

Merriman Park  University Manor
 NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

The Shade Tree

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Hi Neighbors,

Happy 2025! I'm excited to share this newest edition of *The Shade Tree* with you. As one of the newer faces in MPUM, I've been blown away by how friendly and passionate this neighborhood is. Whether it's chatting with other "strollers" during my family's walks or seeing the incredible work our volunteers put into keeping this place beautiful, it's clear we've got something special here.

This issue is packed with ways to get involved and make connections—whether you're joining a wine night, nominating a neighbor for Yard of the Month, or stepping up for a Board position (yes, you!). There is a lot of new energy here, and it's all about building community and having fun while we're at it.

Let's make this year one to remember. If you have ideas, want to share a story, or just want to say hi, please don't hesitate to reach out to newsletter@mpum.com. I'd love to hear from you!

See you soon,
Gretchen Seller
Editor, *The Shade Tree*

A Great Place to Call Home



COMMUNITY

Vino Our Neighbors, Our Wine Group



A fun social group invites you to join

Cheers to 12 wonderful years of MPUM Vino Our Neighbors! What began in 2012 as a simple idea to connect with neighbors over food, wine, and good company has blossomed into a group of over 150+ members. We've shared countless laughs, stories, and memorable evenings, building friendships and strengthening our sense of community along the way.

Special thanks to original organizer, Katie on Winchester, for her dedication to keeping the spirit of MPUM Vino Our Neighbors alive. Now, with new energy and leadership from Ayesha, we're excited to continue growing and making memories together.

A few things to know:

- You don't have to drink wine to join! We all love to share food dishes as well! This group is about connection, not just the bottle.
- We ask each member to host at least once a year (or every other year) so the hosting duties are shared and no one feels overburdened.
- Hosting is simple: pick a theme and date, and neighbors bring the food and drinks.

Our goal has always been to celebrate our neighborhood and the people who make it special. Whether you've been with us from the start or are considering joining for the first time, we can't wait to see you at the next wine night.

Here's to many more years of community, connection, and unforgettable gatherings - cheers! 🍷🍷🍷

To join this group, please email vino@mpum.com and be sure to join the MPUM Vino Our Neighbors group in the WhatsApp community.

New Leader of the Happy People,
Ayesha Yerra

Yard of the Month to Resume in April

YOTM is taking a Winter Break

The Yard of the Month (YOTM) program will resume when flowers bloom again in the Spring. The next Winner will be in April, so be sure to nominate yourself or a deserving neighbor by March 15th - just email yotm@mpum.com.

The winners are chosen by The Dallas County Master Gardener Association. To see how each yard is judged, see the guidelines at mpum.com. With a little work, you just might be the next winner so check these guidelines!

The MPUM YOTM sign is displayed in the winner's yard and the winner receives a \$50 gift certificate from our sponsor, Brumley Gardens, to be spent on even more beautiful plants for their yard. Thank you Master Gardeners and thank you to our sponsor!



WHITE ROCK
fellowship

Worship With Us in the Neighborhood

A local church welcomes neighbors

At White Rock Fellowship, we are grateful to be a part of this wonderful neighborhood! Whether you are looking for a church home or just want to see what we're about, we'd love to have you join us on Sundays at 9:00am & 10:30am. We have special programming for kids from 6 weeks old through High School (Middle & High School at 10:30am only), but they're also welcome to join us in the main worship service. You can find more information about us at whiterock.org. We hope to meet you soon!

6800 Town North Drive



UPCOMING EVENTS

Paula Blackmon to Visit MPUM

Tuesday, February 18 | 6-7pm

Hotchkiss Elementary School



Join us at Hotchkiss Elementary to meet with Dallas City Council Member Paula Blackmon. She will be discussing the Dallas Police Department and plans for White Rock Lake, and answer any questions.

This event is open to all MPUM neighbors!

MPUM Parents Sunday Stroll

Sunday, February 23 | 3:30pm

Hotchkiss Elementary School

Meet up at the Hotchkiss parking lot for an early evening stroll and play. Families and children are welcome to join for an easy walk around the neighborhood, ending at the Hotchkiss playground. A great way to meet other families, all are welcome!

This is weather permitting. Updates and reminders will be sent in the MPUM Parents group in the WhatsApp MPUM Community and on the MPUM Parents Facebook group, so be sure to join!



MPUM NA Meeting: Board Nominations

Monday, March 24 | 6-7pm

Hotchkiss Elementary School

This is the next big meeting for the MPUM Neighborhood Association (NA) and all are encouraged to join! All Board of Directors positions are open for election. Those nominated to the NA Board are asked to attend this meeting and give a brief introduction of who they are and their qualifications.

The agenda will include:

- MPUM Steering Committee Presentation (see pg. 4 for more information on the Steering Committee)
- MPUM Neighborhood Association Board Nominations & Introductions (see pg. 4 for more info)
- Current President Bill Haughton Q&A

For more information on the Board positions and to nominate yourself or neighbor, email info@mpum.com

MPUM NA Meeting: Board Elections

May - date TBA

Hotchkiss Elementary School

Following the MPUM NA Board Nominations, the elections meeting will be held in May 2025. The exact date and time will be announced soon. Once confirmed, we will send out the meeting details and agenda on various MPUM channels including the website, email, Spring Newsletter, WhatsApp and Facebook so be sure to check back soon. Voting will be by a show of hands, so be sure to attend!

MERRIMAN PARK-UNIVERSITY MANOR

Groundswell of New Energy in MPUM

By Gretchen Seller

The Merriman Park-University Manor (MPUM) Neighborhood Association (NA) was established in 1978 and has since evolved under various leadership. The current and only Board Directors, President **Bill Haughton** and past President **Robert Giesler**, have upheld the Association's legacy, dedicating over 14 and 36 years, respectively, to the NA. Together with a small group of volunteers, they manage NA operations, trim trees, remove graffiti, replace lightbulbs, pick up trash, install sprinkler systems, maintain close relationships with DPD and City Council reps, and advocate for city improvements such as the recent street repairs. Additionally, **Dottie Giesler**, longtime NA volunteer and Robert's wife, is the powerhouse behind the landscaping and flowers at the neighborhood entrances. She and helpful volunteers, **Debra Hale** and **Kristen Anderson**, ensure they remain vibrant and welcoming year-round. The community deeply appreciates their tireless efforts in maintaining and beautifying MPUM!

Did you know?
The City of Dallas owns many of the common areas (like the MPUM entrances) but is not responsible for their ongoing maintenance and costs. That's where we come in!

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 significantly impacted the NA, leading to reduced participation, the departure of longtime volunteers, decreased awareness, and a decline in dues contributions over the last 4 years. However, with nearly 180 homes sold since 2020, there are many new residents in MPUM and a renewed sense of community has emerged. Neighbors are eager to engage, learn about the NA's role, and be involved with our beloved MPUM neighborhood.

In the summer of 2024, an interest group led by **Codi Knight** began rallying neighbors to bring back ENP and to revitalize the Association by encouraging neighbor involvement and expansion of the Board of Directors. This effort resulted in two community meetings in October and December, where topics such as volunteer opportunities, leadership, finances, safety programs, including Extended Neighborhood Patrol (ENP) and Volunteers in Patrol (VIP), and the Association's status were discussed. Questions raised during these meetings prompted the bylaws (last updated in 2016) to be distributed via email and posted on the NA's website, mpum.com. Physical copies will also be provided at the next meeting on March 24th. Still, there are a lot of question marks that need to be addressed and empty Board seats to be filled.

At the December meeting, a Steering Committee (SC) was voted in and established as an independent "consulting group" to address outstanding questions, gather facts, present

information back to the community, and recommend a path forward for the NA. Led by neighbor **Tyler Lynch**, the SC formed sub-task groups to focus on four key areas:

- Current status of the Neighborhood Association, its 501(c)(4) designation, and bylaws
- Leadership structure and future planning
- Financial transparency
- Relationship between the NA and the Extended Neighborhood Patrol (ENP) safety organization

The SC has already conducted a very productive meeting with Bill and Robert to gain insights and address community concerns. Their high-level findings are included in this newsletter and a full report will be presented in March.

A new Communications team has also been established to enhance neighborhood connectivity and information sharing. Under the guidance of longtime Communications chair **Gordon Cathey**, the team is launching a redesigned website and updated email system (thanks to **Karthik Yerra**), created a new MPUM Community within WhatsApp, and revamped the newsletter. These initiatives aim to make it easier for neighbors to stay informed and connect with each other based on shared interests. The results are already evident: over 150 neighbors have joined the MPUM WhatsApp Community since October, actively participating in discussions and group chats. Fresh ideas are emerging, such as reviving the Welcome Committee, introducing a Pet of the Month program, organizing Sunday Strolls for families, and more, fostering a stronger sense of community.

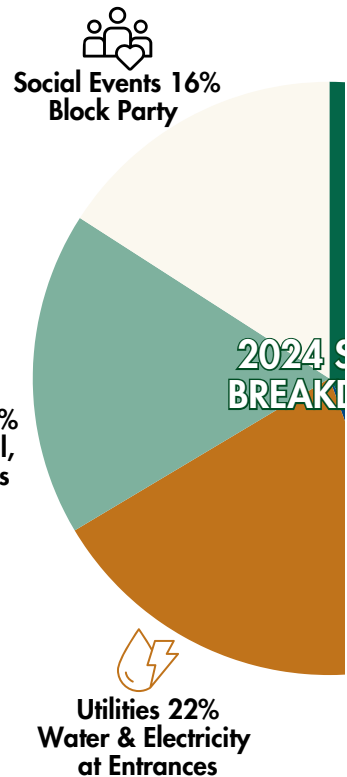
The energy and enthusiasm within the MPUM community are undeniable. As neighbors buzz with ideas, it's crucial to translate this momentum into action.

As Robert Giesler aptly said, "See something, do something!" Whether it's fixing an issue, joining the Board or a committee, or volunteering your time, every effort contributes to the betterment of our neighborhood.

The MPUM NA thrives on the dedication of volunteers and the support of its residents. Together, we can make a significant impact!

2024 BY THE

- 704** Number of h Merriman P
- 32%** Percentage c that paid du
- \$6,000** Total funds r NA dues an
- \$8,369** Total spent i **-\$2,369** pai



NOR NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Questions Answered

Information provided by the MPUM Steering Committee

What does 501(c)(4) mean?

501(c)(4) status designates an organization as a social welfare group. Donations to a 501(c)(4) org. are not tax-deductible. Due to recent transitions of Board Directors, the paperwork required to keep the NA's 501(c)(4) has not been filed in recent years. Current President Bill Haughton ensures us that the paperwork required for the NA to be tax exempt is in the works and that it should not affect the ongoing NA ops. We are hoping to have an update by the March meeting.

THE NUMBERS

of households in
in Park-University Manor

age of MPUM households
d dues in 2024

ids raised in 2024 through
s and additional donations

ent in 2024. Overage
paid thru acct. balance

Are there bylaws?

Yes. The bylaws were last updated in 2016. They do not need to be filed with the city/state because we are a NA and not a HOA. You can find the bylaws on mpum.com

Where do my dues go?

A majority of the NA budget is allocated to upkeeping the entrances and common areas. Monthly costs include water for sprinklers, a landscaper, and electricity for entry wall lights. See below for a breakdown of how funds were managed in 2024.

Who handles the financials?

Typically the Treasurer oversees accounts, with major spending decisions approved by the Board. In the absence of a Treasurer, the President is responsible.



Landscaping 41%
Monthly Landscaper,
Flowers & Supplies
for Entrances

What about ENP?

There is a lot of interest in bringing back the Extended Neighborhood Patrol program, which needs to be managed independently from the NA to avoid liability issues. There is a separate account, and funding is handled outside of the NA dues. The SC ENP task group plans to meet with the Board, those who have managed the program in the past, and dedicated neighbors who want to help in the future. The hope is to relaunch later this year. More info to come!



Neighbors gather at a MPUM Neighborhood Association meeting in October

Board of Directors Needed!

Being on the Board does not take a lot of time and it gives you the opportunity to make a lasting difference in the place you call home. The frequency of meetings is determined by the Board, but ideally the Board meets once a month and all-neighborhood meetings are held as-needed, 3-4 times a year.

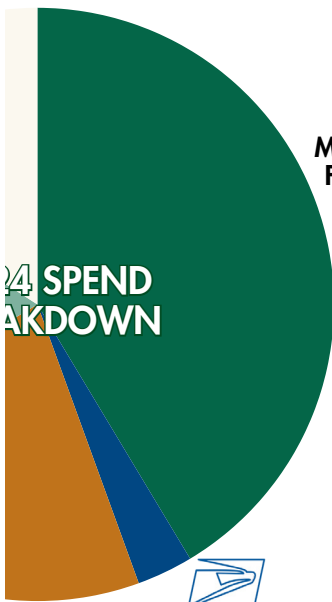
All Board of Directors positions will be up for election in May. The official Board positions are:

- **President:** Leads meetings and represents the Association.
- **Vice President:** Assists the President and steps in when needed.
- **Secretary:** Keeps meeting records and handles correspondence.
- **Treasurer:** Manages finances and reports on the budget.

Please reach out to info@mpum.com for information on the specific responsibilities of each position or if you'd like to nominate yourself or a neighbor. Do not be discouraged if you have reached out to this email in the past with no answer, the email systems have been improved and more people are monitoring these emails!

Those nominated are asked to attend the March 24th meeting and give a brief introduction of who they are and their qualifications. Nominations can be made until the voting takes place at the May meeting (date TBA).

Meeting details and nominations will be sent out on various MPUM channels including the website, email, Spring Newsletter, WhatsApp and Facebook so be sure to check back soon. Voting will be by a show of hands, so be sure to attend!



PO Box Rental 3%
at USPS Office
on Abrams

LOCAL NEWS

Watching Commercial Real Estate Changes

by Glenn Hunter

Good news for wine drinkers & dry-cleaning fans

As mentioned in the Dec. 30 MPUM email, we learned last month that Creekside Shopping Center—at the NE corner of Abrams Road and Skillman Street—had just leased the old Fireside Pies “outparcel” space to a new winery/bistro concept called Waters Edge Winery. A real estate firm called Structure Commercial handled the lease.



VINE AND DANDY: The old Fireside Pies location in Creekside Shopping Center will soon house a Waters Edge wine bar and bistro café.

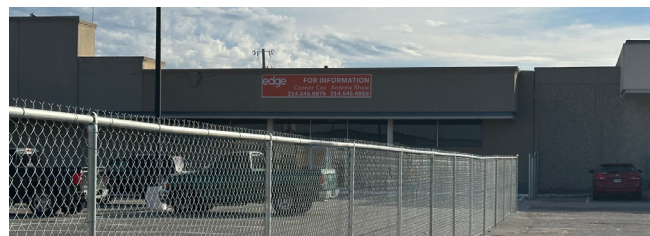
Now we’ve learned from Structure’s **Kyle Montana** that Waters Edge has also leased a second spot in Creekside’s main building, between Zaap Kitchen and Fito’s Tacos. The local franchisee for California-based Waters Edge is currently remodeling the 2,400-square-foot Fireside Pies space, with plans to open its wine bar/bistro cafe there the first week of March. The 4,200-square-foot place next to Zaap will be a full-blown winery, with four large stainless steel barrels processing the company’s own grapes. But it probably won’t open until August, according to **Alec Kemp**, the franchise’s operational manager.

In the little strip center right across Skillman, meantime, the vacant spot between First Cash Pawn and Baja Auto Insurance has just been leased by Structure to a dry cleaner service, Montana says. Which is interesting, because there’s another, well-established dry cleaners just a stone’s throw away, in the Merriman Park Shopping Center, at the SE corner of Abrams and Skillman.

Lease signed at shopping center

Speaking of that shopping center, the commercial real estate site LoopNet says part of the center is for sale for \$6.75 million, though the listed broker hasn’t returned my inquiries. The for-sale part, LoopNet says, includes the Harbor Freight Tools space, the one next to it, as well as certain outbuildings like the barber shop and the aforementioned dry cleaners. (Not included in the sale are the Habitat store or the standalone laundromat.)

The center’s leasing broker—**Andrew Shaw** of Edge Realty—tells me the 8,600-square-foot space next to Harbor Freight has just been leased (he didn’t say to whom). One clued-in source told me the new tenant will be a beauty-supplies venture. I also asked about the lengthy chain-link fence that recently went up in the center’s parking lot. The source said the fence may have been put up because the Harbor Freight-side owner—whose parking lot is in decent shape—wanted to disassociate from the Habitat side, whose parking lot is riddled with potholes.



GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS? A lengthy chain-link fence went up in the parking lot of the Merriman Park Shopping Center.

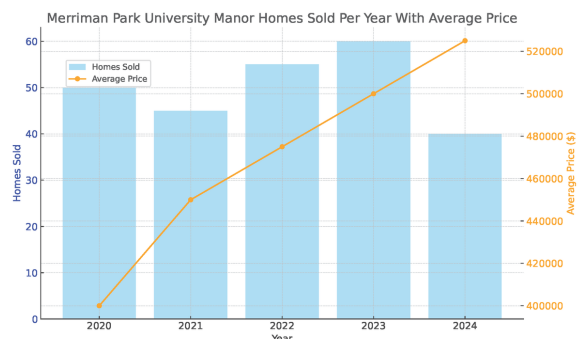
‘No nibbles’ on church property yet

Heading a block or two up Abrams, the .21-acre piece of land at the SE corner of Abrams and Larmanda Street, next to the Seventh Church of Christ, Scientist building, remains for sale for \$650,000. Broker **Randy Streig** with Dominus Commercial says the land has been on the market for about a year now, zoned for duplex housing, with “no nibbles” yet. He said it’s been hard to generate much interest in the parcel because it’s so small. The church, which owns the property, is trying to sell it to generate funds to build a new library, he added. I’ve stopped by the church a few times to talk to someone, but no one’s been there.

Residential Trends

by Amy Koh

From January 2020 to December 2024, nearly 180 homes sold in Merriman Park-University Manor. These residential properties sold for an average price of \$546,018 and a median price of \$532,500. The average price per square foot was \$275.71, with homes typically selling at around 100% of their list price. Property sizes averaged 2,022 square feet, and the median year built was 1959. Sale prices ranged from \$335,000 to \$924,900, and price per square foot varied between \$109.81 and \$408.15. Most listings were single-family residences, with varying acreage and features like pools or garages, reflecting the diversity in the neighborhood.



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 214-298-2460

Prepared By Amy Koh

January 21, 2025



LOCAL NEWS

A Little Bit of History

By MPUM Historian, Rose Blatch

In March of 1978 several neighbors had petitioned and won a challenge to a proposed zoning change that would have allowed mini-warehouses to be built at the neighborhood entrance at Larmanda and Abrams. While circulating the petitions, the petitioners learned there was a strong sentiment favoring formation of a neighborhood association. Merriam Park Estates had formed such an association twenty years earlier and had not only experienced successes in dealing effectively with zoning threats, but also had felt the social benefits of sharing and working together.

On October 10 [1978], a letter went out to all residents, calling for a gathering at Hotchkiss school on Wednesday, October 18 for the purpose of planning and organizing our own homeowners association. Approximately 140 neighbors attended.

The Merriman Park/University Manor Association's first newsletter was published in November, 1978, following the official formation of the organization on the 18th of October[...] The first newsletter is posted on the MPUM web site for all to read and enjoy. You'll learn about J.B. Merriman, the first association officers, and the interest groups available in the neighborhood.

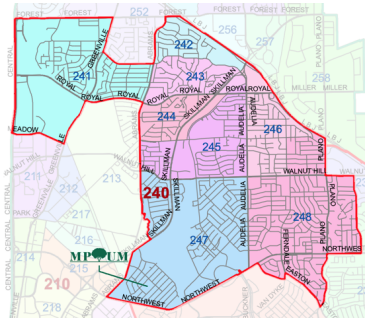
A note from the editor: This article appeared in our May, 2013 newsletter. It was just one of a series of stories told by historian and beloved MPUM neighbor Ms. Rose Blatch.



Where are the police when we need them?

by Gordon Cathey

While our Dallas police officers are on the job for us 24/7, there are times when we cannot get an officer to rush to our personal assistance. The map here shows the Northeast Division's Zone 240, which just a few years ago had almost twice the patrol officers assigned to it than are available now.



"But we need more patrols in MPUM!"

Yes, we need more patrols, and we already have a greatly effective program in place that can provide us with them. This program is the simplest and least expensive method available to us for increasing our safety patrols. Surely you have heard of Volunteers in Patrol (VIP), the extra eyes for our police.

The volunteers are us, your neighbors who live right here in MPUM, and we are hoping that you may share our desire to help our neighbors and our neighborhood.

The patrolling is safe and easy for anyone with access to a vehicle, and each patroller sets his or her own work schedule to fit their lives and availability. The VIP program is established by and managed by the Dallas Police Department and involves absolutely no contact with any suspicious person.

There will be an upcoming VIP Training Class on a date that is still being set by the DPD Northeast Division, and we hope to have a full class of volunteers from MPUM all ready to begin. Please submit your questions and voice your desire to volunteer by sending email to vip@mpum.com.





GET INVOLVED

Committees & Groups

There are other fun ways to get involved and meet neighbors based on your interests. You can give as much or as little time as you'd like, no pressure!

- **Beautification:** Keep your neighborhood looking gorgeous by planting flowers, removing graffiti, and more - email beautification@mpum.com
- **Communications:** Inform neighbors and keep everyone engaged through content creation, photography, social media, email management, and newsletter contributions, just to name a few - email newsletter@mpum.com
- **MPUM Parents:** Connect with other parents and families near you - join the "MPUM Parents" WhatsApp and Facebook Groups
- **Vino Our Neighbors:** Socialize with neighbors over food, wine, and good company - email vino@mpum.com and join the "MPUM Vino Our Neighbors" WhatsApp Group
- **Volunteers in Patrol (VIP):** Help to keep our neighborhood safe by patrolling the streets on your own time - email vip@mpum.com and join the "MPUM Safety" WhatsApp Group
- **Pets:** Share real-time updates on Lost & Found Pets, and advocate for pets in the community - email pets@mpum.com and join the WhatsApp Group

Have an idea for a new committee or group? Get it started! For all of your volunteering questions, please send an email to info@mpum.com.

Did you know?
Anyone can pick up trash in the neighborhood, including in and around the Hotchkiss schoolgrounds, no formal committee needed. Just something to keep in mind for your next walk or playground visit!



Due Now, Only \$25!

If you are an adult either residing in or owning residential property within the Merriman Park-University Manor neighborhood, you are automatically a member of the Merriman Park-University Manor Neighborhood Association (NA). Dues are not mandatory, but the NA functions solely on donations and any amount is appreciated! This is your neighborhood, where neighbors make personal investments in improving and enhancing the environment for you and your family.

Voluntary dues are only \$25* per household per year!

Pay online via PayPal* at mpum.com

To Pay by Check, make your check in the amount of \$25 payable to "MPUM" and mail it to:

MPUM
P.O. Box 821733
Dallas, TX 75382

Additional donations are accepted and appreciated. If you are combining dues and a donation in one check, please indicate the donation amount on the check, for accounting purposes.

*Dues and donations are not tax deductible. An additional \$1 will be added to online payments to cover PayPal fees.

Join the Conversation



Check out the revamped website at mpum.com



Submit newsletter content, photos, ideas, and suggestions to newsletter@mpum.com



Email info@mpum.com to join the MPUM email list



Join the MPUM Community in WhatsApp by scanning this QR code or emailing info@mpum.com for a link. The Community is private, you can only join via special links.



Follow the Merriman Park/University Manor Facebook Page. Also join the MPUM Parents Facebook Group, it is not run by the NA but it is a great resource for Parents!