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COMMUNITY PLACE  
BUILDING LIVING

SAFE INNOVATION  
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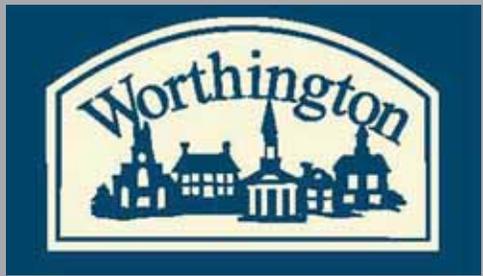
EVENTS

Green ENJOY  
FORWARD PROGRAMS

PEACEFUL PLAN



*Welcome to Worthington  
The Community That Says -  
“Hi Neighbor!”*





### *The community story...*

Worthington has a long history dating back to 1803. This document contains the stories that make up Worthington. While the community's history is rich, the real story of Worthington is shaped by the tight knit community and the people who call Worthington home.



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# **WELCOME FROM THE COMMISSION**



Welcome to **Worthington, Ohio!**

We are the members of the Worthington Community Relations Commission (CRC). We would like to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves and to provide information about our community. The CRC is dedicated to promoting an atmosphere of understanding and cooperation among members of the Worthington community. We advise the City Council on issues related to the fair and equal treatment for all persons, as well as promote Worthington as a livable, safe, friendly community. As part of promoting Worthington, we would like to take this opportunity to share with you just some of the things that make Worthington great.

**What you can expect to find here in Worthington:**

- Weekly Farmers Market, located in Downtown Worthington in the summer and at The Shops at Worthington Place in the winter
- Free concerts on the Green during the summer months
- Annual Worthington Art Festival, Market Day Festival, and other festivals
- July 4th Celebration with Fireworks
- Numerous other special events throughout the year

We have the McConnell Arts Center, the Community Center (72,000 square foot facility with two pools, a fitness center and a variety of programs, camps, and free special events), Sustainable Worthington (promoting healthy and green living), multiple faith communities, and many other organizations and institutions that add to our city. We have some of the best schools and libraries in Ohio: the Worthington School District boasts a number of honors, and the Worthington Libraries were the recipient of the prestigious National Library of the Year Award awarded by Gale Publishing.

Please check out the city website at [worthington.org](http://worthington.org) to see all of the things going on in our vibrant, welcoming community!

**Worthington: The City That Says "Hi Neighbor!"**

## FROM THE BEGINNING

Worthington is a community planned in New England by a group of men under the leadership of James Kilbourne who formed the Scioto Company to purchase land west of the Allegheny Mountains. Thirty-eight original proprietors from Connecticut and Massachusetts purchased 16,000 acres and the first families arrived in 1803 – the same year that Ohio became a state. The town of Worthington consisted of 8,000 acres surveyed into town lots for homes and businesses, and surrounded by farm lots in true New England style.

The pioneer village prospered – forming an Episcopal congregation and a Masonic Lodge in 1804, acquiring a post office in 1805, an Academy in 1808, a newspaper and a manufacturing company in 1811. The 1830 census recorded 910 persons in Sharon Township – approximately one-third in the village and two-thirds on surrounding farms. ("A Village Along Main St." describes Worthington around 1825) In 1835, the Ohio legislature

incorporated Worthington as a village with an elected Village Council and Mayor. The village retained a stable population with little growth and served as the market center for surrounding farms for the remainder of the nineteenth century.

When the electric street railway connected Columbus and Worthington in 1893, the village became a suburb with cars running every half hour and making it possible to live in Worthington and work or shop in the capitol city. The village acquired a telephone exchange in 1899, a public water system in 1913, permission for private homes to tap the interurban electric lines in 1917, and free mail delivery in 1929. By World War II, Worthington had a population of 1,569. In 1954 when residents of the Colonial Hills subdivision circulated petitions to annex to Worthington, they had more residents than the village but together they had more than the 5,000 residents required to be incorporated as a city with a city council/city manager charter.



## *Post War Years*

The post-war years were boom years for Worthington when the 1950 population of 2,128 ballooned to 15,326 by 1970. It was a period of annexations, new subdivisions, and new schools almost annually. When Interstate 270 was completed in 1975 defining Worthington's northern boundary, growth again stabilized, although the present Worthington School District includes significant areas outside the city boundaries.



*Grounded In History*

# COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION OVERVIEW





## WHO WE ARE

We are the Worthington Community Relations Commission (CRC), an advisory body to City Council. We are a group of residents that devote time to promote goodwill and positive relationships among the citizens of the community. During our monthly meetings we work to unite Worthington residents and increase the great sense of community that is present in the City. For more information visit [worthington.org/crc](http://worthington.org/crc)



*Community works together!*

Worthington believes in the true values of a community - neighbors working together to improve lives and help others. In this work, Worthington has strived to connect citizens to each other and the community as a whole.

**Shawn Hamzee:** I have lived in the Northbrook subdivision of Worthington for four years now. My family moved from Clintonville, where we'd lived for 12 years before moving to Worthington. I'm married and have two children, but if you count the dog, then that would make it three. My hobbies are gardening and sports, including coaching my kids' soccer teams. We moved to Worthington for the great schools, which we'd heard about from friends already living here. After we moved in, we fell in love not only with the schools but also with the city's charm and friendliness. It's been a great four years!



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**Angela Courtwright Mahaffey:** My husband, Ken Mahaffey, and I moved to Worthington in 2009. We chose Worthington because we wanted a safe, friendly community in which to raise our family. I am an attorney at the law firm Ice Miller, located in the Arena District, so easy accessibility to downtown Columbus was also very important. Worthington has exceeded our expectations. There is a tremendous sense of community in Worthington. The residents share our same family values and the schools are second to none in serving as partners to educate our children. We can be found most evenings at one of the great parks or strolling through downtown while stopping to talk to many neighbors.



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**Maria Miller:** My husband and I moved to Worthington Estates in 2007, after living in the Short North for several years. We wanted someplace with open spaces for our daughter to run around in, friendly neighbors, and access to amenities (although we want a coffee shop nearby that isn't a chain). We also wanted to live in a place where the houses didn't all look the same, and that was diverse, in all senses of the word. Friends who visit us from the coasts remark upon the charm of Worthington: its greenness, walkability, congeniality are immediately apparent.



*Community plays together!*

Worthington believes that the hard work should always pay off with some fun; that's why you will always see events happening in the City. It's our way of creating the best community.

# WHO WE ARE

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**Dave Kittredge:** In 1987 my wife and I moved to the Worthington area from North Carolina. We moved here based on the recommendation made by a friend of ours who had been raised in Worthington and who spoke highly of the city. For us, Worthington was, and is, a community with values that make it a healthy, safe, wholesome, and challenging place to raise a family. Though at age 65, and with my children out on their own, I continue to learn and grow in Worthington. So, I guess the core values that draw and keep people here are good for all ages!



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**Mikel Coulter:** Worthington is the place where my wife and I educated and raised our two sons. They both have fond memories of growing up in Worthington and it is our hope that someday they will move back. Old Worthington, where we live, has the sense of a small town similar to where I grew up. Everything we want and need is here. We have all the amenities of a big town but not the sense that I can't participate in how our town functions. There are wonderful opportunities for those that want to have an influence on how we work, learn, play and live.



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**Aaron Domini:** I live in a unique pocket of Morning Street. In these last three years, half the block has been redeveloped (older run down homes being renovated), and a collection of new young families has moved in, including mine. On any given day you can find small groups of children running around, neighbors helping each other with yard work, sharing stories or a glass of wine on a front porch. Many of us also run into each other and other members of the community at nearby locations such as the Library, Old Worthington, Pingree Park, or the Moses Wright Nature Area, to name a few. *Note: Aaron was a CRC member until August 2014 and was instrumental in the creation of this publication.*



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**Jack Miner:** Jack Miner and his partner moved to Worthington ten years ago from Victorian Village because they had both grown up in small towns and Worthington offered the best combination of the resources of a large city and the feel of a small hometown. Jack's family chose an area of Worthington off of Olentangy River Road because of the strong neighborhood and the proximity to Antrim Park. Jack is the Director of Operations for the University Registrar's Office at Ohio State and works with a number of local non-profit and service organizations in the area. He and his partner enjoy traveling and spending time with their two grown children and two dogs. Jack's favorite Worthington gem is the McConnell Arts Center.



Joe Decker: Worthington's connectedness drew my family here. We love the easy access to Columbus from 71, 315, and the Olentangy Trail. Being able to walk to our schools, the library, and downtown Worthington is special. Our neighbors welcomed us the first day we arrived, and we've felt at home ever since.



Richard Macer: My family and I have lived in the Worthington Community since August 1970. My wife and I have three adult children, all of whom progressed through the exceptional Worthington School system. My wife and I chose Worthington because we were interested in finding an area that matched our experiences in terms of quality schools, positive neighborhoods, and a calm environment. I grew up in Iowa, and wanted us to live someplace that would be reflective of the life I had lived there. In many ways, the Worthington Community presented that unique environment that matched some of my development years.



Top Row from left to right: Jack Miner, Joe Decker, Mikel Coulter, Dave Kittredge, Richard Macer  
Bottom from left to right: Maria Miller, Angela Courtwright Mahaffey, Shawn Hamzee

## WHAT WE DO

The Community Relations Commission (CRC) advises City Council and City staff on community issues related to fair and equal treatment for all persons. The Commission promotes educational programs to foster positive relationships among people of diverse educational, racial, ethnic, cultural and economic backgrounds; promotes strong neighborhoods and community connections; and works to foster cooperation and goodwill among the residents of Worthington.

### COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

#### "Hi Neighbor"

"Hi Neighbor" was created in 2002 to encourage Worthington residents to begin establishing relationships that build strong communities. Initially a one-night event in June, the CRC now promotes "Hi Neighbor" as a way of life in Worthington.

#### Good Neighbor Award

The CRC has presented the Good Neighbor Award each year since 1993 to thank members of the community who promote cooperation and goodwill throughout their neighborhood. We know that these residents often go about their good deeds without any special recognition and this award presents an opportunity for others to nominate community

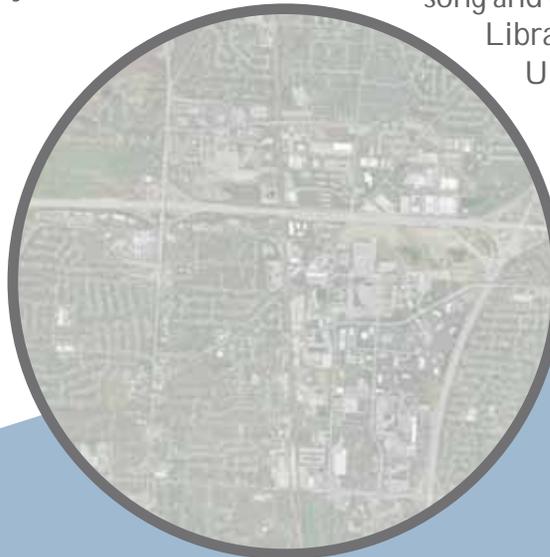
members whose commitment to Worthington exemplifies what it means to be a Good Neighbor.

#### The Neighborhood Grant Program

The City of Worthington and the CRC jointly sponsor Neighborhood Grant awards of up to \$500 each year. The purpose of these grants is to provide financial incentives for Worthington residents to work together to form neighborhood organizations or to make improvements to their neighborhoods. Ultimately, the CRC believes that making connections with your neighbors is essential to creating strong communities and can promote safety, unity and friendships.

#### The Martin Luther King Community Celebration

The CRC hosts the annual community celebration of the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by coordinating a program that combines an inspiring speaker with spiritual song and dance. The CRC partners with the Worthington Libraries, Worthington Schools, Worthington United Methodist Church, and other community organizations to present this event in January.



An aerial photograph of a city, likely Worthington, Ohio, showing a complex highway interchange with multiple overpasses and ramps. A river flows through the center of the city. The surrounding area is densely packed with residential and commercial buildings, parking lots, and green spaces.

# *Within Reach of It All*

## **REGIONAL MAP**

Worthington is conveniently located in the heart of Central Ohio. Whether you are heading out for a night on the town, or to the airport we are within reach of it all.

Drive time:

- Downtown Columbus - 15 minutes
- Columbus Airport - 15 minutes
- The Ohio State University - 10 minutes
- Short North - 15 minutes
- Easton - 10 minutes
- Polaris - 10 minutes

A grayscale photograph of a residential street. In the foreground, a large, mature tree with a thick trunk and dense foliage stands prominently. Behind it, a two-story house with a brick lower level and white upper level is visible. The street is lined with other trees and houses, creating a sense of a established neighborhood.

# WHAT IS COMMUNITY?

*A sense of place and putting down roots*



### COMMUNITY IS . . .

A community is the mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared, and that the people who share the place define and limit the possibilities of each other's lives. It is the knowledge that people have of each other, their concern for each other, their trust in each other, the freedom with which they come and go among themselves.

- Wendell Berry, *The Long Legged House*

The indispensable form that can intervene between public and private interests is that of the community. The concerns of public and private, republic and citizen, necessary as they are, are not adequate for the shaping of human life. Community alone, as a principle and as a fact, can raise the standards of local health (ecological, economic, social, and spiritual) without which the other two interests will destroy one another.

By community, I mean the commonwealth and common interests, commonly understood, of people living together in a place and wishing to continue to do so. To put it another way, community is a locally understood interdependence of local people, local culture, local economy, and local nature. ... Lacking the interest of or in such a community, private life becomes merely a sort of reserve in which individuals defend their right to act as they please and attempt to limit or destroy the rights of other individuals to act as they please.

A community identifies itself by an understood mutuality of interests. But it lives and acts by the common virtues of trust, goodwill, forbearance, self restraint, compassion, and forgiveness.

- Wendell Berry - *Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community*



*Community stands together!*

The Community Relations Committee unites:

- Residents
- Neighborhoods
- Civic Leaders
- Businesses
- Elected Officials



## Worthington Memorial Day Parade

Worthington's Memorial Day Parade is a yearly event organized by American Legion Post 239 that highlights the service men and women in our community and beyond. The parade also represents a coming together of the community and includes a variety of community groups that reflect the fabric of Worthington.



# THE STORIES OF WORTHINGTON



# A DEFINITION OF NEIGHBORLINESS

## *Earle and Elizabeth Wathen (2012 Good Neighbor Award Recipients)*

Earle and Elizabeth Wathen are amazing people. Although they are senior citizens (Earle is near 90) you would never know it by their busy lives. They are always helping a neighbor, being friendly to those passing by, and keeping active in their yard. Earle took the initiative to cut up a neighbor's large tree limb that was too large for the yard waste collection. Another example of his thoughtfulness occurs when Earle comes by to visit with the neighborhood's young children – such as lying down on

a driveway to draw animals and color with them! Elizabeth often brings neighbors helpful items such as baby wipes or cat food or flowers to brighten their day. Earle has even mowed the lawn before a neighbor returns from vacation – just to welcome them home.

Friendly, caring, kind – all apt descriptions of Earle and Elizabeth Wathen.



# VOLUNTEERING AND COMMITMENT

## *Darnell Perkins (2011 Good Neighbor Award Recipient)*

On March 19, 2012, the Worthington Community Relations Commission presented the 2011 Good Neighbor Award to Darnell Perkins. Darnell exemplifies the term good neighbor through his service to the Worthington community.

Darnell's many volunteer activities in the community have included fund-raising, tutoring in the Worthington Schools, and volunteering at the Worthington Food Pantry and the St. Michael Church festival. Darnell was a past president of the Dublin-Worthington Rotary and continues

as an active member of the Rotary, serves on the Board of Trustees for the Peggy R. McConnell Arts Center, and leads the planning committee for the annual Martin Luther King Celebration.

Darnell's volunteerism and commitment to the community has set an example for all of us to follow.



### HELPING IN A TIME OF NEED

#### *Shirley Rybak (2010 Good Neighbor Award Recipient)*

Shirley Rybak exemplifies the term "good neighbor" by helping neighbors in their time of need; and in warm weather Shirley Rybak helps neighbors by mowing or raking yards and picking up storm debris, and in winter uses her snow blower to clean the snow covered driveways and sidewalks of elderly neighbors or anyone else who needs a hand.

Shirley Rybak looks out for everyone in the neighborhood by calling or stopping by if anything seems suspicious, by bringing in trash cans on Fridays, or other tasks that help busy neighbors. Shirley can also be seen providing delicious

baked goods to neighbors throughout the year, and is always ready with a warm hug and a treat for any neighborhood resident or guest. Shirley's love and friendship to her neighbors is an example of how Worthington has grown to own the phrase, the community that says "Hi Neighbor."



# NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICE

## *George Campbell (2010 Good Neighbor Award Recipient)*

George Campbell exemplifies the term "good neighbor" through his service to the Colonial Hills neighborhood. George has served his neighborhood with creative vision as president of the Colonial Hills Civic Association, including revitalization and expansion of the July 4th celebration thereby restoring the community feeling that this event enjoyed in earlier decades.

George Campbell's management and leadership of the Colonial Hills Civic Association has included hands-on participation in neighborhood events, and improved funding for the association by expanding the percentage of

residents who pay their association dues. He has improved communication among Colonial Hills residents by expanding the newsletter, designing and maintaining a neighborhood website, updating and publishing a neighborhood directory, and digitally documenting neighborhood history.



# VOLUNTEERING AND EXTENDING A HELPING HAND

*John Hamilton (2009 Good Neighbor Award Recipient)*

John Hamilton exemplifies the term "good neighbor" by helping neighbors in their time of need. John Hamilton has willingly answered the call to help the elderly and the disadvantaged among us who are unable to make property repairs. John has worked with City officials to help those who cannot maintain their property, and has spent many hours clearing overgrown yards, and making home repairs.

John's volunteerism and compassion for others has ranged from mentoring young people at summer work camps, to collecting bicycles for underprivileged children, to helping flood victims in the Gulf states; to serving as an active

member of the Worthington Presbyterian Church; and by treating even strangers as his neighbors. John Hamilton has set an example for all of us to follow.



# EXEMPLIFYING KINDNESS AND CONSIDERATION

## *Bob and Linda Howe (2008 Good Neighbor Award Recipients)*

Bob and Linda Howe exemplify the term good neighbor by showing kindness and consideration for their neighbors. Bob helps his neighbors by mowing lawns in summer, shoveling snow in winter, and fixing things whenever needed. Linda Howe is known for baking treats for neighbors, looking out for neighborhood children and volunteering with her church.

Bob and Linda Howe have shown love and friendship to their neighbors through good times and bad, and have always gone above and beyond what would be expected.

Bob and Linda Howe keep their neighborhood connected by hosting "Hi Neighbor" events, and through their many acts of kindness to all of their neighbors whether next door or many houses away.



# PLACE PROFILE

*Worthington Community Garden*  
*Worthington Farmers Market*



# WORTHINGTON COMMUNITY GARDEN

### Background

Community Gardens were conceived as a way to encourage everyone to eat well by giving them access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and to support the spirit of community that comes from nurturing a shared plot of land. Community Gardens have long been a part of Worthington's history. Upon establishing the Village of Worthington in 1803, the founders set aside two parcels as farmland to support the school and the church. The school farm was located on the northwest corner of what is now Evening Street and West Granville Road. The church farm was on the southwest corner. The school farm was gradually converted from farming to school buildings, beginning in the early 20th

century. The church farm remained until the late 1950s and was rented out in plots to residents who wanted more garden space than that available on their home properties. Also, during the mid-1900s community garden plots were located on the northeast corner of West New England and Oxford and, in the early 1970s, a community garden was located at the northwest corner of Larrimer and High.

Now, those hoping to reap the benefits of fresh garden vegetables and fruits, have the opportunity to grow their own in a new community garden which opened in the spring of 2010 at the Worthington Community Center.



## The Details

This garden is a joint project of Sustainable Worthington and Worthington Parks & Recreation. Additionally, one plot has been set aside for the Worthington Food Pantry.

The 30 garden plots are located behind the Worthington Community Center, on the south edge of McCord Park. Each plot is leased by a city resident who wants to grow fruits, vegetables, herbs or flowers alongside neighbors with the same interest. Most plots are 30 feet by 20 feet in area, though there are half-plots and quarter plots for less ambitious gardeners.

The cost for a whole plot is \$40, with half plots costing \$25, and quarter plots \$20. Gardeners also pay a \$25 fee that will be returned at the end of the season if the plot is cared for. Many of the gardeners chose to donate that fee. The garden is self-supporting and costs nothing for the city. The garden is organic, meaning no treated wood or chemical fertilizers or pesticides are permitted.

A group of volunteers is also growing a plot of fruits and vegetables to donate to the Worthington Food Pantry.

## How To Get Involved

Anyone who wants to help can contact coordinator April Scott at 580-7523.



# WORTHINGTON FARMERS MARKET

## Background

The Worthington Farmers Market is a market of Ohio farmers and artisan food producers to sell high quality produce, goods, and various other foods.

Farming has always been a part of Worthington's history. The original planned settlement, built New England style, featured farm lots surrounding the central business and residential section. Since 1987, the Worthington Farmers Market has been providing the community with locally grown produce, cheeses, jams, jellies, honey and maple syrup. The Market also includes high quality cuts of meat from carefully raised farm animals, eggs from pastured

chickens, flowers, herbs, plants and homemade soaps.

This year round market is held outdoor in the heart of downtown Old Worthington every Saturday from May through October and indoor from November through the end of April at The Shops at Worthington Place.

## The Details

The Market is sponsored by the Olde Worthington Business Association (OWBA). Every Saturday citizens of Worthington alongside others from all over the greater Columbus area, gather to shop, eat and talk. This event provides a perfect platform for the social interactions that



create a community. The Worthington Farmers Market is a showcase event for what makes Worthington so special. It unites local business to the community and attracts outside visitors while promoting the City.



# COMMUNITY TOOLBOX

*A local resource to building community*



## Building Community

Community starts with people. It requires the dedicated effort of individuals to forge the bond of the total. The following pages show how individuals can work within their neighborhood to advance the community.

## NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY

There's no better way to engage with your neighbor than by hosting or attending a block party. These events capture community spirit and allow space for social interactions. Block parties are a great way to learn more about your neighbors and create relationships that ensure safety and community bonding.

### HOW?

The earlier you get organized, the better. Engaging with and involving your neighbors can make things easier for you. Locating the block party in a central location is important. Send out plenty of reminders and encourage RSVPs, this way you know how much of everything you need.

Planning a party is not easy for everyone, but with some neighborly help it can be.

- First, set up a meeting with your neighbors to find a date and delegate duties. The duties include passing out flyers, acquiring permits if necessary and food and beverages, among others.
- If wanting to block off streets for the block party, a Block Party Permit can easily be found on the City's website.
- Publicize the party by posting signs, handing out invitations, and calling your neighbors.



# NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK WATCH

Neighborhood block watches give residents the chance to personally monitor criminal and suspicious actions in their neighborhood. By reporting these suspicious behaviors to the Worthington Police Department, neighbors can prevent crime and promote cooperation among residents and police. Block watches provide police with additional eyes and ears on the street to ensure neighborhood security.

## HOW?

- The first step is to identify key leaders within the neighborhood to take a lead on the block watch. These individuals are important to the organization and promotion of the block watch.
- Recruiting is the next step, it ensures a neighborhood-

wide adoption of the program which can make the block watch successful.

- Advertising through the newspaper or online is a helpful tool in recruitment.
- When meeting while organizing the group, involve the police for additional training and advice on management. Training will provide advice on recognizing and reporting suspicious activity and on home and neighborhood security.

When organizing a neighborhood block watch, you might consider applying for a Neighborhood Grant, through the Worthington Community Relations Commission!



# NEIGHBORHOOD CONTACT LIST

Something as simple as creating a contact list of neighbors can help create a safer and more united community. Having a list of numbers provides residents information in case of emergency or if they are in need of some help. Creating a contact list also gives residents a chance to meet neighbors they haven't met before. This interaction can increase community building and a feeling of security between residents.

## HOW?

Creating a contact list for a neighborhood is one of the simplest tools for community.

- The most engaging way to approach the list is by going door-to-door with a pen and paper to acquire contact information. Be sure to include name, phone number and email address.
- Once the list is compiled, enter into a spreadsheet and email the list out to everyone else. This also makes it easier when trying to organize neighborhood events, since all the emails are already typed into the computer.



# VOLUNTEERING AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

## VOLUNTEERING

Building a community always starts with hard work and a helping hand. Strong communities always have a strong base of volunteerism, whether it's helping at a local food shelter or serving on a civic committee. Volunteer work builds neighborhood bonds while helping others in need. Worthington prides itself on the work its residents put into the community.

## COMMUNITY GROUPS

Worthington is home to many community groups that serve the community in a variety of ways. To review a partial list of local community groups please visit the City's webpage at [worthington.org/communitygroups](http://worthington.org/communitygroups). Learn more about each group, how they serve the community, and how to get involved.



