

**Owl Creek Neighborhood  
Neighborhood Needs Assessment Final Report  
By Latundra Davis  
City of Madison  
Department of Community Development  
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**BACKGROUND**

The Owl Creek Neighborhood consists of housing units located off of Voges Road in Madison, WI. The streets that are included in this study include: Owl Creek Drive, Horned Owl Drive, Great Gray Drive, Horned Owl Court and Snowy Owl Drive. The Owl Creek Neighborhood includes 52 housing units: 14 duplexes, 4 single family units and five fourplex units. The area also has roughly 6 distinct areas with empty lots.

In an effort to identify the overall needs of the neighborhood, an individual family needs assessment was conducted over 6 weeks from October 27, 2011 through December 9, 2011 by Latundra Davis (Tondra), a part-time, limited term Neighborhood Aide with the Department of Community Development. Initially, the plan was to work through families that current service providers already had a relationship with to build trust and gain access to households in the Owl Creek neighborhood. Meetings were held with numerous community partners to include: Glendale Elementary School, La Follette High School, Public Health of Madison and Dane County, and Joining Forces for Families – Leopold. Approximately 4 families were identified through this method.

Public Health of Madison and Dane County distributed flyers (Appendix 1) that pictured Tondra Davis and informed residents that she was available to hear their concerns and help them access resources available to the neighborhood. From this effort, 2 family contacts were made – 1 via email and 1 via telephone.

On October 27, 2011 Ms. Davis attended the Public Health's presentation of the Photomapping Project that the children of the Owl Creek Neighborhood had conducted over the summer. This proved to be quite successful in that 5 family needs assessments were completed along with resident referrals for 3 additional families.

From October through December 2011 Tondra Davis made individual appointments with approximately 3 families and went door to door knocking on resident doors. A total of 19 Family Needs Assessments were completed. The flyer that announced Tondra's presence in the neighborhood had a great impact. Many residents recognized her picture and were expecting her. This allowed for candid and frank conversations about their quality of life in the neighborhood.

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

**Instrument**

The Needs Assessment Instrument (Appendix 2) was designed to be conversational, so that Tondra Davis could quickly build rapport with the residents as she asked questions that might otherwise be considered personal and private. The areas that the needs assessment covered included: housing, child care, youth programming, access to transportation, health care, employment and training and resident strengths. Residents were asked to sign a waiver to assure that information shared with Ms. Davis would be kept confidential, except in the case of

identified referrals. Resident needs assessment interviews ranged in length from approximately 3 to 75 minutes, while the average needs assessment took about 25 minutes.

Tondra Davis referred residents to the community services that residents identified they needed. 2 residents were referred to Public Health of Madison and Dane County for dental care and access to prescription medication. 1 resident was referred to the Department of Community Development's Child Care Unit for available weekend child care resources. Also, 1 resident was referred to after school programming at the Broadway Lakepoint Waunona Neighborhood Center.

### **Data**

Appendix 3 summarizes data shared during the family needs assessments and shows the concerns of the Owl Creek residents. The data shows that residents are primarily concerned with the lack of programming and things for kids to do in the neighborhood. The recent installation of playground equipment by the City of Madison's Parks Department is not being utilized. Tondra Davis spent several hours in the neighborhood on a day when school was out and observed that no children played at the City park structure during that time. Surveyed residents would like to see the park equipped with a basketball court, access to water, bench seating and a shelter. Residents feel that the area surrounding the playground equipment is unsafe and designed for smaller children. Of the households surveyed, only 8 of 61 children were under four years old. 12 of the 61 (19.7%) youth living in the surveyed Owl Creek households are enrolled in after school programming. The remaining 49 youth are not engaged in youth programming. Many of the parents surveyed are home when school ends and expressed that they do not need or utilized after school programming because of this.

Another concern that numerous residents voiced was access to transportation. The Owl Creek Neighborhood does not currently have access to public transportation. Residents would like a bus system so that their children can be transported to social programming and activities. They would also like access to public transportation on Voges Road to serve as a backup resource should their vehicles not be operational. Several residents expressed having to walk over 2 miles to access public transportation at the Stoughton Road Arby's when their vehicle fails, so that they could get to work and buy groceries for their family. Many residents reported that they did not have a plan of action for if their vehicle fails, because they are aware of the lack of public transportation. They reported that they would utilize and solicit the help of family and friends if that situation occurred. A comprehensive list of resident concerns is listed in Appendix 3. Only 1 resident indicated that they do not currently have access to transportation.

Upon completion of the family needs assessment, residents were given small household items to thank them for their time. These incentives also had the unplanned effect of encouraging residents to refer additional families to Tondra Davis for a needs assessment.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following are recommendations developed by Department of Community Development Staff: Tondra Davis, Monica Host and Mary O'Donnell.

#### **Youth Programming and Recreation**

- Build relationships and enhance programs for children and youth with existing service providers and school programs

- Repurpose Park to accommodate older children
- Add basketball court, water, seating and shelter to City park
- Investigate infestation of ticks and snakes in City park

#### **Bus Line**

- Bus access on Voges Road
- Review bus policies to allow parents access to bus to kids' school and as means to get to other routes

#### **Neighborhood**

- Weekly Cleanup
  - April – November (include youth)
  - Youth Clean Up Crews (Employment and community relations)
- Appoint Block Captains
- Neighborhood Association
- Annual Block Party
- Parenting Classes
- Eliminate and grade dirt piles on empty lots
- Exchange landscaped rock coverings for mulch

#### **Resources Communicated**

- Kiosk of available resources and events
- Neighborhood Welcomers
  - Welcome New Residents
  - Distribute Resource List/Magnet

#### **Build Relationships with Governing Law Enforcement Agencies**

- Madison
- McFarland
- Clarify different municipal ordinances for children and youth, especially curfew laws