

**University of Missouri Extension
Greene County Extension Council
2400 S. Scenic Ave, Springfield, Mo. 65807**

August 10, 2024

Dear municipal leader:

I am writing to formally invite you and your city to join other groups in celebrating Missouri Good Neighbor Week (Sept. 28-Oct. 4). Neighborhoods USA recognized Missouri Good Neighbor Week as the best neighboring program in the United States in 2023!

Last year we had nearly 20,000 acts of neighboring performed and reported during Missouri Good Neighbor Week. We were also able to recognize/reward and tell the stories of 12 engaged neighbors in Missouri and highlight some of the best acts of neighboring.

New this year is an effort to recognize the most neighborly cities in Missouri. We will recognize four cities based on size categories provided by the Missouri Municipal League. The recognition is based on participation in Missouri Good Neighbor Week by your residents. The four cities recognized will receive a digital “badge” that can be used on newsletters, letterhead, social media, etc., and a plaque delivered during a council meeting. There will also be media coverage of the award and the honored cities.

Since Missouri first proclaimed this official week, we have seen it become an impactful annual program to recognize great neighbors in our respective communities. When people think about and show kindness toward neighbors they become more likely to volunteer and to serve.

There is an additional reason to embrace and encourage the celebration of this week in your community. A Nextdoor study showed people who know six or more of their neighbors have decreased levels of social isolation and loneliness compared to people who do not. By stepping out of your home and connecting with neighbors through a neighborhood gathering or act of kindness, you are helping to build a social support system in your neighborhood. This is an effort that benefits your city which is why we believe Missouri Good Neighbor Week is worthy of your support.

Recognition of great neighbors provides tangible examples for others to follow and highlights leaders of all ages who are engaged neighbors. It is important to remember that this grassroots community and leadership development effort is the starting point for good neighbors, not the finish line.

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PS: The joint partners for Missouri Good Neighbor Week are University of Missouri Extension and The Hopeful Neighborhood Project. This year we have also added an alliance with Habitat for Humanity.



MISSOURI CITIES

INSTRUCTION KIT FOR MISSOURI GOOD NEIGHBOR WEEK

For more information reach contact:

David Burton, burtond@missouri.edu, 417-881-8909

Jennifer Prophete, jennifer@hopefulneighborhood.org, 833-343-1509

New for Municipalities This Year:

Earn Status as Most Neighborly City in Missouri

Determine and recognize the most Neighborly Cities in Missouri based on four size categories (provided by the Missouri Municipal League). Points are assigned to communities based on:

- reported acts of neighboring from that community during Missouri Good Neighbor Week,
- the number of engaged neighbor nominations submitted,
- points for a local Good Neighbor Week proclamations reported,
- and bonus points for any winning acts of neighboring or winning engaged neighbor nominations.

Encourage your residents to do an act of neighboring and then report it via the Missouri Good Neighbor Week website! Ten of the top acts in Missouri will be recognized and those efforts help your city too. The award categories are: Small City, with population under 5,000; Medium City, with population 5,000 – 15,000; Large City, with population 15,000 -30,000; and Metro City, with population more than 30,000. Winning cities will be announced nationwide, receive a plaque at a council meeting and also receive a digital badge for use on newsletters, websites and social media.

Nominations for Engaged Neighbors Open All Year

The statewide recognition of Missouri's Most Engaged Neighbor as part of Missouri Good Neighbor Week (Sept. 28 to Oct. 4) is being expanded this year with **nominations accepted all year online at <http://missourigoodneighborweek.com>**. We heard from participants and nominators this year that the week came and went, and they did not get nominations submitted. So, instead of creating a barrier to nominations, we want to open the process to collect names all year. Then we will recognize the winning nominations during Missouri Good Neighbor Week. During Missouri Good Neighbor Week in 2023, 62 people were nominated for recognition. Each of them received an acknowledgment letter and gift by mail. Twelve were selected for the statewide honor and received an award certificate and prize check. These statewide awards are provided by University of Missouri Extension and The Hopeful Neighborhood Project, which sponsors Missouri Good Neighbor Week.

New Partnership with Habitat for Humanity in Missouri

A partnership with the Habitat for Humanity organizations across Missouri is a new addition. We hope to raise awareness of Habitat for Humanity's mission, develop new volunteers and perhaps raise funds. Our official partnership statement reads as follows: "Local Missouri Habitat for Humanities are partnering with Missouri Good Neighbor Week to repair, rebuild and restore communities around Missouri. Celebrate the week by volunteering or working with your local Habitat for Humanity, or doing events that raise funds for local efforts. Find your local habitat at <https://www.habitat.org/local/affiliate-by-state?state=MO>."

More Information

Missouri's Governor signed legislation HB1738 on July 1, 2022, establishing Missouri Good Neighbor Week. The week begins on Sept. 28, also National Good Neighbor Day (first created in 1978 by President Jimmy Carter). Missouri Good Neighbor Week was selected as the best neighboring program in the United States for 2023 by Neighborhoods USA.

In the past, Missouri cities have partnered with us and so have MU Extension Councils all over the state. This year we are expanding efforts with Missouri cities and adding a partnership with Habitat for Humanity. You can find us online at <https://www.missourigoodneighborweek.com/>

For more information, contact David Burton, community development specialist with University of Missouri Extension, by phone at (417) 881-8909 or by email at burtond@missouri.edu or online at <http://engagedneighbor.com>.

Jennifer Prophete can be found at the Hopeful Neighborhood Project (<https://www.hopefulneighborhood.org>) and reached by email at jennifer@hopefulneighborhood.org.

Suggested Steps to Celebrate Missouri Good Neighbor Week in Your Own Neighborhood

_____ Visit the Missouri Good Neighbor Week website and nominate someone as the most engaged neighbor in your community. Winners will be selected and recognized during the week of celebration.

_____ Get local sponsors or funding for local prizes to recognize top acts of neighboring and the “Most Engaged Neighbor” in your town or county. (We recommend \$250 for top awards but leave it up to the local contact.)

_____ MU Extension and The Hopeful Neighborhood Project will do statewide promotion and offer statewide prizes for neighbor nominations. But your efforts to promote the week locally make a difference.

_____ Prepare a city or county proclamation for Missouri Good Neighbor Week as part of your local promotional effort. An example proclamation is included in this packet.

_____ The goal is to encourage more acts of neighboring and to foster discussion about what it means to be an engaged neighbor. Let this special week be the start of an ongoing effort in the fall to promote neighboring.

_____ Talk to members of your household about a way to connect with your eight closest neighbors. It could be a front yard cookout, or delivering cookies, or just beverages and cookies on the driveway. The report what you did online at <https://www.missourigoodneighborweek.com/> so your city gets credit!

_____ Visit the Missouri Good Neighbor Week website and download our list of 101 acts of neighboring.

_____ Pick a date for your event that is during Missouri Good Neighbor Week (Sept. 28 to Oct. 4) and send out invitations to your neighbors or hang an invite on their door.

_____ Plan and host your event. And remember to have a good time! You are not responsible for entertaining people. The goal is to build connections!

_____ Report your successful event and the outcome (number who attended and impact) on the Missouri Good Neighbor Week website (missourigoodneighborweek.com) or the websites of the week sponsors.

_____ There will be random drawings among those who submit what they did with or for their neighbors. But better yet, these submissions from across Missouri will help create a database of unique neighboring ideas! Reporting your activity directly ties to the long-term success of this event.

_____ If you have some photos from your event please email those to burtond@missouri.edu

_____ You don't have to stop at just one event. Deliver a gift to your neighbors, host a get-together of some sort, or even organize a neighborhood parade. We have an entire week to celebrate!

Sample Proclamation

Missouri Good Neighbor Week, Sept. 28 - Oct. 4, 2024

WHEREAS, research shows that neighborhoods are a vital factor in creating safe, healthy, and inclusive communities neighborhood-by-neighborhood;

WHEREAS, the vast majority of Americans do not know the name of their neighbors and believe a good neighbor, is someone who is quiet and leaves them alone;

WHEREAS, research shows an alarming rise in isolation and loneliness, which impacts physical health, mental health, life expectancy, polarization, and well-being;

WHEREAS, current research shows many Americans suffer from a lack of personal relationships, which leads to isolation, depression, and anger; and,

WHEREAS, one recent study showed that people who know six or more of their neighbors have decreased levels of social isolation and loneliness compared to people who do not;

WHEREAS, research shows that developing positive neighbor relationships positively impacts mental health, life expectancy, and physical health for individuals;

WHEREAS, research shows that developing positive neighbor relationships positively impacts disaster response, civic engagement, crime prevention, and economic resilience for entire communities;

WHEREAS developing positive relationships means stepping out of your home and connecting with neighbors who can help build a social support system in your neighborhood;

WHEREAS, neighboring is an opportunity to be thankful for those living nearest us, a chance to be a blessing or generous, and an opportunity also to receive;

WHEREAS, good neighbors help to create good neighborhoods and vibrant communities; and

WHEREAS, we know to have good neighbors, you must first be a good neighbor yourself; and,

WHEREAS, _____ has officially voted to make September 28 to October 4 as Missouri Good Neighbor Week.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, _____, proclaim September 28 to October 4 as Missouri Good Neighbor Week in _____.

I call upon the people of _____ to join me in observing this day by introducing yourself to, getting to know, and celebrating your neighbors. I further encourage you to visit the Missouri Good Neighbor Week website to nominate an engaged neighbor and report your acts of neighboring kindness as part of the neighboring movement in _____.

WHAT OTHERS SAID ABOUT OUR GOOD NEIGHBOR WEEK

"I was thrilled to see our neighborhood won one of the Springfield awards! But MU Extension deserves the award for raising this issue and encouraging people to take action. Our neighborhood has already scheduled a similar neighborhood event for next year as part of good neighbor week." – L.C., Springfield, Mo

"I just got notice of our award and got to share the news at our association meeting. Everyone was so excited. We work so hard to raise what little money we do have for projects and to help connect our neighbors. The award money helps us do more and the recognition shows we are doing something right." – C.S., Springfield, Mo.

"Until last week I didn't even know why MU Extension existed. Now I know there is more to it than good neighbor week effort but if that was the only program, it would totally be worth it." – P.H., Springfield, Mo

"What a difference you are making in our community, county and state. All I did was share goodie bags with my neighbors for good neighbor week but everywhere I went I heard people talking about being a good neighbor and showing kindness. For me, this is the launching pad for a new way of living." – J.T., Republic, Mo.

"Let me know how our business can partner with you next year to make National Good Neighbor Day in Springfield even bigger and better." – D.V., Springfield, Mo.

"A neighbor just came and brush hogged our field. They knew our mower was broken. While talking he said it did it because of the good neighbor campaign going on in the county so I just had to look it up online and find out more. I wanted you to know that you are inspiring other people to take action." – T.H., Fair Grove, Mo.

"I never dreamed we would be singled out for an award! I hope we can provide inspiration to other communities! I'm already planning for next year's celebration of National Good Neighbor Day." – S.M., Houston, Mo

"What an awesome event! Keep up the good work of supporting and inspiring our communities to do more and be more." – E.A., St. Louis, Mo.

"Thanks for all your positive efforts in the state. You are doing a great job with this program. Congrats on the outcomes." – J.B., Buffalo, Mo.

"I just watched a video about the work you are doing around Springfield and the impact. Wow. Just wow. Please continue to let me know if there is anything I can do to help!" - Dave Runyon, co-author "The Art of Neighboring"

"I may have written a book on neighboring but this program is teaching me new ideas. The celebration of National Good Neighbor Day and Week was inspired." – Chris McKinney, author "Placed for a Purpose"

"Everywhere I go I am telling people, look at what David Burton and MU Extension are doing with the idea of neighboring. The promotion of good neighbor week was genius but I think you have barely scratched the surface there in Missouri." – Tim DeTillis, author "Good Neighbors, Make Great Neighborhoods"

"It's amazing how much positivity can come out of something like this. As the A-Team said...I love it when a plan comes together! You've been such a great partner in this campaign, and I can't tell you how much this means to me and the station. Let's work together on this again in 2022." - Daniel Posey, Community Relations Manager, KY3-TV