

Pasadena's Garfield Heights Is Neighborhood of the Year

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HNA neighbors celebrating the Neighborhood of the Year Award in the City Hall Courtyard (Photo – Brian Biery)

Pasadena's Garfield Heights Neighborhood Association earned the Grand Prize Award and was named 'Neighborhood of the Year' by Neighborhoods, USA (NUSA).

By Brian Biery

The neighborhood association was honored by Mayor Victor Gordo and District 3 City Council Member Justin Jones during the ceremonial section of the Council's meeting on June 5.

Mayor Gordo shared during the celebration that “I am proud to say that you are my neighbors. I live just a couple of blocks from Garfield Heights, so I am well aware of your tremendous sense of neighborliness.”

Garfield Heights is bounded by Washington Blvd., Los Robles Ave., Mountain St. and Marengo Ave. and consists of approximately 400 properties. All residents are members of the neighborhood association, renters and homeowners alike.

The NOTY award was given to GHNA in the Social Revitalization/Neighborliness in a Single Neighborhood category in recognition of its Garfield Heights’ Historic Pasadena Bus Tour which was organized in May of 2022. The purpose of the bus tour was to provide neighbors with an opportunity to learn more about one other and many of the community’s overlooked and unwritten histories. The dynamic tour included the cultural landmarks, businesses, religious sites and historic homes of Pasadena’s Armenian, Japanese, Mexican, Native, and Black American communities.

According to GHNA Board Member and NUSA Presenter Danny Parker, “Healthy communities are built on a foundation of mutual understanding and trust.” NUSA officials recognized the immense value of the bus tour in providing a safe space for neighbors to discuss challenging issues in a productive way. NUSA further observed that this unique event brought neighbors together around a positive activity and is a remarkable testament to the association’s desire to improve the neighborhood’s cohesion and quality of life.



GHNA Board Member Lisa Mann accepting the NOTY Grand Prize Award with NUSA President Precious McKesson and Board Members Dwight Pridgeon and Joyce Cox in El Paso, Tx (Photo – Brian Biery)

At the Neighborhood of the Year Awards Luncheon in El Paso, NUSA Board President Precious McKesson praised Garfield Heights as a “model of neighborhood organizing for the rest of the country” to emulate.

Pasadena hosted the Neighborhoods, USA Conference in 1994 and several of the city’s neighborhoods have been recognized by NUSA in the past, including Sunset Ave. and Bungalow Heaven neighborhood associations. However, this is the first time that a Pasadena neighborhood has ever won the Neighborhood of the Year Grand Prize.

The Garfield Heights Neighborhood Association and Landmark District were officially designated by the City of Pasadena in 1999. Neighbors received organizational support from the City’s Neighborhood Connections office during that process. Neighborhood Connections served the city’s neighborhood associations for 30 years and was a model for neighborhood organizing throughout Southern California.

Former GHNA Board Chair and member of the NUSA presentation team, Lisa Mann stated that “...this (award) is truly special and we feel very honored and proud to represent Pasadena” at a national level with Neighborhoods, USA.

Neighborhoods, USA (NUSA) is a national, non-profit organization committed to building and strengthening neighborhood organizations. Created in 1975 to share information and experiences used to build stronger communities, NUSA continues to encourage networking and information-sharing to facilitate the development of partnerships among neighborhood organizations, government, and the private sector for the ultimate goal of strengthening every neighborhood.



GHNA neighbors with Mayor Victor Gordo and Councilmember Justin Jones (Photo – Brian Biery)

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