

## Volunteer of the Month –SMBP – Block Party

June 25<sup>th</sup> would have been the 16<sup>th</sup> consecutive Block Party on South Marshall Street.

Instead it was the first to be cancelled due to rain. The organizers didn't give up easy either.

Despite the weather predictions for rain in the 50% to 55% range, they were still hoping there would be a let up in the morning rain early enough to get set up and move forward



with all the plans that had been made over the last several months. Instead 55% turned into 80%. Even if the kids and parents were willing to brave the possible rain, the performers, including stilt walkers, dancers and a DJ could not be expected to take the chance, and nobody likes a soggy hamburger.

For the first few years the Block Party was mostly the effort of Sandy Barry, then the Executive Director of Marshall House, and the food & entertainment was whatever she could raise on her own. After Immanuel Congregational Church decided to “adopt” South Marshall Street, they also helped and when Sandy was no longer the Executive Director, most of the leadership in organization came from the South Marshall Interfaith Coalition (SMIC), a partnership of various faith organizations willing to help this especially troubled street.

Today South Marshall is vastly improved from the early days. Habitat for Humanity has added 22 homeowners to the street, and several of the problem apartment buildings have new owners and managers.

Salvation Army, under the leadership of Sarah DiMaio has again assumed the lead in planning, and SMIC lead by Nancy Rion, has provided a lot of historical knowledge as well as the contacts of the volunteers that populate the 30+ tables that make the party so successful. AHNA, Wheeler Clinic, the Aetna, Trinity Episcopal, and AHCC have all been a part of the effort.

The volunteer part of this story is that for everyone involved, this annual event is not a part of anyone's job description. All the meetings, the phone calls the emails the donations of food and giveaways to the children are all part of a very large group volunteer effort. All do this on top of their regular job; the only pay is the joy of the children.

The photo shown here is from a past Block Party, and the link is to several prior Parties are here <https://photos.app.goo.gl/wzRTeA3izb9hN59t7> .

More photos to come next year. If you're interested in joining this very successful tradition, let us know at [info@asylumhill.org](mailto:info@asylumhill.org)