

Little Neighborhood Of Baristo Makes Big Difference

By David Carden, Jr.

Since its inception in 2007, the Baristo Neighborhood Organization has been affectionately known as the “little neighborhood who could, who can — and does.”



From left: Sandi Evans, Dale Maguire, David Carden Jr., Ann Pelgorsch and Claudia Rossi help install Neighborhood Watch signs along the Baristo corridor.

The neighborhood is unique in that it is the only neighborhood organization made up exclusively of condominium complexes within boundaries exclusively in Section 14 of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indian reservation in the heart of Palm Springs.

Representing 750 homeowners in 10 home owner associations as well as three large apartment complexes and the Ralphs shopping center, the active membership is more than 250 and more than 95 percent of its members are accessible via the Internet.

One of the key elements of the success of the BNO is its ability to continually tackle the top three issues submitted by its residents. One by one, those issues have been addressed and today the BNO is proud of its accomplishments and continues to inspire other neighborhood organizations.

From the beginning the BNO faced tough odds as the residents worked to rid the neighborhood of transient encampments throughout the vacant lots within its boundaries. Organizing its first Neighborhood Watch program in 2007, the BNO has continued to organize its program to include signage in the neighborhood, regular meetings and an active network of residents who monitor suspicious activity.

One of its unique programs has been the Lights On — Crime Out! lighting program at the Rose Garden complex. With donations funding the purchase of low-wattage energy-saving lighting, the BNO supplies outdoor lights free of charge and installs them. Homeowners cooperate by leaving the lights on over their garages and entries from dusk to dawn. The program now boasts more than 85 percent participation and crime has been reduced by 90 percent.

Working with the Palm Springs Police Department and the Citizens on Patrol, the BNO has worked hard to curb panhandling, public intoxication and loitering at the Ralphs shopping center. BNO residents are proud of their proactive involvement.

Coming soon, the Baristo Traffic Calming and Striping Project along Baristo Road between Sunrise Way and Avenida Caballeros. The BNO created a partnership with the City of Palm Springs by raising \$2,000 of the \$7,000 project to ensure it gets done this summer. The striping will help slow down traffic and reduce noise levels that affect more than 250 residents.

Perhaps the greatest accomplishment of the BNO is that the residents actually created a neighborhood where none existed previously. Blade signage is the next project, so anyone going through the neighborhood boundaries will know “the little neighborhood that could” proudly welcomes its residents and visitors alike.