

## CHAPTER VIII

### **PARTICIPATION**

As in any neighborhood, garnering participation among residents is an ongoing challenge and oftentimes the same individuals contribute the most year after year. A variety of activities can improve conditions in a neighborhood while increasing the number of those taking part. Representatives from the Ward III Office who worked closely with the Neighborhood on Back to Basics and other programs believe an organized neighborhood clean up is the best first step towards increasing participation. A clean up effort brings community members together, improves the general appearance of, and increases pride in, the neighborhood (Bernal 2005). The Tucson Police Department provides free outdoor movies in City neighborhoods, complete with popcorn, which could be planned for Miracle Manor with relatively little effort and provide a fun and relaxing evening for all residents (Bernal 2005).

In addition to community activities, maintaining an active board of directors for a neighborhood is essential. Ideally, no officer reaches the point of burnout and positions are held for the full term and then assumed by another volunteer. Delegation of board work to committees is important to reduce the load on officers and ensures broader participation. As discussed in earlier sections, increased participation at Association meetings is important to improving relations and engaging more residents in community issues and activities. Some additional strategies are outlined below in addition to those already mentioned.

#### **Assumptions**

- Voluntary neighborhood associations need to continually develop new leadership.
- Officers want to share the responsibility of decision-making, organizing and executing events among more residents.

- Participation could increase attendance at Association monthly meetings.
- Community building through neighborhood-wide events would benefit the neighborhood and encourage greater participation in the Association.

### **Goals, Objectives and Strategies**

**Goal 1:** Increase neighborhood participation.

**Objective 1:** Plan neighborhood-wide activities to increase social interaction and build familiarity among residents.

#### **Strategies:**

- Hold a neighborhood-wide clean-up and give prizes for those blocks that achieve the best clean-up.
- Organize a movie night in conjunction with Tucson Police Department which can provide use of a projector, screen and popcorn machine
- Plan a yard sale on a particular street, or at Jacinto Park for the entire community
- Hold holiday events at the park, for example a Halloween or New Years' party
- Organize home or yard improvements or maintenance for a neighbor in need
- Plan a clean up effort for Nash Elementary or Head Start to insure the schools' properties are maintained and not negatively impacted by sharing facilities.

**Objective 2:** Establish block captains and use the Neighborhood Association website to aid with circulation of Association information and announcements (See Chapter V on Crime and Safety.)

**Strategies:**

- Solicit a block captain for each street, or side of street, in Neighborhood to personally contact residents to communicate upcoming events and to learn about residents' issues, needs, and concerns. Captains increase participation through ongoing communication and generation of interest in community events.
- Update the website hosted by Neighborhood Link and located at [www.neighborhoodlink.com/tucson/mmm/](http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/tucson/mmm/) to keep residents and newcomers apprised of activities.

**Goal 2:** Increase participation on the Neighborhood Association board

**Objective:** Develop new Neighborhood Association leadership

**Strategies:**

- Emphasize need for new candidates at Association meetings.
- Recruit new officers from individuals serving on committees.
- Meet individually with potential candidates to inform them about positions and associated responsibilities.
- Work with Ward III office and PRO Neighborhoods to get training and support for new officers.

**Goal 3:** Increase resident participation in Neighborhood Association meetings.

**Objective:** Increase number of attendees at monthly Association meetings.

**Strategies:**

- Provide babysitting to encourage parents to attend.
- Ask City of Tucson to have notifications of Neighborhood activities in Spanish and English.
- Plan potluck dinners in conjunction with meetings for the convenience of working people.
- Hold meetings in English and Spanish to encourage non-English speakers to attend.
- Invite business owners and agency representatives to meetings.
- Solicit donations from business owners for meeting raffle prizes.
- Invite owners and employees of Neighborhood businesses to attend meetings.