

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

April 7, 2015

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**SUBJECT: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM NAME CHANGE**

The purpose of this Informal Report is to inform the City Council that the Neighborhood Education Office has been renamed as the Community Engagement Team and to update Council on the vital role the office plays in engaging our community.

The name change clarifies the office's role within the Communications & Public Engagement Office and the strategic purpose moving forward.

Transition History

In FY2015, the City Manager's Office moved the Neighborhood Education Office from the Planning & Development Department to the Communications & Public Engagement Office. This realignment allowed existing resources and city staff to communicate a coordinated message to our residents.

Strategically, joining the communication activities of the City with the team that creates and maintains relationships with community leaders to provide effective communication and public engagement has been a positive move. However, the current name does not adequately convey the team's responsibilities.

A New Name Exemplifying a Strategic Focus

The Community Engagement Team is responsible for neighborhood capacity building and developing communication networks of city stakeholders such as faith-based groups, schools and non-profits that are vital to the success of city initiatives and programs. The team facilitates:

- **Adult Educational Presentations** - The Community Engagement Team makes regular presentations to community groups about the city services. Most adult presentations are held at night and/or Saturday mornings at meetings offered by neighborhood associations, civic groups and non-profit organizations. Some of the most popular topics for adult audiences include: *Caring for Cowtown Air, Conquer Your Crud, Keeping Our Lakes Clean and Recycle Right.*
- **School-Age Educational Presentations** - During the weekday, the team provides valuable hands-on presentations about city services our stakeholders provide in schools, after-school programs, community centers and libraries throughout the Fort Worth area. Children become a part of the learning process during engaging presentation options such as: *Captain Crud and the Cruddies, What's Wrong With This Picture, Career Days, Freddie the Fish PAWS: Pets Are Worth It,! Recycle Right, Captain Crud and the Buddies, Journey of a Water Drop and Worth Reading.*

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Their school-age presentations are unique because they teach using TEKS criteria and terms that coincide with the subjects being taught in schools. The office provides teachers with useful TEKS lesson plans and worksheets to assist them with their current classroom focus.

- **After-School & Community Center Presentations** - Already active within sixteen school districts, the office is also creating new relationships for age-appropriate presentations at:

- Boy Scouts meetings
- Girl Scouts meetings
- Advance after-school program
- Clayton YES! after-school program
- City of Fort Worth Community Centers
- Parent Teacher Association meetings
- Parenting Resource Centers

- **Neighborhood Association Meetings** - The Community Engagement Team works with residents to ensure their associations are equipped to promote public engagement and communication with the City. The office attends the monthly, quarterly and annual meetings of over 320 Neighborhood Associations and Alliances when called upon or placed on the agenda to make a presentation about city services.

Following each meeting, staff members prepare Neighborhood Meeting Reports which detail the agenda, residents and city staff attendance and any concerns that were mentioned. These reports are then forwarded to Directors, Council staff and other city staff. The office is often the first resource for neighborhood leaders who:

- Have questions about the city services our stakeholders provide
- Want to start or re-energize a neighborhood association
- Need neighborhood outreach and communication strategies
- Want suggestions to increase association membership
- Are interested in scheduling city services presentations

- **Capacity Building Workshops** – The office routinely offers monthly, quarterly and bi-annual series of classes that teach residents about City services and neighborhood capacity building. Classes range from 1 to 2 hours in length and are taught by the Community Engagement staff and/or other City staff.

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- **Community Meeting Planning** - The office is available to assist the Mayor, Councilmembers, Aides and other city departments with any or all of the following planning needs for community meetings:
 - Personalized advance e-mail notification to the planning sector leaders you are targeting
 - Neighborhood association and/or district maps
 - Current list of challenges your targeted area has shared with our office
 - Suggestions for appropriate speakers from City departments
 - Neighborhood leader contact information
- **Community Recognition** – During our annual Neighborhood Dinner & Awards, neighborhood leaders are honored for their community outreach, volunteer recruitment, outstanding spirit and ability to build strong neighborhood connections. The “*Neighborhood of the Year*” award recipients then represent the City of Fort Worth at the Neighborhoods USA conference in the spring.
- **Neighborhood Database Updates** – The office also manages the Neighborhood Database which provides contact information pertaining to each neighborhood association that has registered with the city. Registered neighborhood associations are contacted annually to provide updates about their current officers, primary contact information and boundaries. This information is updated in the Neighborhood Database and shared online with residents and city staff. From the intranet site, employees can generate mailing labels or excel spreadsheets of neighborhood contacts. Queries allow staff to generate lists or labels within a particular zip code, council district, planning sector or neighborhood policing district.

Tomorrow, the Community Engagement Team will digitally publish its first newsletter. *Connecting Communities* celebrates the unique relationship between its office and the community it serves.

Though the name of the office may be changing, the intent focus on building strong neighborhoods, schools and entire communities will continue moving forward.

David Cooke
City Manager