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December 1, 2006

Tree of Life

In a few weeks we will celebrate the incarnation of the Lord of the universe—his move into our neighborhood. Evergreen trees remind us of the new and everlasting life available through him. We rejoice at the arrival of the King of Kings and his gift of redemption.

As our logo suggests, Oakdale Neighbors is planting trees—both figuratively and literally. We are “greening” the neighborhood by caring for and enhancing our physical environment. Allow me to describe several expressions of new life in the Oakdale neighborhood.

Green Streets

For two summers Oakdale Neighbors has been planting perennials along Kalamazoo Avenue. In 2007 Oakdale Neighbors intends to plant 50 trees which will benefit the neighborhood in several ways:

- Trees cool the neighborhood.
- Trees improve surface water quality and reduce flooding.
- Trees extend the life of paved surfaces.
- Trees increase traffic safety.
- Trees enhance the look and feel of a street.
- Trees make a neighborhood more pedestrian-friendly.
- Trees increase property values.

- Trees serve as a windbreak.
- Trees absorb gases, improve air quality, and limit global warming.

We’ll be using volunteers on this project whenever possible. Calvin College will be helping us identify and plant trees that are native to Michigan.

Donate to Oakdale Neighbors with your credit card

Supporting Oakdale Neighbors is now as simple as a few clicks of the mouse. Visit our new website at www.oakdaleneighbors.org to make an online financial contribution to Oakdale Neighbors. Click on one of the DONATE buttons and *JustGive* or *PayPal* will help you give a credit card donation. It’s easy and fast! --No need to save envelopes or look for stamps. Explore the rest of the website to find out what we’re up to. We welcome your comments or ideas. Send them to us in the CONTACT US section of the website.

Green Travel

Greenhouse gases that cause global warming are produced when we heat homes, drive automobiles, or purchase transported food. We can neutralize the climate impact of our travel by planting trees. Do you have travel plans this Christmas or next summer? Make your trip carbon-neutral by sponsoring a tree in the Oakdale neighborhood. One tree will absorb the carbon produced by 1200 miles of travel by car or four hours of travel by air. Donate \$100 per tree to Oakdale Neighbors and feel good about the global impact of your travel.

Green Office

Oakdale Neighbors is shrinking its ecological footprint by using fewer resources. We are purchasing 100% recycled paper for most of our white office paper needs. Producing this paper requires 43% less energy, 39% less water, and 100% fewer trees than regular paper. We recycle paper regularly and use both sides of a sheet of paper when possible.

In 2005-2006 we used 51% less natural gas than the previous year. We reduced our heating and cooling costs by 17%.

Oakdale Neighbors' Christmas lights will be "green" this year. We recently began purchasing electricity produced by windmills to light our office and run our computers. To learn more about purchasing this alternative electricity, visit the *Green Generation* section of www.consumersenergy.com.

Green Greens

Oakdale Neighbors is exploring new ways to help neighbors meet food needs. We are considering the development of a food cooperative. Oakdale Neighbors would help members identify food sources, collect the food, and distribute it to the members. The cooperative could purchase healthy, organic food for its members in bulk. If you are interested in participating in something like this, give us a call.

Green Trash

In October Larrine Reinhart organized a Neighborhood Clean-Up Day. Oakdale Neighbors and the City of Grand Rapids provided dumpsters, giving neighborhood residents the opportunity to make space in their basements, garages, and *lives*. A Neighborhood Clean-Up Day helps keep trash out of the alleys and other corners of

the neighborhood. Residents filled more than four dumpsters with refuse on a Saturday morning. Oakdale Neighbors "greened" the event by collecting a van-load of cardboard and electronic equipment for recycling.

We invite you to help us make Oakdale a great, green neighborhood. Contribute to the work of Oakdale Neighbors or to specific projects with the enclosed envelope.

Tom Bulten, Director
Oakdale Neighbors