

# Howie Acres Community Uses Grants to Preserve Its History

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For historic neighborhoods, utilizing funds from the Neighborhood Matching Grants (NMG) program offered by the City of Charlotte means a great deal. It is a resource available to help preserve neighborhood history and integrity. "Little things to some, it may not mean a lot, but to others – it does," shared Roma Johnson, who grew up in the Howie Acres community. Having fond memories of the neighborhood being close knit, where people embrace one another, is something that she hopes will remain for years to come.

As a neighborhood, they decided there were things they wanted refine while also keeping the community's character. "How could we still preserve what we have, but also enhance it and make it more appealing?" she said. "So, with some of the items that we were able to get within the matching grant program, [we could] do that and bring some notoriety to our neighborhood, and still allow the original feel to be there."

The process of applying for multiple matching grants has afforded this neighborhood an opportunity to come together to determine news possibilities for growth. The first grant went to a new entrance sign for the neighborhood, located at the intersection of Redwood Avenue and East

Sugar Creek Road. "We were just so proud to have that sign because that can actually define, 'We're Howie Acres. We're right here,'" Johnson described.



They continued to build on the NMG momentum used is other funding to purchase t-shirts, a kiosk, and community crime watch sign that is posted within their community. The t-shirts represent their love for one another as neighbors and the design was produced by a neighbor. Johnson said, "Whenever we had functions or we go somewhere for a meeting, whether it's outside, or Howie Acres, or we have to go to one of the public meetings, we're able to stand out and say, 'Hey, we're prideful, we care about our neighborhood. See look, we have shirts!'"





It is important for information to be accessible for all Howie Acres residents, so that they can join in on the fun and camaraderie building. The kiosk they received as a part of the grant is located within a resident's yard and is available for people to grab flyers, etc., and allows them to reach even more residents. "Not everyone is social media friendly, so we're able to have that kiosk where we can put in a newsletter or any other correspondence that we want people to see," she said.

Howie Acres was recently awarded their third matching grant, and residents are looking forward to incorporating street sign toppers around the neighborhood. They are having so much fun with the NMG projects, they won't be stopping anytime soon. These residents take pride in "trying to be leaders of change to help people become more engaged." This could mean anything from creating more engagement among existing residents within their community to serving as an inspiration for other communities, especially other historic neighborhoods with a deep desire to keep their history intact.

"The funding helped the neighborhood be able to improve upon what we already have. A lot of neighborhoods like ours are financially challenged. So, it gave us the opportunity to not only want to improve upon what we have, but also bring people out to become engaged, together."

Learn more about neighborhood matching grants and apply by the June 1 deadline.

[www.charlottenc.gov/nmg](http://www.charlottenc.gov/nmg)

