

## **Daytime Graffiti Team Committee**

The Archer Heights Civic Association Daytime Graffiti Team was created in 2006 as an offshoot of the Archer Heights Civic Association Neighborhood Watch and ever since has been the eyes of the community reporting all incidents of graffiti. The Team has at various times had five to six members canvassing the neighborhood in two cars. Currently we have a dauntless team of three members that each Monday canvasses the community (every residential alley, commercial building and factory), records and reports any newly discovered graffiti and follows for the removal of tagging from previously reported locations. In general, most graffiti in Archer Heights is perpetrated by “taggers” trying to make a name for them self. However, any and all graffiti devalues property values as it is defacement or destruction of private property.

Our civic association has been relentless in our ongoing fight against graffiti. To further show our commitment to this battle, civic association officers President Thomas S. Baliga and Executive Director Stanley T. Lihosit met with Alderman Michael R. Zalewski of the 23rd Ward on February 10, 2012 and asked him to introduce into City Council specific changes to the four Municipal City Codes that cover graffiti. We provided the actual text for the changes and **the codes are: 8-4-070 Responsibility of Parent or Legal Guardian; 8-4-120 Damage to Public Property; 8-4-130 Possession of Etching Materials, Paint or Marker with Intent to Deface Unlawful; and 8-4-060 Vandalism Defined.**

For all the City Codes the changes basically doubled and tripled all monetary fines, provided for increased and/or mandatory jail time, increased and/or added mandatory community service for restitution, and provided for increased parental responsibility and fines. After being sent to city council committee for review, review by the City Corporation Counsel, and a public hearing at which civic President Thomas S. Baliga testified, the changes were enacted into law by the full Chicago City Council on July 13, 2014. This was a classic example of how our civic association works with our elected Aldermen for the benefit of the Archer Heights community. These changes also had far-reaching benefits for the entire City of Chicago.

The hourly schedule during which time the Daytime Graffiti Team canvasses the neighborhood varies week after week and on a few occasions in the past the Team has actually happened upon tagging taking place. In these instances the police were called, the vandals arrested and members of the Team, together with the property owners, followed the cases through the court system to ensure prosecution, fines and restitution.

Our Daytime Graffiti Team currently consists of Joan Batastini – Chairperson, Kathy Esposito and Rita Harazin. Kathy and Rita canvass the community by block and report all incidents to Joan, who in turn compiles a report using Microsoft Word and transmits this information online directly to the Chicago Department of Streets & Sanitation. Most graffiti is cleaned within 24 hours of the Department of Streets & Sanitation receiving the report. **From what we understand we are the only civic association in the entire city of Chicago who has volunteers to perform such a service for a community.** We are truly proud of and grateful for our

dedicated neighborhood volunteers for taking on this mission. Our Daytime Graffiti Team has earned the respect and support of Aldermen Edward M, Burke (14<sup>th</sup> Ward) and Michael Zalewski (23<sup>rd</sup> Ward).

You can help our Daytime Graffiti Team in keeping the neighborhood free of tagging by promptly reporting any graffiti to the City of Chicago non-emergency number of 311, providing the address and type of graffiti being reported. **If you see anyone actively tagging any piece of residential, business, commercial or City property, you should immediately call the police using 911.** Please provide the address and best description of the person committing the crime. **You can further help our Daytime Graffiti Team by displaying your address on the alley facing side of your garage, fence or business. Your address helps both the Team and City to effectively clean any graffiti in a timely, efficient way.**

If you would like to actively help keep Archer Heights free of graffiti by becoming a member of our Daytime Graffiti Team and either recording or driving for the Team, please contact our civic association by calling our office at **773-843-2232** and leaving a message on our answering machine providing us with your name, phone number and the best time to call. You can also use the "Contact Us" box on this website. The time commitment is about three hours per week and would be less if we have more drivers. Drivers for our Daytime Graffiti Team receive a stipend of \$5.00 for gas. By becoming a member of our Daytime Graffiti Team you can have a significant impact on both the quality of life and your own property values in Archer Heights.

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