



East Calhoun Community Organization (ECCO) 2011 Annual Report to Neighborhood and Community Relations

Accomplishments

ECCO's major accomplishments in 2011 focused on sustainability issues.

East Calhoun's Green Team created a program called Waste Watchers, funded by a \$2,000 grant from Hennepin County. The primary goal of the project was to reduce waste in East Calhoun by encouraging residents to participate in the organics collection pilot program and to increase their curbside recycling. To this end, we publicized the program in the Uptown Neighborhood News (UNN), monthly e-newsletters, our website, and at neighborhood events. Door-knocking and neighbor-to-neighbor discussions were particularly helpful in promoting the program. Participants received free supplies (cloth bag, compostable bags and countertop compost pail) to help implement the new system. As a awareness-building community event, we designed, built and raced a Waste Watcher-themed boat in the Aquatennial Milk Carton Boat Races.

Education was also an important piece of the program. We engaged residents by organizing events like the Tour de Compost and two waste reduction workshops.

Two on-line surveys were conducted to gauge changes in behavior. Survey results: 84% of those surveyed reduced their household trash over the course of the project; of these, 75% were composting more and 44% were recycling more.

A zero-waste social event was held at the end of the project to honor all the volunteers.

Results: 44% of eligible East Calhoun households are now participating in the curbside organics collection pilot. Waste Watchers had a core volunteer group of 15-20 people and was a finalist for the 2012 Environmental Initiative Award (sponsored by the non-profit, Environmental Initiative) in the Sustainable Community category.

East Calhoun was selected as one of two neighborhoods in Minneapolis for the single-sort recycling pilot. The success of this pilot (a 32% increase in the amount of recycling collected in East Calhoun) contributed to the City's decision to implement single-sort recycling citywide in 2013.

ECCO won two grants from the Center for Energy and Environment and the McKnight Foundation for participating in Community Energy Services (CES). ECCO won the first place Outreach Challenge Award of \$5,000 for having the highest participation rate of eligible Minneapolis neighborhoods (over 18% of East Calhoun households participated). Our staff member, Monica Smith, won an Outstanding Contribution Award on behalf of ECCO for coordinating the promotion of the program in the neighborhood.

2011 CPP Submission

Outreach and engagement activities included **electronic communication** with residents via our monthly e-newsletter, website and Facebook page. In an effort to stay connected with residents who do not have access to electronic communication, we utilized **print communication** via hand-delivered fliers and the community newspaper.

The ECCO Board focused on community-building through social engagement. ECCO organized monthly social events for residents. We offered a variety of activities to engage different demographics.

2011 Events:

Winter:

- Midwinter Mixer. Evening event on the lake with cross-country skiing, games for kids, and treats.
- Meet at the Movies. Saturday morning vintage cartoons at the Suburban World Theatre.

Spring:

- Joyce Uptown Food Shelf Fundraiser. Old-fashioned church hot dish dinner to raise money for the food shelf.
- Earth Day Clean-Up at Lake Calhoun.
- Spring into Fun. Potluck dinner at the lake followed by games (bocce ball, Frisbee, etc.)

Summer:

- Community Forum on Emerald Ash Borer.
- Super Sale. Neighborhood-wide garage sale.
- Waste Watchers: Waste Loss Fair. Workshop on reducing household waste.
- Waste Watchers: Tour de Compost. Walking tour of East Calhoun households with tips for recycling and composting.
- Workshops for building and decorating our boat for the Milk Carton Boat Races plus workshops for cheering section costumes.
- Loon Lake Trolley Path Maintenance. Weeding the trolley path.
- Fireworks and s'mores at Lake Calhoun.
- ECCO competed in the Aquatennial Milk Carton Boat Races.
- National Night Out events.
- Obstacle Course Croquet Social followed by a potluck dinner.

Fall:

- Annual Labor Day Celebration. Parade, followed by games, a potluck dinner and bingo.
- Waste Watchers: Waste Loss Fair. Our second workshop on reducing household waste.
- Annual Meeting. Pizza dinner and social hour followed by a community meeting and board elections.
- Annual Wine Tasting Fundraiser to support Hennepin and Lake area neighborhoods.
- Candle-light Dessert Social at the Loon Lake Trolley Path with s'mores and hot cocoa.
- Holiday Caroling Party. Caroling through the neighborhood streets followed by refreshments and social time.

We had varying degrees of success with our events this year. Many of our events were outdoors and highly dependent on good weather for attendance. Our most successful events were: Meet at the Movies, two Waste Loss Fairs, Labor Day Celebration, Annual Meeting, Wine-Tasting Fundraiser and the Holiday Caroling Party. The Super Sale and National Night Out are always wonderful community-building events in East Calhoun. The Milk Carton Boat Races engaged a group of committed volunteers to design, build and decorate the boat. The boat's theme (Waste Watchers) brought attention to our waste reduction efforts in the neighborhood.

Our two outdoor winter events (Feb. and Nov.) were not well-attended due to cold weather. It was also very cold for our Earth Day Clean-Up, so we had fewer volunteers than usual. The Obstacle Course Croquet Social event was not well attended, perhaps because August is a popular vacation month.

The ECCO Board discussed producing a mailing for all residents, but the project was postponed to 2012.

Art-based community involvement activities such as pavement painting were planned in our CPP application but the organization did not have the capacity to accomplish this goal and decided to focus on our other community-building events outlined above.

Stakeholder Involvement

Our under-represented group in East Calhoun is renters. We used electronic and print communication tools (outlined above) to reach out to all residents. Many of our renters live in 1-4 unit buildings. Fliers and the UNN are delivered to these dwellings. Larger apartment/condo buildings that have security doors do not receive fliers or the UNN.

We had the most success in communicating with residents via our monthly e-newsletter and fliers. Many of our residents are faithful readers of the UNN. Door-knocking and neighbor-to-neighbor conversations were very effective for spreading the word about programs.

We did not accomplish our goal of reaching building owners and managers in order to contact renters directly. Our plan for a mailing to all residents was postponed until 2012.

The ECCO Board holds its elections at our October Annual Meeting. The board that served through most of 2011 consisted of 12 members (1 vacancy) and included two renters.

ECCO's committees in 2011 included: Zoning (five members), Social Committee (4-8 members depending on the activity), and the Green Team (10-15 members). A Tree Task Force consisting of ten people was established at the end of 2011 to work on protecting the shade trees in East Calhoun.

Other information about the organization in 2011:

- Attendance at the October Annual Meeting was 50 people.
- Our email distribution list contained 370 addresses.
- The monthly UNN was delivered to 1,000 households in East Calhoun plus an additional 2,000 are distributed to area businesses.
- Our largest community events was the Labor Day Celebration with approximately 150 people participating and the Annual Wine Tasting (ECCO sold 115 tickets).

2011 Financial Report

CPP Budget vs Expenses through 12-31-11

	2011 Budget	Expenses	Balance
Staff	\$7,219.86	\$6,550.51	\$669.35
Communications/Outreach	6,073.00	4,868.50	1,204.50
Supplies and Material	300.00	33.11	266.89
Festivals and events	2,225.00	1,535.28	689.72
Food and refreshments	850.00	261.77	588.23
Development	1,100.00	-	1,100.00
Other services (insurance, po box, stipend)	1,089.00	538.06	550.94
Total	\$18,856.86	\$13,787.23	\$5,069.63

Other 2011 revenue sources:

\$5,333 Grant from CEE and McKnight Foundation for CES awards.

\$2,000 Grant from Hennepin County for Waste Watchers program.

\$4,224 Revenue from Wine-Tasting Fundraiser

\$250 Nature Valley Bicycle Festival

\$275 Super Sale revenue

Non-CPP Expenses

\$500 Joyce Uptown Food Shelf – donation

\$500 Minneapolis Pops – donation

In addition to your annual report, please take time to describe your interactions with City departments and other jurisdictions.

1. *Impact*

What interactions occupied a major part of your time? What worked well, what could be improved?

- Waste Watchers: Our coordinator worked with Solid Waste and Recycling. City staff was extremely cooperative and supportive.
- CPP: The CPP application and guidelines was time consuming. Understanding the program, educating the ECCO Board, and completing the required paperwork was a challenge considering the relatively small amount of money ECCO received in funding.

2. *City Communications – effectiveness*

Is the information that you receive from the City understandable and useful?

- Many of the notices of public hearing are very cryptic and require follow-up on the part of neighborhoods to learn more so we can determine whether it is an issue we wish to address.
- The MPD Action Alert system is limited to a certain number of characters so the information is truncated. If we want a copy of the full public report, we need to go to City Hall or mail a written request and pay a fee. Can the email be expanded to include all the public information so this extra step is not required?

3. *City Communications – timeliness*

Do you receive adequate notice of City activities in your neighborhood? If not, did your organization inform somebody at the City of this? Did the City respond in a positive manner? Please explain.

- Neighborhood boards and zoning committees typically meet monthly. Notices of public hearing are required to be sent within 10-days of the hearing. The timing does not allow our volunteer board and committees to adequately review and respond to the issue.
- The documents for the next phase of CPP were released on April 12 with a deadline of June 15. The short time frame is difficult for a volunteer organization to complete the required paperwork and get it approved by our board within two months.

4. *City Departments*

How can City departments improve the way in which they function in your neighborhood?

5. *City Assistance*

How can the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department improve the assistance it provides to your organization as a citizen participation group?

- Continue to offer boiler-plate forms and policies so that each neighborhood does not need to create these documents. Have a forum to share best

practices with other neighborhoods (particularly with engaging under-represented groups). We all have similar issues and can learn from each other.

6. *Other comments?*