

MUNCIE WAYPOINT

A GUIDE FOR GREATER COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT

Chip Taylor

Do you care about Muncie but feel overwhelmed by how to make a difference? Muncie Waypoint turns local engagement into a rewarding challenge, helping you shift from passive news consumption to active leadership on issues like neighborhood quality.

When you sign up, you'll receive weekly newsletters with information to help you engage with local government or your neighborhood. Recent editions covered providing effective input at public meetings and conducting community walks to identify areas that need attention.

You can then act on what you learn. Muncie Waypoint provides a flexible list of activities for learning, community building, and influencing politics. By logging your actions online, you earn points for advancement, prizes, and an invitation to a year end celebration.

Learn more and sign up at <https://munciewaypoint.substack.com>

SOUTH CENTRAL BLOOMS TOGETHER

Kylee Tremaine

The South Central neighborhood is in bloom, but the real beauty of this year's Flower Parade was watching the local children lead the way. Their excitement while passing out flowers and planting roots showed a heartwarming sense of pride in their own streets.

By shopping local at Wise Country Market, neighbors selected beautiful perennials designed to invite hummingbirds and butterflies back to the South Side. Moving house-to-house also gave the South Central Neighborhood Association a chance to connect one-on-one with residents, reinforcing that every perspective is valued.

Neighbors are always welcome to help with projects or attend monthly meetings at Urban Light Community Church (fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:00 PM). Supported by the 8twelve Coalition, we are proud to keep this tradition growing—one neighbor and one pollinator at a time.



PORCH LIGHT RADIO AIRS EVERY SUNDAY AT 6:00 A.M.

Sam McCollum



Porch Light Radio is off to an incredible start as a community-centered radio segment focused on real stories, local voices, and meaningful conversations in Muncie and beyond. Hosted by Sam McCollum and Jasmine Taylor, the show highlights neighbors,

organizations, artists, advocates, and everyday people making a difference in their communities. Airing through WMUN, Porch Light Radio aims to create a welcoming space where people feel seen, heard, and connected. Listeners can support the show by tuning in, sharing episodes on social media, recommending guests, or reaching out with stories and community events they would like featured. Porch Light Radio records every Wednesday and continues to grow through community collaboration!

Porch Light Radio is a project initiated by 2025–2026 CenterPoint Scholars. Sam and Jasmine, through MAP's CenterPoint Scholars program, which is funded through generous support from the CenterPoint Energy Foundation and the City of Muncie.

NEIGHBORHOOD SUMMER EVENTS

Halteman Village

Park Party

June 13th, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. @ Halteman Park

Gatewood / Kenmore / Western Woods

Display of Flags

July 1-8 | Throughout the Neighborhoods

Muncie Porch Parties

July 11th, 3-6 p.m.

Locations throughout the Old West End

\$2 Tour of the Village

August 29th, 3-6 p.m.

On University Avenue through the Village

NEWSLETTER



MUNCIE ACTION PLAN

JUNE 2026



THERE WASN'T A "GROUCH" IN THE BUNCH

Michelle Kinsey

The 11th IDEA Conference returned on March 6th with a playful, purposeful nod to Sesame Street, inviting neighborhood leaders to "come and play" while engaging in networking, workshops, and more at Ball State University's L.A. Pittenger Student Center.

Nearly 130 people attended this year's sessions, which covered a range of topics, from political action and leadership development to project planning and community engagement.

A highlight of the event each year is the annual Neighborhood Awards, recognizing outstanding efforts to enhance local neighborhoods. Morningside McCormick and Whitely received the awards for most trash collected during the Spring and Fall 2025 cleanups. Combined, they removed 30,000 tons from our neighborhood streets and alleys!

The 2025 Neighborhood Project and Neighborhood Leader of the Year were awarded to the Old West End neighborhood for its partnership in a multi-million dollar housing regeneration project, and Frank Scott Sr. for his dedication to leadership in the Whitely neighborhood.

IDEA was hosted by Building Better Neighborhoods, Muncie Action Plan, Shafer Leadership Academy, and Ball State

University's Office of Community Engagement. Contributing sponsors include City of Muncie, Ball Brothers Foundation, The Community Foundation of Muncie & Delaware County, HOPE, and the Muncie Sanitary District.

Some of the participants at this year's IDEA Conference noted that they were inspired to attend "because I love Muncie and want to learn as much as I can to contribute to my community," they "want to be more involved in my neighborhood," and "learn more about my community and the resources and agencies in it."

During the event, this year's graduating CenterPoint Scholars were also recognized and a new cohort was introduced. CenterPoint Scholars is a leadership academy designed to equip neighborhood advocates with essential skills in advocacy, conflict resolution, and project management.

Graduating Scholars were Jasmine Taylor, Joey Scholl III, Sam McCollum, Rachael Robertson, Eliana Heimlich, Isabel Heimlich, and Kiwani Pine. New Scholars are Paige Brown, Elisabeth Edgell, Kim Hampton, Danielle Heimlich, David Robbins, Monique Vargas, and Kylee Tremaine. Several of their projects were featured during sessions at the conference, including a new neighborhood-focused program/podcast, Porch Light Radio.

For more information about neighborhood initiatives and future events, visit <http://www.muncineighborhoods.org>.

THE WHITELY ADOPT-A-COP PROGRAM

Frank Scott | President, Whately Community Council

The Whately Adopt A Cop program is a relationship building initiative modeled after our mentoring partnership with the School Within the Context of Community class. In this program, Whately families are paired with local police officers and spend time together in everyday, informal settings sharing meals, attending games, watching movies, hosting cookouts, or simply talking and getting to know one another as people. It is important to note that all these officers volunteered for the program and meet with families on their own time.

The goal is to break down barriers and replace assumptions with genuine connection. Families get to see officers in a positive, human light, and officers get to experience the warmth, strength, and character of Whately residents. By building trust and mutual respect, we look for the program to strengthen the support that officers provide to our neighborhood and the cooperation and confidence our

residents extend in return. It's a simple idea we hope will have a powerful impact. Our goal is to demonstrate that when people know each other, communities become safer, stronger, and more united.



Want to learn more about the Whately Adopt-A-Cop Program? Check out this Indiana Public Radio, Better Together program on YouTube!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v_tHoFPNy9Rm4



Community Engagement to host the city's first run of porch parties. Neighbors from across town will be welcomed into the Old West End to share fellowship and witness Muncie's own musical talent live from porches in the neighborhood!

During my weekend canvassing Old West End, I had an opportunity to speak to some of the residents, who have long felt that they were not at all high on the city's list of priorities. The consensus for this event was overwhelmingly positive — they felt like the city was treating their historic district as a place worthy of being taken care of.

Bring some lawn chairs and a good attitude on July 11th from 3-6 p.m. and meet the Old West Enders that have made this possible! For more information about the event lineup, please check out the website at <https://muncieneighborhoods.org/porchparties/>.

This event is a project of the 2025–2026 CenterPoint Scholars and is generously funded by the Zeigler Foundation, CenterPoint Energy, and City of Muncie.



HOSPITALITY WITH HEART: CHRISTIANA MANN INVESTS IN MUNCIE'S MOST VULNERABLE

Kate Elliott

Christiana Mann spends most of her day around food — eating it, teaching about it and serving it. But her thoughts are never far from those who are hungry. Since 1999, the Indiana native has volunteered for the Soup Kitchen of Muncie, which serves up more than 91,000 meals each year at its facility in downtown Muncie.

“Food is a basic human right,” said Christiana, an associate lecturer of hospitality innovation and leadership at Ball State University. “There’s absolutely no reason why there should be one person going without.”

To combat food insecurity, Christiana is giving her \$20 to the Soup Kitchen of Muncie.

“They show up, Monday through Friday, except for Christmas Day and Thanksgiving, to help their brothers and sisters,” she said. “I’m amazed and in awe of the amount of food the Soup Kitchen produces by volunteers and a very limited staff.”

And the Soup Kitchen of Muncie, Christiana said, “nourishes souls.” When a regular stopped coming last summer, volunteers learned he was in the hospital and offered help as he healed.

“People gather prior to meals to connect about their lives and share resources,” said Christiana, who has served two, three-year terms on the nonprofit’s board. “The Soup Kitchen doesn’t ask questions or require proof of hardship. Anyone is welcome to have a hot meal, rest or regroup with no judgement.”

From lemon shakeups to local renewal Christiana talks about food insecurity like it’s her full-time job, but it’s not. She teaches about restaurant management and foodservice sanitation during the week and then oversees Three Bears Concessions, which her family started 40 years ago to help pay her college bills. The enterprise grew from a seasonal, single mobile unit to a fleet of five food trucks, catering and concessions contracts with Ball State Athletics and area state parks.

“In addition, I started my own independent business at 15. Christiana’s Concessions sold enough lemon shakeups to come out of college, debt free,” she said. And in 2024, Christiana embarked on another entrepreneurial adventure — The Culinary Cottage, a private venue for intimate gatherings and custom culinary experiences for up to 30 guests.

“I decided to practice what I preach in class, so I conducted a market analysis and determined that our community could sustain a business like this,” she said of the cozy house south of downtown. “We offer a rich tapestry of seasonal flavors,

provided by local farmers and producers, and savor diverse and authentic recipes, prepared and served with a special focus on health, sustainable practices, fair pricing and great taste.”

Wanting to be part of downtown Muncie’s revitalization efforts, Christiana chose to lease the rectory of Grace Episcopal Church. She renovated the interior last year and will beautify the exterior and gardens this summer. “Fun fact,” she said, “is that before closing in 2020, the facility housed the Alpha Center, an adult day center, where I volunteered, and my grandma attended. The space holds special memories.”

She continues to build memories there, alongside her parents, Joe and Judy Mann; husband, Michael; and children, Michael and Madelyn, who assist with special events. “My love language is food, and I’ll eat anything other than a beet, which tastes like dirt matter how you fix them, or a lima bean, due to childhood trauma,” she said.

And although she often makes dishes that look too good to eat, Christiana is not snobby about food: “There’s nothing better than a bag of tacos from the drive-through at midnight,” she added.

Where passion meets purpose Christiana admits she has not mastered a healthy work-life balance, with so much of her job emmeshed with her family and interests. But, other than the administrative work, she loves what she does and approaches each day with a positive attitude and focus on communication and time management.

“These are the things that I believe and share with my students,” said Mann, who has earned three degrees from Ball State. “So much of what we do is not about the food. If you can master communication and time management — while maintaining a positive attitude — you’ll succeed in anything you do.”

She would know. Christiana has earned the 2025 Mayors Arts Award for “Muncie Maker,” which is given to a local business owner who exemplifies the impact and vitality of Muncie’s creative economy. The Yorktown Chamber of Commerce recognized her as its Volunteer of the Year in 2022.

But she doesn’t let those achievements stop her from rolling up her sleeves to serve at the Soup Kitchen’s Farm to Fork Fundraiser or to review its policies and procedures. Having spent more than a decade as environmental director for the Delaware County Health Department, Christiana’s experience with sanitation has helped the Soup Kitchen operate safely, most notably during the COVID-19 pandemic. She continues to consult for the organization and donate excess from her catering and concessions businesses.

To learn more about Christiana and The Culinary Cottage, go to www.theculinarycottageuncie.com. To learn more about the Soup Kitchen of Muncie, go to www.soupkitchenofmuncie.org. Thank you to Muncie Action Plan and CenterPoint Scholars for supporting these small but meaningful investments in community.



OLD WEST END NEIGHBORS EXCITED TO HOST PORCH PARTIES

Kiwani Pine

The Old West End neighborhood, just west of downtown, is one rich in history. So historically rich, in fact, that it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986. Old West End is one of a small handful of areas within Muncie listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including Westwood, the Emily Kimbrough District, Meeks Avenue, and the Riverside Historic District, among others. Old West End is a neighborhood of dual realities: some of the city’s most breathtakingly beautiful homes are found in the neighborhood, but a significant portion of the properties there also show signs of distress.

On July 11th, Muncie Action Plan is partnering with the Old West End Neighborhood Association, Downtown Development, Muncie Arts and Culture Council, and Ball State’s Office of