

2022 Neighborhood
of the Year Finalist!
—NeighborhoodsUSA

FLORAL PARK

NEIGHBORHOOD GAZETTE

**Floral Park
Love
Stories**

**Spring 2022
Home &
Garden Tour**

**Architecture:
Tudor
Revival**

**Floral Park's
Varsity Team**

The Queen of Victoria Drive

Letter From The President

by Jeffrey Katz



At every minute, and at every conceivable division of time, one of two possible paths present themselves. They are the path of self-gratification and the path of service. In considering the distance of each, you'll soon discover that the first is never more than a journey of say, half

a foot, and that the second is never less than a journey of a million miles. We make our way down each of those paths every day, sometimes logging the length of our journey to nowhere, other times logging the distance of our incalculable journey.

There's no need to instruct or to advise a person on the first path. To walk its miniscule span is effortless. The second path requires a lifetime of understanding, along with the patience to accept that both along the way, and at its end, there can be no understanding at all. How could anyone understand such a thing? It's unnatural for a person to walk so far, unfathomable to imagine the pain of it, unthinkable to envision the will to continue it, step after step, utterly impossible to consider the weight of each groan and grimace along the way.

Greenleaf. Ross. Riverside. Flower. Though the street names are the same for each of us, their appearance changes remarkably to the observer. For some of us, these streets are the "paths of self-gratification." For others, they have become the "paths of service." How you see these streets determines whether you are truly living within this amazing community.

David Spangler, an American spiritual philosopher and self-described "practical mystic" has written: "Some people think they are in community, but they are only in proximity. True community requires commitment and openness. It is a willingness to extend yourself to encounter and know the other."

Living in a true community is not a passive existence. It requires active engagement. Whether you are aware of it or not, what we do or don't do affects our neighborhood.

Of perforce, I accept that some of my neighbors are more comfortable with communal withdrawal. Yet, I have complete admiration for those who have had the courage to be vulnerable; to open themselves up. The reward has been that the world – our world – opens to them.

There are millions of cheap seats in the world today filled with people that will never once step foot in the arena. They will never once put themselves out there, but they will make it a full-time job to hurl criticism and judgment. The loudest boos always come from the cheap seats.

For those who have had the nerve to get out of their seats and emerge from their houses, they "get it." The neighborhood mixers, the parties, and celebrations. They are not excuses to simply revel. They are rituals which arouse us to encounter our neighbors and to truly come to know them.

The evolution of *The Gazette* has been very deliberate during the past two years. The newsletter is not simply a device to publicize the next dumpster day. It is a dynamic instrument to introduce our readers to their neighbors and their stories. Mark Rothenberg's Eccentric's Corner column has introduced us to the hobbies of our neighbors. The

Floral Park's Got Talent series has opened our eyes to the talents that live in our community.

We are a remarkable neighborhood. We have achieved this status with the engagement of just 20% of our neighbors. Imagine if we doubled that number. Neighborhood engagement restores trust – a commodity which has been on the decline in American society. When trust is confirmed, it is more likely to be reciprocated. This is the foundation for so-

cial connectedness – the strengthening of the web of feelings, action and interactions that ties people together. In turn, social connectedness has been identified as the main social determinants of health.

Brene Brown's words offer a powerful admonition. "Here's the thing. I'm not going to b.s. you. Vulnerability is hard. And it's scary, and it feels dangerous. But it's not as hard, scary, or dangerous as getting to the end of our lives and having to ask ourselves, 'What if I would have shown up?'"

Comments? Write President@FloralPark.com.

“True community requires commitment and openness. It is a willingness to extend yourself to encounter and know the other.”
— David Spangler

UPDATE: Floral Park has just been named a finalist for 2022 Neighborhood of the Year by NeighborhoodsUSA!