includes a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Sunshine Committee and Historian. The optional \$20 yearly fee per household is to offset some activity costs and between 70% and 80% of the neighbors participate. Upon submitting the fee, the participant receives a map with the names and contact information for all the neighbors. The DeWittshire Community Club organizes many activities throughout the year: A Turkey Trot, Ladies Night Out, Cookies Exchange, Luminary Bags, Potluck picnics, Neighborhood Garage Sale, Easter Egg Hunt, July 4th Neighborhood Parade, Fall Welcome.

The Association has a Facebook Page and distributes a calendar of events every year. They send out a survey every 3 years to hear feedback on the activities.

President Alyssa Olsen has young children and enjoys interacting with her neighbors and has volunteered to be President because she loves the neighborhood and sense of community.



If you are interested in starting an Association in your neighborhood, here are some basic steps.

Get started!

Create a small core group of neighbors and friends and inventory the neighborhood to identify and determine the primary issues that people care about.

Core Group Homework

After the core group defines the major issues facing your neighborhood, their primary function is to act as a steering committee and help plan the first general meeting of the entire neighborhood.

The core group will need to do a number of important things in preparation for the first general neighborhood meeting.

- Define a list of small, simple "kick-off" projects such as a block clean-up or a potluck fundraising event to make it easy for the people who come to the first meeting to get involved.
- Create a list with contact names, phone numbers and email addresses and designate who in the core group should be in charge of this task.
- Designate someone in the core group to be in charge of recruiting neighbors to be general members of the neighborhood association.
- Designate someone to research in depth all of the issues identified. It is important that you know the history of the important issues so that you know what has already been done in the past and you don't repeat any previous mistakes.

Plan the First General Meeting

Choose a convenient date and time for the largest number of people possible such as a weekday evening or a day on the weekend. Schools, the DeWitt and Jamesville library and churches make great locations for the meeting and will often be free of charge. The DeWitt Town Hall has meeting rooms you can reserve (call (315) 446-3910)

At this meeting, you will make introductions, agree on goals, discuss the issues, set priorities, create tasks, decide on the way to get the word out and set the date for the next meeting.

Neighborhood Watch

If your Neighborhood Association would like to include a Neighborhood Watch, contact the DeWitt Police. They have dedicated officers to do community outreach and to meet with neighborhood groups. Contact them at (315) 449-3640 or communitypolicing@townofdewitt.com

To learn more about DeWitt Community Policing, go to http://www.townofdewittpolice.com/Community_Policing.html.

DeWitt is a great place to live and our neighborhoods are its heartbeat. Neighborhood Associations can help keep it beating strong.