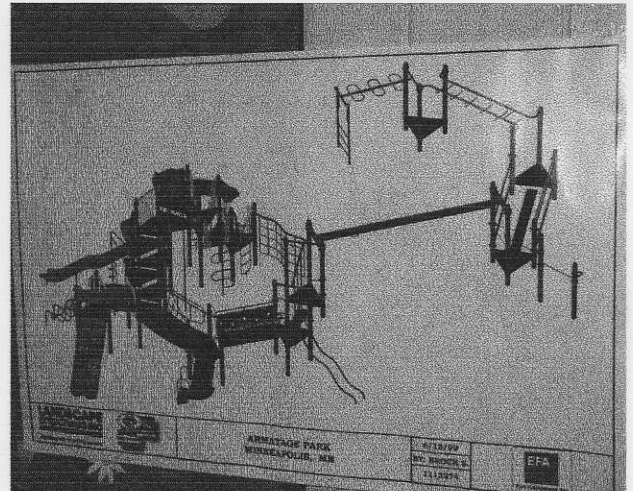




## ARMATAGE NEIGHBORHOOD PHASE I HIGHLIGHTS

### Armatage Park Playground Design

This project was entirely initiated and driven by Armatage neighborhood residents. A group of mothers with young children were interested in seeing the existing playground torn down and a new playground constructed. It was this same group of mothers who approached the ANA to find out how to go about seeing this happen. The group of young mothers formed a playground sub-committee of the ANA, and met with the architects and MPRB to see that their vision would become a reality. This group also formed a partnership with the Armatage Community School to gain their input in this process. Including the school was important because the entire student body grades K-5 uses the playground on a daily basis. This was an excellent example of a grassroots effort on the part of residents to turn a vision into reality with their leadership.



### Armatage Parking Lot for Seniors

A group of active seniors from Armatage and other neighborhoods meet at Armatage Park for a variety of programming activities on a monthly basis. During a focus group conducted by the ANA, seniors expressed a desire to expand the existing parking lot closer to the building to allow for increased accessibility for seniors, disabled visitors, and Metro Mobility. The seniors joined the ANA in working with the MPRB and City Council Steve Minn to find funding for the project and to implement the construction. About 10 additional spaces were added. Four of these spaces are reserved for handicapped parking and four are "reserved" for senior visitors. This project was successful in leveraging funds to fulfill a need identified by the citizens of the neighborhood who were active participants in the process.

### Armatage Park Playground Loan

To access complete funding for the new playground, the ANA and playground sub-committee needed to find additional funding from within its' action plan. A decision was made to temporarily loan funds to the MPRB from the ANA Housing Improvement Program. To accomplish this, a ballot was sent out to every household in the Armatage Neighborhood. The vote was overwhelmingly in support of the transfer of funds. The ANA then presented the plan modification to the NRP Policy Board and received support to proceed with the loan to the MPRB. Although this was a lengthy approval process that was contentious at times, the neighborhood is very pleased to have accomplished the playground construction four years ahead of the MPRB's scheduled renovation.

## Armatage Park Playground Equipment

This project was initiated and implemented by a group of young mothers from the Armatage neighborhood. They identified a need for new playground equipment at Armatage Park but the MPRB did not have the playground on their schedule for improvements until 2003. The group of mothers formed a playground sub-committee of the ANA anyway, and was instrumental in working with the MPRB in getting a design completed.



The design was used to gain support from residents and other funding sources to proceed with the project ahead of schedule. To find enough funding for the project, the ANA extended a ballot to the entire neighborhood to temporarily transfer funds from another area of the plan into the playground. Additional sources of funding were leveraged as well. This project received overwhelming support from residents who voted on the ballot and signed petitions. The playground was constructed in the fall of 1999 and has drawn an unprecedented number of families in Armatage and surrounding neighborhoods. The Armatage Community School also uses the playground on a daily basis for its entire student body grades K-5. The result has been an increased feeling of community at the park and school as the heart of our neighborhood.



## Armatage Park Sidewalk

Once the new playground at Armatage Park was constructed and the gateway arch was scheduled to be installed, the ANA decided they would like to be able to use the arch as a natural pathway to the new playground. Installing a paved walkway under the arch was suggested to accomplish this goal. Because there were unutilized funds from an unsuccessful safety strategy, the ANA decided to proceed with a plan modification to transfer the funds. The result has been a natural pathway that enhances the visual impact of the gateway arch and provides more direct access to the new playground.

## Armatage Park/School Feasibility Study

The study, as well as construction, is complete. The impetus for the study came from our neighborhood's NRP survey, which identified improvements to the park as a priority. Ground-breaking for the gymnasium and school building addition was held in October 1998. The study was a cooperative effort between the ANA, MPS, MPRB, and Smiley, Glotter, Nyberg architects.

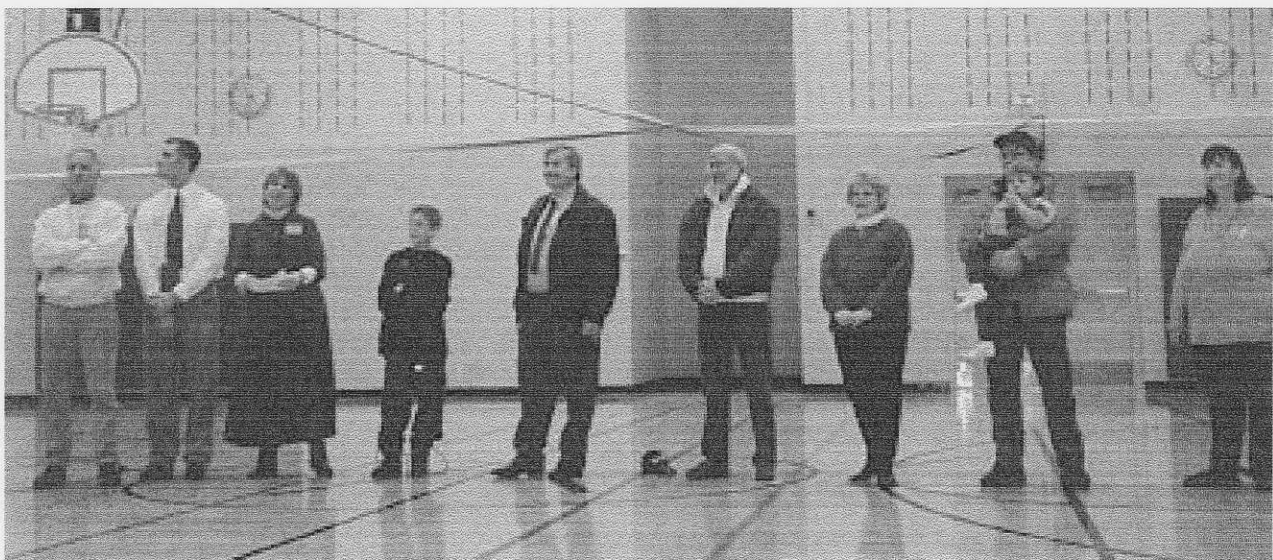
## Motion Detector and Lock Program

The program was expanded to include carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers, but was unsuccessful due to poor advertising and costs associated with related electrical work. However, a neighborhood resident who is an electrical contractor continues to offer residents assistance with installing motion detectors and this is advertised in our neighborhood newsletters.

## Armatage Park/School Improvements

When the ANA was first developing a NRP Full Action Plan, they surveyed the residents to identify priorities. The community center and school at the center of our neighborhood were identified as a high priority for improvements. As a result, the ANA formed a park/school task force to study the issue of potential improvements to the facilities. This turned into a multi-million dollar project with many funding partners spanning numerous years. The result is that a new gymnasium, 3 classrooms, media center, computer lab, and office and storage spaces were

built which physically linked the park and school buildings into one continuous entity. Not only has the physical impact of this project enormously enhanced the opportunities for neighborhood residents, but a new spirit of cooperation is developing between the ANA, the park, and the school. This has had wide ranging impacts of increased programming and joint projects as well as a sense of "we" instead of "us vs. them".





## Block Club Incentives

Even though the ANA has not formally initiated recruitment or retention efforts, we have a strong network of block club leaders in the Armatage Neighborhood, with many of our blocks organized. For the past three years, the ANA has offered block leaders the opportunity to computerize their block maps on the organization computer. This has been popular with both new and existing block leaders. We have assisted almost half of our leaders with this task. We regularly publish information in our neighborhood newsletter on how residents can become block leaders and the benefits of doing so.

We also have held two block leader events, in the spring of 1999 and 1998. One was designed as a so-

cial event for leaders to get to know each other and the CCP/SAFE department provided a free Operation ID kit to a randomly chosen leader. The second event was specifically to ask for their input as leaders on a neighborhood safety survey that was to be distributed. Although many of our leaders did not attend these events, those that did appreciated the opportunity to talk with each other and provided valuable feedback to the ANA on their perception of safety issues in the neighborhood.

Through our block leader events, recruitment information, and computerized block maps, our number of blocks organized has increased significantly over the past year and a half. During the year 2000 alone, eight new block leaders participated in CCP/SAFE training.

## Commercial Improvement Grant Program

This program has allowed five business owners in the Armatage neighborhood to make improvements to a total of ten business properties. This is almost one-third of all the businesses in the neighborhood. The impact of the grants was immediately visible to the owners, managers, and residents alike.

The improvements included such projects as new roofing, siding, windows, landscaping, and awnings. In a number of cases, the owner made substantial investment of their own funds toward the project.

This project has provided an opportunity for new vitality and appeal at important business nodes in the area. The timing was also excellent in that our neighborhood will be seeing increased traffic along

Penn and Xerxes Avenue when the Crosstown construction project begins. Hopefully, our businesses will be more visible to newcomers in the area, and see an increase in business as well.



## Exterior Home Improvement Program (First Step)

The First Step is completed. This program was so successful that many more applications were received than could be funded. In total, 23 ANA loans, out of 153 applications, were provided for exterior improvements to properties in the Armatage neighborhood.

## Exterior Home Improvement Program (Action Plan)

This program was designed to provide the opportunity for residents with a limited income to apply for deferred loans to make improvements to their homes that might not otherwise have been possible. Eligible projects included exterior improvements such as roofing, siding, windows, and sidewalks. The ANA was able to fund every project that was applied for and eligible according to program guidelines.

## Home Addition Plans

The ANA was interested in having a book of remodeling suggestions specifically for the home types in our neighborhood. The neighborhood association spoke with other groups who were working on similar projects such as the city of Saint Louis Park and the Longfellow neighborhood. The neighborhood decided to contribute funding towards the publication of the Saint Louis Park book rather than develop our own. However, as the project proceeded, other priorities for the ANA emerged and they decided to take another approach.

The ANA received one copy of the remodeling book once it was completed, and has made the information about the book available through our neighborhood newsletter. We have "loaned" out the book to any resident interested in reading it free of charge. There has been a slow but steady flow of requests for the book after the initial demand waned. The ANA believes this approach has met the needs of our residents while allowing us to use the allocated funds toward other action plan strategies.

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## Home Improvement Fair

The Armatage Neighborhood Association joined other south Minneapolis neighborhoods in the planning and implementation of the 1999 South Minneapolis Housing Fair. This involved numerous planning meetings as well as staffing an ANA table the day of the fair and assisting with teardown after it was over. Although the fair is an excellent resource, we discovered that few of our neighborhood residents attended. Informal feedback after the fair indicated that most residents don't choose to

travel to the location of the fair, and consider the Richfield event to be easier to access. Attendance at subsequent fairs has not changed. As a result, the ANA has not chosen to participate in subsequent fairs that involve a high level of planning, with little participation from our area. This experience has been valuable for our neighborhood and we continue to support the fair through our neighborhood newsletter publication annually.

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## Minnesota Multi-Housing Association Membership

This strategy was implemented to a limited degree. A number of meetings were held with property owners to gauge what their interest was in developing an association and to find out what concerns they had as rental property owners.

Newsletter articles were also published on where rental property owners could get financing for improvements, etc. However, most of the rental property owners were absentee owners, which seemed to affect investment and at-

tendance in establishing an association. In September of 2000, the funds set aside for the MMHA membership were reallocated into another strategy related to housing so it could be used more effectively.

The ANA has received a grant from the Minneapolis Center for Neighborhoods to help us identify more effective ways to engage under-represented groups in our neighborhood, including renters and rental property owners.

## Implementation Coordinator (First Step and Action Plan)

The ANA's first step plan included such items as working with CCP/SAFE to identify new block clubs and McGruff houses as well as support those already in existence; administer the motion detector/dead bolt lock program; and work with MCDA on implementing a first step housing program.

This coordinator was vital in making sure that these items were carried out, and carried out in a timely manner. The organization was still in its infancy stages, and needed the guidance of a professional who could educate them on the processes involved while still making sure the plan was moving forward.

A Full Action Plan Coordinator was hired in April of 1998. Administrative support for the organization was

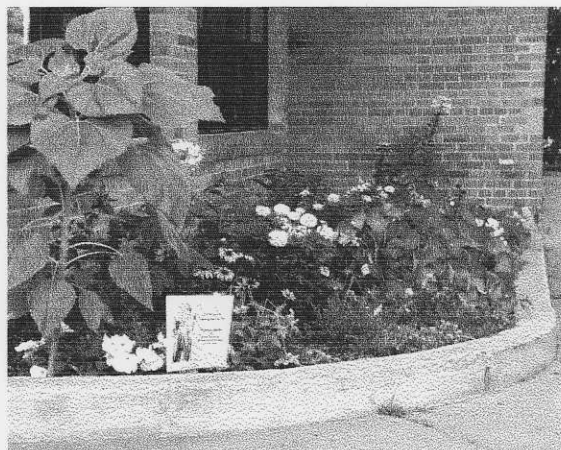
critical in moving plan implementation forward, as well as carrying out some of the day-to-day needs of the organization. The ANA is now in a position where over 95% of its plan has been contracted and they can move forward with Phase II.

Non-personnel costs consist of the computer system, established in August (\$3,500). As part of the new construction to the Armatage Park/school building, the ANA now has a shared office space for the organization's computer and historical files. The office space and computer have been invaluable in establishing the ANA as a legitimate organization in working with other public agencies, and provided the structure for good information collection and storage to provide continuity when board members turn over.

## MN Green Membership

This has been a very positive and visible experience for the ANA. The ANA began its MN Green membership in 1998 and have used this membership to provide resources for Garden Club members through their monthly publications. We have also been able to get reduced priced planting materials through our membership.

This spring will mark the third year since our Garden Club has formed. They have enjoyed planning ways to "green up" the neighborhood. To date, the club has had two seasons of planting beds that are attached to the front of the Armatage Park building. The club has also planted bulbs around the base of the Gateway Arch sculpture at Armatage Park.



When new volunteers get involved, this has been consistently the area where most are interested in joining. The days the garden club is planting and watering, lots of interest and enthusiasm is received from residents. This has been one of the most pleasurable tasks the ANA has carried out from its action plan.

## Newsletter

The quarterly newsletter has changed over the course of time. The newsletter used to be 16 pages and was hand delivered. It now has a new writer/editor, has been reduced to 8 pages, is a streamlined format, and is delivered by mail. As a result, the pro-

duction and distribution costs have been reduced significantly. The newsletter is the main method of communication for residents in the Armatage neighborhood. Although residents receive the Southwest Journal as well, it does not contain information specific only to the neighborhood.

The newsletter features columns on ANA current activities; a Ward 13 City Council Member letter; local business and outstanding volunteer features; park activities, senior events, etc. We hope to be able to continue to provide this service to Armatage residents for a long time to come.



## Neighborhood Events

This strategy has become an increasingly successful one for building a sense of community in Armatage and increasing awareness of the ANA and NRP. Each of the neighborhood festivals provides entertainment, games, food, and information on what is happening with the ANA currently. NRP funds help with items such as paper supplies and flyer mailing costs, while food sales and donations help pay for non-NRP expenses.



Special events have been a tool for gathering support for playground funding, having neighborhood boundary sign contests, and recognizing outstanding volunteers. Since the addition of the new gym at Armatage park, the ANA has seen attendance at its festivals increase as well since this is another opportunity to offer new programming for residents, and for them to see how their money has been put to excellent use.



## Neighborhood Signs

The ANA held a contest at one of our summer festivals to generate a design for the boundary signs. A selection was made from among our residents. However, when it came time to implement the production of signs, the ANA felt it was best to use a design that tied into a common, recognizable symbol in the neighborhood. Concurrently, the ANA was in the process of selecting a gateway arch design. The ANA determined that once a gateway arch artist was selected, a symbol from that arch would be used to develop the boundary sign.

In addition, the ANA wanted to use the symbol as a unifying force with the ANA as a logo and letterhead design. Permission was granted from the artist for this purpose, and design of the signs moved forward with the assistance of a neighborhood artist. Once the signs were up and the arch in place, an article was placed in the neighborhood newsletter explaining the symbolism and how it all tied together. Although, implementation of this strategy did not occur as initially expected, the end result has been positive.

## Senior Needs Survey

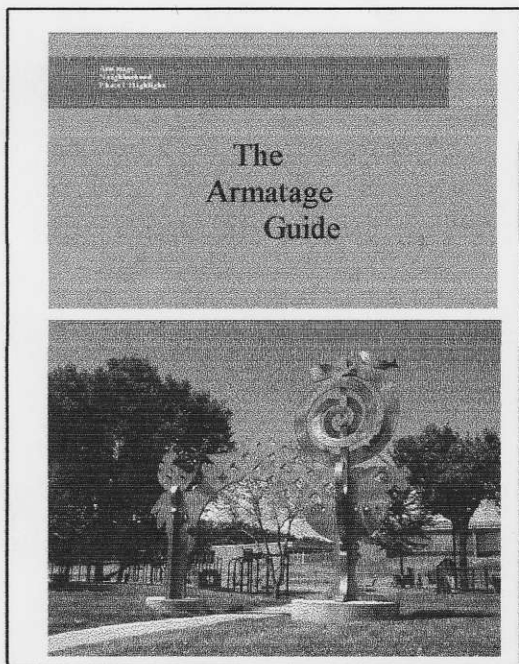
The Armatage Neighborhood Association mailed 70 surveys to seniors, 21 of which were returned. The surveys seemed to indicate that the highest interest was in recreational services. Very few of the respondents indicated that they would utilize other services such as congregate dining.

Independent of the ANA is a senior group that meets numerous times a month for various activities such as cards, bingo, and movies. In addition, Armatage park staff provide specialized field trips the seniors indicate interest in. As a result, the ANA has never formally implemented any additional services for seniors in the neighborhood.

## Odd Jobs Clearinghouse

The Armatage Neighborhood Association attempted to implement this activity in a formal manner last year. We put an article in the neighborhood newsletter requesting residents of all ages to submit information on what services they could provide to other residents in need. We did not get a single response. As a result, the ANA has been trying to address this need on an informal basis.

When neighbors call in requesting information on service providers, the board brainstorms who might be able to provide this service. Sometimes it is a commercial business, sometimes it is a home-based business, and sometimes it is just a resident with some spare time. We also provide people bulletin board space at the park as needed to post flyers if they are looking for help. To a large degree we have been able to address needs. In addition, the ANA is in the process of producing a neighborhood resource guide that lists neighborhood commercial and home-based business information that we hope will address some of the needs of our residents.



## Welcome Packets

This packet has had a long process of implementation. Two different people had drafted samples of the packet since 1997. Neither one of those were actually produced as the people involved left the association before the project was completed and current board members had preferences for different formats.

The ANA decided to combine the two aspects of a welcome packet and an information booklet into one entity. The ANA's NRP coordinator developed a 16-page resource guide that included history on the Armatage neighborhood, information on the ANA, a listing of neighborhood commer-

cial and home-based businesses, as well as commonly utilized city amenities and services.

This resource guide was printed and mailed to every resident and business in the neighborhood. Additional copies have been made so that new residents may request a copy after they have moved in. The ANA will use the neighborhood newsletter to make periodic announcements about the resource guide and how new residents can receive one.