



**Department of Communications**  
401 Broadway • Suite 211 • Gary, Indiana 46402-1236  
Phone 219.881.1314 • Fax 219.881.1337  
Email [ldburns@ci.gary.in.us](mailto:ldburns@ci.gary.in.us)

Karen Freeman-Wilson  
Mayor

LaLosa Dent Burns  
Director of Communications

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
February 26, 2018

**GARY REDEVELOPMENT GEARING UP FOR 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL  
GARY PRESERVATION TOUR**

**VOLUNTEERS SEEKING TO RAISE FUNDS**

**Gary, Indiana-** The Gary Redevelopment Commission is eager to host the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Gary Preservation Tour this summer that will be organized by Redevelopment volunteers.

Planning is well underway for the one day Open House and Tours that will be conducted in the city's downtown and in historic districts. The 2018 tour will also include tours in two residential historic districts: Horace Mann and Morningside. The guided home tours in Horace Mann and Morningside will be by reservation.

Volunteers have established a 30-day crowdfunding campaign to raise \$17,000 in support the series of historic tours in Gary in June and July. The funding campaign for the Gary Preservation Tour will go live on Thursday, March 1, 2018. With community support, the project has already secured \$5,000 in donations from Indiana American Water, Barnes & Thornburg, and Legacy Foundation Knight Donor Advised Fund. In addition to funding the tours, the money raised will go toward beautification projects in the neighborhoods.

In February 2017, AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers along with the Gary Redevelopment Commission raised \$9,250 through crowdfunding and received another \$7,500 in match-grant funding from Patronicity and the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA). Their efforts resulted in two downtown beautification projects and three days of architectural tours, drawing more than 500 visitors from Northwest Indiana and Chicagoland to learn about the city's history. One site on the tour became a separate preservation project for Gary's City Methodist Church, which received a \$163,133 award from Knight Foundation in June 2017 to develop a plan to repurpose the structure into a ruins garden.

"The aim of the Gary Preservation Tour is to change the conversation around Gary from blight and abandonment to possibilities for the future and investment," explained Robyn Robb, one of the current AmeriCorps volunteers working with the Planning and Redevelopment Department. "By

exploring the city's history and triumphs, we seek to restore pride in Gary and encourage a new vision for its future."

"We want to build on the successes of the inaugural tour and make it a sustainable, recurring event, encouraging people to explore and appreciate downtown and other neighborhoods," said Sarah Kobetis, Deputy Director of Planning for the City of Gary. "The Preservation Tour not only sheds light on Gary's amazing architectural assets and cultural past, but also inspires residents and visitors to think more creatively about the city's future."

The VISTAs and the Gary Redevelopment Commission look forward to hosting the tours this summer and encourage everyone to donate and spread the word. The team has engaged residents, block clubs, and other community leaders to gain feedback and gather support. The team also conducted presentations at area schools to teach children about the story of their hometown.

A tax-deductible donation can be made via [tinyurl.com/preservegary](http://tinyurl.com/preservegary) or by sending a check to Legacy Foundation, care of Gary Preservation Tour, 1000 E 80<sup>th</sup> Place, Suite 402N, Merrillville, IN 46410. For more information about the project, contact the Gary Redevelopment Commission at (219) 886-1531.

#### **About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**

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