

January 2004

One evening, last summer around 8 PM, 2 teenagers held my 15-year-old son at gunpoint at the Georgetown Elementary School Park for 85 cents and a stick of chewing gum. One of the friends my son was with was hit and punched by the same teenager who held a 22 pistol to my son's head before running off. I will NEVER forget the look on my son's face when he arrived home, accompanied by a police officer, shortly after. I had never seen that "look" before.

At first, I did not understand what was going on, until the police officer said that a gun was involved. I can only imagine the feeling of a cold hard-barrel, 22 pistol held to my head. I truly cannot fathom what my 15-year-old son felt. I was HORRIFIED. WHAT IF he had pulled the trigger?! WHAT IF he had killed my son?! WHAT IF, WHAT IF, WHAT IF!!!!!!.....I was FURIOUS! I was scared. My next thought...we are MOVING!

Then the fear turned to anger...and then the anger into energy...and the energy ...to a new conviction and a different determination! Suddenly, I thought...NO! No, we are NOT going to move! No, we are NOT going to allow our neighborhood to go down the tubes! No, we are NOT going to live IN FEAR. We ARE going to DO SOMETHING!

I asked the officer what could be done. "Contact your Alderman. That's a good place to start," he said. After learning that a surrounding neighborhood had been experiencing similar "thug activity" (their specific problems centered more around housing issues), and that they were able to flush out many of their problems by instituting their association (as a means of requiring their community of residents to maintain reasonable property standards), I began investigating the possibility that Georgetown might have once been associated. I kept thinking Georgetown's association should read...If you don't follow the law, WE will require you to, or YOU will have to move!

I contacted a lawyer and regrettably learned that Georgetown never had an association; its developer never intended it to be. Still feeling sure there was another, better way, I wrote a letter to the editor of the Beacon News and contacted my alderman, Leroy Keith. He replied!!! And my letter to the editor was published!

I then began stuffing over 100 Ziploc bags with my story, the letter to the editor, my alderman's reply letter and a date and location of a meeting place I organized at Fox Restaurant, in an effort to sit down and discuss a way for Georgetown to rally against the riff-raff. I went door to door, with help of some neighborhood kids, putting these baggies outside as many mailboxes I could. One hundred copies did not even put a dent in our Georgetown Neighborhood! What a task I had begun! And this is where OUR STORY BEGINS...