

Winners Announced for Love Your Block Neighborhood Improvement Grants



Program Will Help 21 Groups Spruce Up Baton Rouge Neighborhoods

With the help of the Home Depot Foundation and ExxonMobil, 21 Baton Rouge groups are slated to receive grants to improve their neighborhoods through the city's new "Love Your Block" Program.

The projects selected for the grants were eligible to receive up to \$750 in assistance. The winners included community garden projects, neighborhood cleanup efforts, community "greening" projects, beautification projects, and a project to control or eradicate paper mulberry trees in Spanish Town.

Mayor-President Melvin "Kip" Holden said the community response to the program was overwhelming, and noted that he was especially impressed with the quality of the projects.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for neighbors to work together to improve their block, get to know each other better, and generally to improve their quality of life," Holden said.

Sponsored by The Home Depot Foundation and Exxon Mobil Corporation, the new program encourages neighbors to work together to fight blight and make their block a better place to live. The Home Depot Foundation contributed \$10,000 in Home Depot Gift Cards for the projects. ExxonMobil contributed an additional \$3,000 that will fund six grant projects.

A total of 31 applications were received for the Love Your Block Program, and 21 projects were selected to receive grants of up to \$750 each. The following is a list of the 21 groups selected to receive Love Your Block grants:

- ***Scotlandville Business Association***

Beautification of store and home fronts with flowers and shrubbery in the area near Southern University

- ***New Life Community Center***
Build a community garden in the Scotlandville area
- ***Summer Crossing Homeowners Association***
Clean out entrance to Summer Crossing neighborhood, and beautify it with plants and signs
- ***Wickland Terrace Homeowners Association***
Cleaning and beautification of neighborhood entrance; install new sign
- ***Aveia's Rainbow Community Garden in Old South Baton Rouge***
Build a fence to secure garden, along with a small movable deck and six small benches
- ***Greater Beulah Baptist Church in Old South Baton Rouge***
Clean lots, cut grass and trees, pick up trash and plant community garden
- ***Spanish Town Invasive Pest Project***
Control or eradicate paper mulberry trees in Spanish Town
- ***Stamp of Hope Community Garden in Old South Baton Rouge***
Stain planter boxes, purchase compost bin, trash can and paint supplies
- ***The Nehemiah Society***
Build community garden in Eden Park
- ***Knowledge of Self Garden Groups***
Build community garden in Scotlandville/University City
- ***My Father's House Church***
Paint homes and maintain lawns in David Place subdivision
- ***New St. John the Baptist Youth Ministry***
Building renovations in South Baton Rouge
- ***Pelican Nest LRC/South Garden Project***
Construct a community garden in Old South Baton Rouge
- ***Community Against Drugs and Violence***
Install trash cans at bus stop, along with landscaping, a concrete table and three benches
- ***Aspirations in the Kildare Subdivision***
Build a community garden
- ***Beauregarden***
Add trellis fixtures to the existing community garden in Beauregard Town
- ***BR Zion City Community Development***
Construct a community garden in Zion City

- ***Estates of Worthington Lakes***
Planting, irrigations and mulch
- ***Southern Heights Property Owners Association***
Improve neighborhood entrances, with landscaping and plants
- ***Martin Luther King Community Center***
Clean blighted areas in Eden Park
- ***District 10 North Region Community Improvement Team***
Maintain lawns of senior citizens in Northdale, Standard Heights and Dixie

"We are honored to be a part of Baton Rouge's "Love Your Block" Initiative to help residents repair and refurbish homes and neighborhoods," said Kelly Caffarelli, president of The Home Depot Foundation. "The cornerstone of our lives is usually the place we call home... where we gather with our families and friends... and we are proud that our grant funding will be used to make a lasting, physical impact on neighborhoods throughout the city.

Stephanie Cargile, Public and Government Affairs Manager of ExxonMobil Baton Rouge, said her company is excited to sponsor six (6) Love Your Block Grants in the North Baton Rouge and Scotlandville area.

"It's a great opportunity for our employees to work side by side with our neighbors to help bring civic pride, beautification and economic growth opportunities to this area," Cargile said. "The city's support of this program is just one example of how the public and private sector can partner with citizens to make Baton Rouge a better place to live."

Also, involved in the Love Your Block Program is the Mid City Redevelopment Alliance, a lead partner that will administer the grants and provide tools for some of the projects. "We look forward to working with Mayor Holden and all the groups on such an exciting program for the City of Baton Rouge," said Sam Sanders, executive director of Mid City Redevelopment Alliance.

The Love Your Block Initiative was developed, as part of Baton Rouge Proud, the Mayor's high-impact service plan that aims to increase volunteerism and target volunteers to address the city's greatest needs. Baton Rouge Proud was developed by the Mayor's Chief Service Officer, a senior city official dedicated to developing and implementing the city's service plan. The Chief Service Officer was hired through a \$200,000 Cities of Service Leadership Grant, funded jointly by the Rockefeller Foundation and Bloomberg Philanthropies.

For more information about the program, go to www.brgov.com/batonrougeproud. To qualify, each group had to represent a block within the city limits of Baton Rouge. They also had to be volunteer-led, and have a minimum of 10 neighborhood volunteers to help with the Love Your Block Project. Eligible groups included, among others, neighborhood, tenant and block associations, as well as community garden groups, and school and church-based groups.

***For more information contact Kia Bickham, the Mayor's Chief Service Officer
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