



Oakridge News

oakridgena.org February 2021, Vol. 29, No. 02

Moving Forward

by Scott Barnes, ONA President

Hello Neighbors.

As we continue to work through a long, tough period as a nation and within our community it can be challenging to maintain our resilience and keep our optimism fresh. One way we can keep our spirits up is by connecting with our neighbors and community. Through positive involvement in our communities, we help ourselves and others to push through tough times while proactively building for a better tomorrow. The ONA is positioned to help provide opportunities for these connections. We are stronger together than we are apart, and the ONA has worked hard this past year to bring Oakridge residents together.

The Role of the ONA

One of the themes we often revisit (because of its importance) is the difference between a Neighborhood Association (NA) and a Homeowner’s Association (HOA). The founders of Oakridge made no provision for a central, mandated entity with any authority over all the residents (such as an HOA). Not only that, but there is no common property in Oakridge – no area that an HOA would need to be responsible for. All of Oakridge’s entrances are private property, the wall is private property, the golf course is private property, and Oakridge has no neighborhood park or shared recreational area.

Without a central entity to bring neighbors together, the founding residents of Oakridge realized they would need to be proactive in finding ways to connect with each other. Therefore, the voluntary Oakridge Neighborhood Association was created.

The ONA started out as a means of collecting contributions to mow the perimeter grass, then crime watch and a newsletter were added, and here we are today. We are not here to push any agendas that drive neighbors apart. Instead, we are volunteers working together to serve and unite Oakridge.

2020 Highlights

Let’s recap some of the ways the ONA volunteers worked together to serve Oakridge in 2020.

Environmental – We stretched every dollar and employed a lot of great volunteer effort to keep the perimeter grass/trees in good shape and keep our entrances looking good and well-maintained.

Communications – Feedback suggests that the neighborhood finds great value in the newsletter (which reaches every one of the 1,166 homes in Oakridge). We continue to improve the content and find ways to connect all of our residents through this key method of communication. We have also upgraded the website quite a bit this year so go take a look if you haven’t recently.

Crime Watch – The number of incidents in Oakridge has gone down dramatically over the past few years. This improvement is due in large part to the hard work of our Crime Watch team coordinating the COP (Citizens on Patrol), Crime Watch Leads on each street, and an active partnership between GPD and Oakridge. It is impressive and very effective – my hat is off to the Crime Watch team!

Events – We had several successful events this year despite the challenges of COVID:

- **Neighborhood “Walk & Greet”.** This simple event was so effective, providing us an opportunity to meet each other and visit for a few minutes while maintaining necessary safety precautions. The event was so popular the ONA plans to schedule another one when the weather warms up.
- **Food Drive.** Oakridge residents turned out in a great show of support for this event. We collected and donated 1,029 pounds of food and goods to the community through Good Samaritans of Garland. Well done! Another food drive is already in the works for the end of February. Details coming soon.
- **Duck Creek Clean Up.** Oakridge residents joined together with the Golf Club, 10 GISD NHS students, and even a volunteer from Richardson to pull 15 bags of trash out of the creek. What a difference it makes.
- **Holiday Meals for Fire/Police.** The added challenges posed by COVID protocols didn’t keep Oakridge residents from coming together to show appreciation

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Moving Forward by Scott Barnes, ONA President

for our local fire and police crews. The outpouring of homemade food, volunteer hours to assemble boxed meals, and monetary donations was tremendous. Thank you.

Getting Involved

As we step into 2021, we are looking for ways to expand how the ONA serves Oakridge and the surrounding community. Of particular note is the work we're currently doing to align with service teams from local high schools. They are looking for opportunities and we have opportunities: win-win. We are also looking to schedule another food drive, a "walk & greet", and even another chance to join forces with the Golf Club to clean the creek.

The ONA is moving forward, but we need your help. We have two General Meetings coming up on the 4th Thursdays of February and May. (Details are on the website.) Following the February meeting we will have a nominating committee in place to assemble a proposed Board for the coming 2021-2022 year (which begins June 1st). Make this the year you volunteer to help on a committee or serve as a board member. Here are some of the opportunities available:

District Director – This is the most active and important job on the Board. It involves being active in the districts, reaching out to neighbors on behalf of the ONA and serving as a conduit for folks to reach back to the ONA. We need signs put out and taken up, new neighbors welcomed, etc. We very much need folks that care a lot about Oakridge and have some time and ability to help out here.

Environmental – Some people don't realize the environmental committee is a combination of volunteers and contracted work. We don't just hire contractors to maintain the entrances; a large chunk of that work is handled by Oakridge volunteers. We currently have a great team of volunteers, but there is always more work to be done. If you are motivated to do things like help us keep Duck Creek looking good, then this is for you.

Events – We will be setting an Events Calendar for the coming year and along with it will be plenty of volunteer opportunities. Throw your hat into the ring now if you enjoy event planning and networking with others.

Crime Watch – Between COP (Citizens on Patrol) and Crime Watch Leads, we are always looking for additional members to add to this network. Let us know if you'd like to be contacted.

Other – We have other functions on the Board that require filling from time to time like Treasurer, Secretary, President, and Vice President.

Let us know if you are interested in learning more about these positions (info@oakridgena.org).

Take Action

We're stronger together than separate. Whenever you volunteer with the ONA (whether it's with a committee or serving on the board) you are participating in something bigger than yourself. You are helping to cultivate a positive community atmosphere in Oakridge – something that is good for you and good for the neighborhood.

Decide to be a part of what we're doing then take action. We are by Oakridge and for Oakridge. We need folks not only to volunteer for the work to be done now, but to become the future leaders of this volunteer Neighborhood Association. Reach out to us (info@oakridgena.org) and start a conversation about volunteering – we'll figure it out from there. For anyone interested in a board position, contact information for the Nominating Committee will be posted following the February General Meeting.

I can't stress enough how vital it is to the long-term health and effectiveness of this Organization that people volunteer and put their energy into the ONA.

We look forward to hearing from you and having you join us as we work to keep Oakridge connected and improving.

Thanks,
Scott

2020-2021 ONA Board

President, Scott Barnes	602-791-2492
Vice President, Michelle Mizerak	214-962-7795
Secretary, Sharon Parrish	469-939-2270
Treasurer, Keith Engler	972-834-0096
District 1 Director, Mary VanPelt	214-868-9854
District 2 Director, Billy Ray Thomas.....	214-734-1017
District 3 Director, Dotty Moseley	214-703-3532
District 4 Director, David Whittington	214-892-8939
District 5 Director, Melanie Busby	972-989-2253
District 6 Director, Brett Trutna	214-274-5251
District 7 Director, Sharon Carlton.....	972-345-9741
Communications, Heather Englebretson	214-562-7857
Crime & Safety, Joan Nichols	214-543-2546
Environmental, David Parrish	469-733-6089
Events, Jackie Reynolds	469-649-5799
Membership, Vacant	

Thanking Officer Barnes

by Joan Nichols, ONA Crime & Safety Committee Director

Officer Tommy Barnes is our Neighborhood Police Officer. If you have attended any of the ONA General Meetings, you have likely met him as he frequently provides updates to the ONA General Membership.



Officer Barnes was an Army Paratrooper, 82nd Airborne Division, and served in Desert Storm. He and his wife Angie have 3 grown sons and a grandson. Officer Barnes has worked in several police departments but says Garland is the best place to work. He enjoys getting up for work every day and he appreciates our attentive Oakridge neighbors. He describes Oakridge as a quiet neighborhood with low crime.

Recently, we presented a well-deserved commendation to Officer Barnes for his service and dedication to Oakridge. A member of the Garland Police supporting our neighborhood since 2012, he is a regular at our neighborhood events and ONA General Meetings. We appreciate his efforts to build a strong community and police partnership – plus, we love that he is an all-around great person with a genuine heart for people. Thank you, Officer Barnes!



Dan and Joan Nichols (ONA Crime & Safety) presented Officer Barnes (center) with a certificate of commendation.

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Video Crime Watch Program

by Joan Nichols, ONA Crime & Safety Committee Director

With 35 Oakridge residents already signed up for Garland's Video Crime Watch Program, Oakridge is well on its way to becoming the first "Video Crime Watch Neighborhood" in Garland. To achieve this honor, we will try to ensure we have coverage on every block throughout the neighborhood. Can you help us reach this goal?

Video doorbells or any surveillance system can be added to the Garland Video Crime Watch map by completing a short survey located on the GPD website (go to <http://www.garlandpolice.com/331/Police> then scroll down to the "Garland Video Crime Watch" section).

If you have any questions, please contact the program coordinator, Captain McCully, at 972-485-4844.

To become a part of Oakridge Crime Watch, you can reach out to safety@oakridgena.org.

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Oakridge Neighborhood Association
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Oakridge Women's Club

by Libby Morse


We lost one of our long-time members of the Oakridge Women's Club last month. MaryAnne Cullum: May 4, 1950-Jan. 10, 2021. She also belonged to the Daytimers group a few years ago. She had a stroke 15 years ago and has had a decline in health this past year. We will miss her friendship, smile, and numerous contributions to our group over the past 25 years. Prayers to her devoted husband Ed and son Tom. RIP Maryanne.

New to the Neighborhood?

by Heather Englebretson, ONA Communications Director

The ONA assembles and delivers welcome bags to residents who are new to Oakridge. The bags contain an assortment of City of Garland promotional materials as well as some Oakridge informational items.

Since we are limited to learning about new residents by word of mouth or through publicly available lists of homeowners, we occasionally miss out on opportunities to welcome our newest neighbors. Therefore, if you are new to the neighborhood and have yet to receive a welcome bag, please email us at info@oakridgena.org. We look forward to sending a bag your way!



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ONA General Membership Meeting
Feb. 25th (Thursday), 7 p.m., online
Details online at www.oakridgena.org

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