

West Charlotte Community Leader Determined to Preserve Its History: National Volunteer Week

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Brenda Campbell has been a leader within the west Charlotte community for 20 years and is more inspired than ever to make sure people are aware of its rich history. She serves as President of the Clanton Park Neighborhood Community Association and Vice President of the West Boulevard Neighborhood Coalition. Her face beamed with pride as she discussed the value of her community. Inspired to get involved by her fellow community leader, Brenda decided it was her time to support her fellow residents.

"My mentor was getting up in age. We couldn't continue to just let our leaders just fade away. They needed help. Needed the support." She elaborated, "It's called passing the torch. The torch was passed to me, so I took that mantle and just began to run with it."

One of the events that Campbell enjoys coordinating is National Night Out (NNO), an annual event that encourages police-community partnerships amongst neighborhoods. During NNO, the West Boulevard Neighborhood Coalition comes together to have one collaborative event. She defined the coalition as "19 beautiful communities along the West Boulevard corridor with different presidents, different people, different backgrounds, and different culture" that come together to celebrate their community. Many vendors participate in the event, and she enjoys being able to work with small businesses, especially African American businesses, to give them an opportunity to thrive.

The Legacy Festival organized by the coalition is another event that she loves as it reminds people of the history of west Charlotte. "We have such rich history on the West Boulevard corridor. That's one of the highlights – to see families come together, to see that mixture, but to let people know that we haven't been forgotten and we still have our history."

Working with so many people to achieve a common goal is no easy feat, and she credits the support of her neighbors and the City of Charlotte. "The City [of Charlotte] has been very instrumental, I tell you. As I look back on being a leader in the community, I look at how the city has helped us form our communities to really bring us together upon structure and organizational skills," Campbell said.

She appreciates that City of Charlotte staff members are only one phone call away to support their needs, whether it be to discuss recycling efforts or code enforcement questions. Campbell is especially grateful for the Neighborhood Board Retreat, which allow residents to come together to identify goals, tasks, and what it means to be a community leader.



Brenda is described as having an unwavering love for her community and also being incredibly reliable. "You just couldn't ask for a better volunteer or leader in the community. She's a voice," said Millicent Powell, the Southwest Community Engagement Manager at the City of Charlotte.

Although Campbell is heavily involved with the west side of town, she also works with communities in east Charlotte to encourage their collaboration. This includes inviting them to her meetings, encouraging them to get involved in the community, and to speak with their city council representatives. She's inspired by those currently doing the work and those who have an interest in leading and is confident that they're going to take it to the next level.

Campbell knows that she will have to pass the torch eventually, just as her mentor did for her, which will give her the opportunity to further pursue her own entrepreneurial goals.

Until that time comes, her community aspirations remain strong. "What do I aspire for my community?" she shared. "I want the best for my community. That means for the children. That means for the seniors. That means for those that don't look like me, but I most of all want the history to be known and stay intact as much as possible."

