

# Residents break bread together

## Stonewall residents talk issues during community gathering

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When the residents of the Stonewall community have big decisions to make, they gather around the table.

Over steaming plates of chicken casserole, pig's feet, barbecue wings and potato salad residents of the neighborhood gathered last weekend for a community celebration.

Tecora Haney, who residents call the community's "mother," believes that food well prepared brings families together.

Two sprawling tables of food, most of which was prepared by Haney, took center stage at the celebration.

Haney began cooking Friday at 10:30 a.m. She didn't finish until 2 p.m. the next day.

"I love to do this. I do this anytime," she said. "I do it for my church at St. Stephen Baptist, for the Daughters of Isis, anytime. I love to see people enjoy (my food). We are only here for a short while. Why can't we enjoy one another? I am the mother of everybody here."

Having lived in the neighborhood since 1975, Haney and her husband of 55 years, Woodrow, have raised five children on love and soul food. Her husband is the only person she allows to assist her with preparing her ambitious meals.

Haney's son Larry considers the tasty spread a routine occurrence.

"My mother's cooking is the best in the world. Every other Sunday, and on holidays, lines of cars come to her house because people know that she enjoys cooking," her son said. Three longtime friends

Berry Murray, Helen Redd and Frankie Williams - heard through the grapevine that Haney was doing the cooking.

They said they wouldn't have missed the celebration.

"I come to her house to eat all of the time. Her pound cakes are delicious and stand about a foot high," Redd said. "I don't mind not knowing her secret as long as she continues to cook it and I can taste it."

Rutherford Moorman, the president of the neighborhood association, said the community is one that appreciates its elders.

"This is a true sense of community. Mother Haney did all of this table herself. This is what Mrs. Haney loves to do," Moorman said. "She comes to the meetings and she is very involved. She loves to cook, and that is the key. Ask people to do what they like to do."

Moorman said the community recently completed a survey to identify the skills of the residents. The survey asked what residents did for a living, what they participate in at church and what they contribute to the community.

"We always look at the areas of expertise, and no one has ever failed us yet. They like what they do," he said. "This is about social capital, getting people to contribute to a cause. It's like the cafeteria project. If we all pitch in, it can happen."

Members of the community are currently working on two projects.

They recently lost the first round in a battle with the City Planning Board to stop creation of an alternate route to get into Stonewall by opening up a dead-end street that would connect it with another neighborhood.



Mother of the Stonewall community, Tecora Haney, prepared pig's feet and chicken casserole for her neighbors.

Photos by Felecia P. McMillan

The City Planning Board wants the community to connect Chicamauga Drive with an upcoming community called Chosen Ground. Also, the community is being encouraged to open currently-closed Appomatox Drive.

This action would supposedly offer better access to emergency vehicles such as ambulances or fire trucks. However, residents believe opening the street would create a way for motorists to take a shortcut through the neighborhood, exposing the children to danger of car accidents.

"If Appomatox was opened for vehicular traffic, people would use Appomatox as a shortcut to Indiana Avenue," said Moorman. "This would be dangerous to our children. We will get involved in this discussion."

Most of the streets have no sidewalks, and these changes



Patsy Murrill and her mother, Benny fill plates at the buffet table.

See Stonewall on A8

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